

# Book V



# Guisoreux-la-Belle

# Guisoreux

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On a hill by the side of the road to Marienburg and the Empire, a little to the north of the sprawling Faubourgs stands a permanent gallows called Montfaucon. This is a scaffold-like structure of stone and iron from which hang the remains of convicted criminals as a warning to passers by. It is a grim reminder to visitors to the city once known as the jewel in the Bretonnian crown that the authority of the King is imposed here. The more reflective may realise that the very existence of Montfaucon is an admission that that authority has to be imposed...

## An overview of the city

Guisoreux is the capital city of Bretonnia and by far the largest town in the Kingdom, however it is no longer the real seat of Bretonnian power since the court moved 35 leagues (100 miles) away to Oisillon à bit more than ten years ago.

Officially the number of inhabitants is recorded as around eighteen thousand though in reality it is possible that it is closer to one hundred thousand, which makes it one of the most populated cities in the Old World. There has been a settlement on the Ois here since ancient times. The oldest records (dating back to Gilles le Breton) name the city Gisoreux. The more modern Bretonnian spelling however is Guisoreux. Scholars believe the change in spelling reflects a change in pronunciation.

Traditionally the city is "*Guisoreux-la-belle*", not only the greatest, but the most beautiful of the cities of Bretonnia. Now the appellation seems a rather sick joke, and few but rather stuffy nobles and academics use it without being conscious of a heavy sense of irony.

Guisoreux is well-placed to guard the strategically important 75 mile gap between the Pale Sisters and the Grey Mountains, the gateway into Bretonnia for its traditional rival: The Empire. There are three main roads out of Guisoreux: north 75 leagues (220 miles) to Marienburg, south 130 leagues (400 miles) to Parravon (with the road East to Altdorf and the Empire branching off at Jouinard), and west. To the west, the road divides in two, travelling North-West to Oisillon (then crossing the Arden forest to Couronne 75 leagues (225 miles) away,

and on to L'Anguille), and South-West along the Grismarie to Moussillon (67 leagues (200 miles)), though few take that road any more... Half way between Guisoreux and Moussillon stands a bridge across the Grismarie, and a road leads south to the main towns of the centre and south-west.

The city itself bridges the river Ois (a tributary of the Grismarie). An island in the middle of the river houses the most prominent buildings in the city and a bridge to the central island from each bank of the Ois links the two halves of Guisoreux. Beneath the streets, decaying catacombs house the dead and worse, whilst the city above crumbles and spreads like fungus beyond its poorly maintained but massive walls. The north and south of the city are filled with ancient, overcrowded houses and narrow, pestilent, filthy streets. Beyond the ancient walls that ring it, massive shantytowns have sprung up like waste piled at the side of a house. Once, parts of the city held the opulent townhouses of nobles from across the country. Now, with the court no longer in Guisoreux, the nobles rarely visit and some of their houses and compounds have become refuse-filled squats.

The population of the city is strongly divided between the rich and the poor, with only a small middle class. The poor live in conditions rarely seen outside of Bretonnia and are preyed upon by a large and violent criminal class, whilst the rich live in opulent decadence. The rich abuse the poor without regard and the poor despise the rich. Fortunately for them, the rich are the ones who pay the wages of the watch and are thus largely protected from the anger of the lower classes.

The city is a hotbed of dissent and radicalism, and a potential tinderbox of revolution. The touch of Chaos is not absent from the city. Among the rich chaos cults dedicated to the Lord of Pleasure flourish. At night drug crazed orgies of sin occur in the catacombs as the nobility fornicate in worship of Slaanesh. Among the disaffected poor Tzeentch is paid homage to in false hope of change for the better and occasionally, when pestilence strikes, prayers to Nurgle are said in hope of deliverance from suffering. Tzeentch also has his servants amongst the more well-to-do. Radicals at the university have some

links to cults, and there is more than one noble whose love of intrigue has drawn them into broad sympathy with the Lord of Change, even if unwittingly. However, it should not be thought that unrest in the city comes only from the machinations of Chaos. Crushing poverty and squalor breed discontent with the nobility without any need of chaos agitators. Heretical Verenan groups calling for true justice for the oppressed have some influence in the University (where a degree of free-thinking and theological speculation is allowed). Rogue Shallyan clerics tell those who come to their soup kitchens that it is those who say that Shallya endorses such a social system who are the true heretics. The cult of Ranald the protector is alive and well in the city. The court may declare that most dissent is the work of foreign agitators, but this is far from being the case. Having said all this, the population is largely pious in respect of the official gods and goddesses of Bretonnia (worship of Shallya is particularly strong). Indeed, it is likely the stabilising effect of this popular devotion that prevents complete social breakdown.

Guisoreux was once the greatest of Bretonnian cities, but has been declining for almost a century. Its recent history shows the signs of this decline: uprisings, corruption and misrule. Occasional bouts of xenophobia (often directed by the nobility who use Sigmarites and foreign agitators as scapegoats for popular discontent) have also marked the last few decades. The royal court is no longer to be found within the city, and many nobles have abandoned their mansions within the city to reside in Oisillon. Most still maintain their houses in Guisoreux (it helps to have somewhere to stay if you have to visit the Cathedral for a ceremony of some kind), but by and large it is only the more minor nobles who actually live in the city any more.

The tale of decline should not be overplayed, however. The nobility are abandoning the city in droves, and have been for decades. The bourgeoisie, however, are continuing to find it a congenial home. For many nouveau riche merchants there is nothing more satisfying than living in a house that was previously the ancestral home of the Comte de Lauverne (or wherever). Guisoreux is still an important trading and financial centre, home to many significant merchant houses and financiers. The presence of such wealthy and relatively well-to-do citizens in the city reassures many that the situation is still relatively stable. For PCs staying in inns with clean beds, with money to ensure they can buy themselves meals in pleasant surroundings, and even wash if they should feel they need to, Guisoreux will not feel like a city in terminal decline, but more like the bustling and vibrant economic centre it is. Its faubourgs are easily forgotten once you are in the city proper, and the tensions in the city only come to a head at comparatively rare moments of crisis. It is only when the mob walk the streets that the city feels dangerous, and the scent of revolution is on the air (the adventure "The Beast of Guisoreux" is designed to allow the PCs to experience one such moment).

Guisoreux is a bustling cosmopolitan place. It recently became home to the first printed newspaper in Bretonnia (probably in the Old World), La Gazette, which airs many radical, anti-establishment views. It is now a common sight to see public figures pestered for comment by university students earning a little cash by acting as

reporters. Two years ago an old wooden bridge crossing the Ois, downstream from the central island was demolished in preparation for the building of a replacement stone one. Halfway through the construction of the new bridge the money allocated for its creation unexpectedly ran out and the bridge has been left half built (forcing those who wish to cross the river to travel via the Ile de Guisoreux or by boat). This debacle has become known as the 'Pont-Neuf' affair, and has lingered long in the memory, largely thanks to the ridicule heaped on the Governor throughout the affair by La Gazette.

## The Districts

### Finding your way round Guisoreux

The city has a number of famous districts within the walls (and just outside them), but beyond this, the shantytowns and suburbs sprawl. These dwellings house almost half of the city's population (uncounted in official records, and occasionally referred to as "the unnumbered"), and range from substantial town houses, inns and shops, to makeshift shacks. No maps of these areas exist, and non-natives must stick to main roads unless they wish to find themselves lost in some back alley as darkness falls.



### The Ile de Guisoreux

This is the name by which the island in the centre of the Ois is known. Upon the island are situated the Palais-Royal, the Convent Ste-Josephine de Shallya. The rest of the Ile is made up almost exclusively of the residences of lesser nobles, wealthy merchants, and senior clerics. Many of the greater nobles, who spend most of the year at the court at Oisillon also maintain a dwelling on the Ile. The streets here are broad and paved, and occasionally open out into small squares with trees and fountains, with benches and sometimes (expensive) bars. The buildings are ostentatious and high-walled, often boasting elaborately carved stonework. Most buildings have courtyards, but few have gardens, as the space on the Ile

is limited. Those residences by the riverside frequently have private quays. The great road that crosses the Ile, the Rue de la Cité, is always busy with the through traffic of wagons, coaches, horsemen, and crowds on foot. However, apart from this, the Cité is reasonably quiet, there is a large watch presence here, and any "undesirable" types will be moved on. However, by night, all manner of rendezvous occur in hidden courtyards and alleys. The houses are built closely together, and it is not unknown to see lovers eloping over the rooftops. The two bridges, which join the south and north of the city to the island, are constantly guarded.

### Places of Note

#### The Palais-Royal

Once home to the Royal Court and epicentre of power in Bretonnia, this building now houses the ageing governor of the city. The Palais still hosts balls and other events, and if the King is ever required to stay in Guisoreux it is, of course, his place of residence within the city. Very little of real significance occurs here anymore. The Palace is built with fine stonework, though slightly less showily than contemporary tastes would require. In Bretonnian terms it is in fact positively dowdy (another reason for constructing a new palace). It has a large courtyard at the front, and extensive private gardens behind, hidden from prying eyes by ten foot walls. The gates are guarded day and night by Musketeer cadets, who will admit no one who is not known to them or bearing letters of authority.

#### The Convent Ste-Josephine de Shallya

The Convent is one of the oldest religious institutions in the city, an enclosed order of nuns, devoted to Shallya, who have withdrawn from a world of violence and hatred to contemplate the mysteries of the love and mercy of Shallya. Always a preserve of daughters of aristocratic families, in more recent times, the Convent has developed another role for itself, as a finishing school for noble ladies. The Convent is very highly regarded, and many of the daughters of nobility in the city attend. Unknown to the populace at large, however, the current School Mistress, Ursuline de Veyron, a young woman of aristocratic birth, is more than she seems. Although she started her life as a Shallyan nun, her contemplations of the mysteries of love led her in a rather different direction. She is now secretly a devotee of Slaanesh, and is always on the lookout for promising young girls who she can lure into worship of the chaos god. Parties dedicated to Slaanesh are secretly organized at the Convent by the Purple Hour cult, and a number of innocent young girls are usually initiated into the worship of the god at each one. Most of the girls (and the nuns, including the Mother Superior) are unaware of this side to the Convent, but reports have reached senior figures in the cult of Shallya. As yet nothing has been done about it, largely because any exposure of the cult's activities would have a disastrous effect on the reputation of the Convent.

#### The Headquarters of the King's Musketeers

The Musketeers have their regimental headquarters in a splendid mansion on the Ile. The regiment's administration is based here, and the Colonel lives in the upper floor. Cadets report here for training, but must find their own billets within the city. Cadets still practice swordplay in the yard, but musketry practice usually takes place outside the city walls, following a number of unfortunate incidents involving passers-by.

#### The House of Master Berant

This is the most famous fencing school in Bretonnia, and one of the most famous in the Old World. François Berant is a master fencer of international repute. He has taught kings and princes, travelled the length of the Old World seeking out masters from whom to learn. Here on the Ile he has made his home in a modest mansion away from the main thoroughfares. And here he takes on students who can afford his prodigious fees. He employs a number of assistants to teach new students the more basic techniques, while he himself teaches the more advanced students. Genuine royalty receive one on one tuition from Berant exclusively, and for the king he travels to Oisillon, but any other students will be taught by him only when they are already passable fencers. Berant is indisputably one of the finest swordsmen in the world, but had quite humble beginnings (which he is now at pains to conceal). Perhaps because of this, he is a complete snob. He is a stickler for etiquette, and acts every inch the epitome of a Bretonnian noble, looking down at anyone who does not dress, speak and act with the greatest possible grace. Berant does not deign to acknowledge other fencing schools, though he does recognise the skill of Carpentras (though he tends to look down on him as "a Gasconne farmer's boy").



#### The North Bank: Nordpont and Deuxportes

The Nordpont and Deuxportes districts are where many of the city's merchant families maintain their offices. Deuxportes is largely an artisans quarter, with many shops selling fine goods. Nordpont is the commercial heart of the city (even if the market at the Place de Breton may attract more visitors), and both are known unofficially as "The Kingdom of Rolland", where Henri Rolland holds his court. The skyline of the district is, however, dominated by the Sully Cathedral to the

North and the Grand Chatelet to the South, a reminder that the real power in the city is wielded by the King and the Cardinal.

### The Sully Cathedral

This famous temple of Shallya dominates religious life in the city. The Cathedral is built in a high gothic style, with twin towers at the front. It is a site of pilgrimage, containing the relics of St Jean of Guisoreux, and a constant stream of pilgrims from all over the Old World wander through its doors. The poor or diseased who turn up here, however, are directed to the Priory in Louffiat, and care is taken to ensure that noble pilgrims do not have to mingle with the riff-raff. The Cathedral is also regarded as in some senses the "Royal Cathedral" and is the location for many important ceremonies of national importance like recently the King's marriage. Within the cult, of course, the Cathedral comes second in importance to the great Cathedral in Couronne, but the national importance of the Sully Cathedral gives it a rival status. The senior cleric here is Bishop Alphonse Gerascoine, a protégé of the Cardinal.

### Hotel de Ville and Administratorum

The imposing Hotel de Ville building houses the bureaucrats of the city's civil administration, who work in a plethora of commissions and departments incomprehensible to those outside the system. Its magnificent building lends it an apparent significance that far outweighs its actual importance. Occupying the entire block behind it, and accessed through either of the rather plain buildings on either side of the Hotel de Ville is the Administratorum. This is the administrative hub of the government of the kingdom. Scribes and bureaucrats work endlessly in chamber after chamber. The Administratorum contains the offices of the Royal exchequer, as well as records used by the Chambre Noire amongst others. Obviously security is important here, and a special detachment of the City Garrison troops guard the building. Documents are not allowed to leave the building unless they are sealed with the signet of the Administratorum, showing that a senior bureaucrat has authorised their removal. Originals are never removed.

### The Royal Military Academy and Gunnery School

This large building, with an imposing parade-ground at its front, is where cadet within the Bretonnian army train before receiving their commissions. The only exception to this is the King's Musketeers, who train their own cadets. Unsurprisingly, this creates a certain level of tension between Musketeer Cadets and Academy Cadets. Duels between the two are not unusual. Cadets receive their commissions into various regiments at the end of their training, and although they may request a certain posting, while at the Academy no cadet has a regiment. In reality, of course, commissions in fashionable regiments are routinely bought by nobles, and a cadet's career is often already mapped out even for him before he arrives at the Academy. The Gunnery School is a reasonably recent development, and trains Naval as well as Army

Officers. Students at the Gunnery School are often older than Academy Cadets, some are University graduates, and some already hold commissions. They therefore tend to keep themselves aloof from the Cadets.

### The Royal Post Office *{Les postes royales}*

The Royal Post is a recent establishment, intended to improve the reliability of communication throughout the kingdom. The Post employs riders (for urgent messages) and coaches (for the more routine communications). Post horses are kept at coaching inns along the main roads throughout the kingdom, to allow Post riders to change horses regularly. The coaches take a locked chest full of official documents to the provincial capitals at the end of every week. Occasionally bureaucrats travel by Post Coach. When there are spare places members of the public can pay for them.

### The Hall of Commerce

This is the guildhall for the Artisans and Merchant's guilds, with its Switzer mercenary guards always on duty at the gates. Although it is viewed by outsiders (and, it is rumoured by Rolland himself) as "King Henri's throneroom", in fact the main chamber is only rarely used and debates there are rarely significant. The real economic decisions occur in the small member's chambers where merchants hold private discussions and strike deals with each other. The Hall is also in effect a bank for guild members. Gold and other valuables are stored within its heavily guarded vaults, and the guild brokers deals whereby members in need of money can receive loans at reasonable rates. The guild also acts as a guarantor for the extension of credit to members. The bar is a great place for picking up gossip about the merchant classes.

### The Guild Chambers

The city's most significant professional guilds (most importantly the guild of Lawyers and the guild of Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries) are based here. They tend to work primarily to protect the interests of their members by registering practitioners who are genuine University graduates. The building, which is quite large, not only contains the offices of the guilds, but also incorporates the Court of Civil Law.

### The Baths *{Les étuves}*

The baths were created several hundred years ago by a group of Shallyan laymen and have since become quite an institution within the city. The bath-house is also a barbers, and the whole establishment is a very male environment. Curiously, it is a place where men of all walks of life (with some exceptions) meet, so the second son of a duke with a commission in the Musketeers may be relaxing in a tub next to an actor whose parents were rat-catchers. Men come to the baths to relax and feel clean and refreshed, but also to chat and swap tall stories. The baths are therefore a great place for hearing rumours.

## The Grand Chatelet

The city's final line of defence in the event of an attack, this fortress is the base of the city garrison, guarding the bridges over the river. All those crossing over must pass beneath its walls, under the gaze of the foreigners who now man its battlements.

## The Hole in the Wall

A much-celebrated inn situated on the wall in Deuxportes district. The Hole in the Wall is actually built through a hole in the wall, and has doors in both Deuxportes and Louffiat, a fact that its patrons often make use of. Its cellars are in Louffiat, and by exploiting a loophole in the city's taxation system it is able to stock wines without officially bringing them into the city, thus undercutting other taverns. The watch and city garrison turn a blind eye to both of these practices, thanks to a healthy bribe paid to each of them. The proprietor is Bertrand Lapuisse, a Navarrese, and the inn is popular with his countrymen.

## The Cathedral-Academy of St Epiclesius, Temple of Myrmidia

The Cathedral-Academy is one of the most significant sites of the cult of Myrmidia in Bretonnia, the resting place of the body of St Epiclesius, legendary Priest-General of the Crusades, who served three successive Kings of Bretonnia. It is a pilgrimage site for devotees of Myrmidia from all over the Old World, acting not simply as a place of worship but also as an independent military academy. Warrior-priests accept students who are devoted to the service of the goddess and experienced soldiers in their own right. The teaching is highly regarded, and focuses on training in strategy and tactical thinking. One who has studied here is entitled to style themselves "Academician". The building itself is large and impressive in a peculiar Bretanno-Tilean style, the original building having been repaired and enlarged by Tilean stonemasons. The mixture of Gothic and Tilean architecture lends the Temple a solid yet slightly exotic air. The temple is popular with members of the city garrison and military academy (many of whom aspire to one day studying here). There is a degree of rivalry between the Royal Military Academy and the Cathedral-Academy, which occasionally results in duels. The high priest is Daniel Talbot, a man of fifty who still routinely defeats initiates in swordplay. Talbot is officially the High Master of the Academy, and acts as an advisor to the King on military matters. His influence within both court and the cult is, however, limited by the personal antipathy between himself and the Marshal of Bretonnia, François de Semblancy. As a result, he is only rarely at the Oisillon Palace, and is looked on with disfavour by the current Cardinal of Myrmidia Claude de Vendome, a strong supporter of the De Semblancy faction.

## The North Bank: District of la Jongleur

La Jongleur is an area of middle class residences, but is most well-known as the social centre of the city. It contains the highest concentration of bars and hostelryes

of any district. There are a number of shops, most of them being rather expensive. The streets tend to meander, but are fairly broad. La Jongleur district is famous for its street entertainers, who often travel from all over Bretonnia to ply their trade here. The watch are quite lenient towards them as long as they are both reasonably talented and reasonably clean. The area is quite busy by day, and tends to attract the "better class" of citizen. At night it is more likely to be the runken sons of these noble citizens and students from the university who wander around its streets. The area is patrolled regularly by the watch.



## Theatre Royal

The Theatre is a circular building of tiered seating surrounding a central stage area where plays are performed by travelling theatre companies, or the resident company: "the Viscomte's men", headed by actor/playwright Wil Robespierre. The Theatre is open to the air, but shielded by an extended Protection from Rain spell. At night the stage is illuminated by torches within glass globes set on posts at the corners. The seats are quite pricey (1-5 Francs), but many can afford to stand at the edge of the stage as "groundlings" (10 Pistoles).

## The Concert Hall and College de Musique

The Concert Hall is a large building with a vaulted roof, looking vaguely like a temple. It is sponsored by the Viscomte and the Cardinal, and holds regular (monthly) performances of famous and occasionally original pieces. The Guisoreux orchestra, who are trained in the attached college, perform most pieces, and are occasionally joined by musicians from the university, and the Cathedral choir. More irregularly, the College's Operatic Company will perform for a season of about a month. Tilean Opera is very in vogue at present.

## L'Harlequin

This bar/cabaret is owned and run by a silver-haired man known only as "Master Octarno", whose origins are a subject of much speculation. He is a gifted singer and has travelled widely in the Southern Old World, apparently being court minstrel to the Doge of Miragliano for over a decade at some point. He himself appears to revel in the mystery, and loves to spin tales about his past to patrons of the bar. The bar itself is richly furnished in dark wood and green velvet throughout. Prices here are high, but the

cabaret is indisputably worth it. The best musicians in the city play here, and often travelling Minstrels will make unannounced appearances. Admission is to members only, and membership costs 50 Francs a year.

### The Cavaliers Paramour {*Au cavalier galant*}

This is the place to be seen in Guisoreux. This cabaret/restaurant is run by Maria Delicieux, a stunningly beautiful blonde who men would (and in fact have) fight a duel over. The restaurant is favoured by those of a romantic disposition, and tables are placed at a discrete distance apart. The cabaret, which is performed in a separate bar, is frequently risqué, and features a wide variety of acts. Admission is 4 Francs for non-members, or a year's membership costs 70 Francs. Existing members may bring a guest.

### The Cat and Ribbon {*Le chat au ruban*}

This is a restaurant/hostelry near the centre of La Jongleur. It is owned and run by Anne de Rennoy, a young woman who inherited the establishment from an uncle when she was studying at the university. She immediately dropped her studies to take it over, and through a combination of charm and determination, is able to run the place efficiently and well. The hostelry itself is fairly average quality, with 6 single, 10 double, and 10 large rooms. Anne has a staff of four to run the hostelry. The restaurant, which is entered from the downstairs bar of the hostelry, or through the "back door", is excellent, and a popular place for pre-show meals.

### The Velvet mask {*Le masque de velours*}

This is the city's most expensive brothel, luxurious and discrete. Regular patrons are known by pseudonyms, are sometimes masked (hence the name) and frequently use one of the many back entrances to the building, some of which are streets away, connected by concealed passageways. The brothel's accounts book, giving the actual identities of patrons (not to mention the frequencies of their visits and any unusual preferences) would be worth a considerable amount to the right people, but Veronique Lasousse, the madam, has resisted any offers to divulge its contents.

## **The North Bank:**

### **Delamœn and Blanchemaille**

Delamœn, (or Delamœnia as its more well-to-do residents call it), and Blanchemaille are the areas of the city where the mansions of the nobility and very wealthy are maintained. (Or at least those who are not of sufficient status to merit a mansion on the Ile). Many prefer the mansions here to those on the Ile, despite the lower prestige value, because they are typically less cramped. Some of the mansions have gardens, and the district has wide tree-lined avenues, with houses and gardens protected by walls or railings. Many of the mansions are now empty, or run by a skeleton staff, as their residents have moved to Oisillon. The watch patrols here are quite frequent and will not hesitate to move on "undesirables". Notwithstanding this, break-ins to uninhabited houses are

not uncommon, and the whole atmosphere of the district is of slow decay. By day the district is usually populated only by servants in differing liveries running to and fro, carriages and riders passing through, and some of the residents (always accompanied by bodyguards) out for a walk. By night it is usually quiet, most residents travelling into La Jongleur for a night out or staying in their own homes.

The Blanchemaille riverside is a popular place for promenades, and boatmen hire their services to those wishing to cross the river or travel La Jongleur by boat (far quicker and often more pleasant than travelling by coach or on foot).

### The Star of Bretonnia {*L'étoile*}

Situated in Delamoen, this is one of the City's finest hostelries, and is luxurious and expensive. The rooms are all richly furnished and the service is impeccable. There are 10 single and 10 double rooms. The Star is owned and run by Jeanette Magres, a middle aged widow whose respectability is unquestioned. She has a staff of 8. The bar is open to non-residents.

### Good King Louis {*Le bon Roy Louis*}

This is the most prestigious hostelry in Guisoreux, on the Blanchemaille riverside. It is notoriously expensive, and is reputed to refurbish its rooms each season. Guests here have suites of rooms, and two servants placed at their disposal. The grand ballroom is often used for official functions. Le bon Roy Louis has six suites of rooms, and a staff of sixteen. The proprietor is Gilles de Viroche, a fourth son of a minor member of the gentry.

### Cardinal Dumourieux's palace

The Cardinal's palace is easily the most imposing residence in Blanchemaille district, purchased when its previous owner became bankrupt, and extended and rebuilt by the Cardinal to reflect the importance of his office. It is in the South West corner of the district, overlooked by the Louisian wall, and has gardens extending down to the riverside walk. The Cardinal himself only lives here when his responsibilities in the Administratum require his presence in the city, spending the rest of his time at the Royal Court or in Couronne. The Palace complex also contains the barracks for the Cardinal's Guards, a unit formed to protect the Cardinal in his capacity as Prime Minister (as Shallyan teaching deplores the use of violence even in self defence, the Cardinal could not officially condone the use of bodyguards for himself in his religious capacity).

### The College Ste Laure of Verena

The College is one of the larger buildings in Delamoen district. It is a school run by the temple of Verena for the education of the daughters of the nobility, and attracts students from all over the kingdom. It was founded during the regency of queen Louise la Magnifique, and tends to be traditional and rather backwards-looking. There is a good deal of attention paid to "the accomplishments that befit a lady of noble birth", specifically, etiquette, music, languages, and family

history. Serious academic study is not encouraged except for those with a real aptitude for it. The college aims at forming girls into charming, educated, and, most importantly, marriageable young ladies. It does not seek to turn them into scholars (unlike Ste Joan college in the University, whose graduates the teachers here regard with a certain degree of horror – how many nobles would want a wife demonstrably cleverer than themselves?). Some rivalry exists with the University, but the College's true rival is the Convent Ste Josephine de Shallya.



### The South Bank: Port and Sudpont districts

The south bank is regarded as the less desirable half of the city. For this reason immigrants (both foreigners and those from the provinces, Navarre or Gascogne) often find residences here. By the time they are well-established enough to afford a place on the north bank, most have been thoroughly assimilated. It is invariably busy, with goods and people moving from the docks at its Western end, over the bridge to the north bank and the roads to Bordeleaux and Oisillon or through the Place de Breton, and on to the Porte de l'Est and thence to Marienburg, Parravon, or Altdorf. The Port district to the west contains some housing and workshops, but mainly warehouses and bars. It is also where *Le marché de gros* is found, the city's bulk goods market, which is always full with buyers from various merchant houses, hostelries, and artisans.

Sudpont district is dominated at its western end by the various colleges of the Guisonne University and associated buildings: a number of scriptoriums, printers, and booksellers, and the residences of students and scholars. The area has quite a buzz, by day full of students and scholars travelling from one lecture to the next, and by night full of (frequently drunken) students out for a night on the town. As it gets nearer to *Le Quartier Viaud*, Sudpont becomes less focused on the University, with housing in apartment blocks. Most of the inhabitants are labourers, craftsmen or traders of some kind, and there are

many workshops and yards, making the district even more noisy.

### The Guisonne University

Formed nearly seven hundred years ago, at the same time as the founding of the university of Nuln, the university is famous throughout the Old World for its legal and ecclesiastical scholars, the Faculty de Sorbet. The original university buildings were part of a large Verenan library-monastery complex, but the university now has no direct links to the cult of Verena. The university is seen by the authorities as a potential hotbed of political revolutionaries, radicals, anarchists and idealists (a potential it occasionally realises, though often in unexpected places). They therefore attempt to impose some sort of control over who may teach at the university, and the Viscomte, as the King's representative, convenes the staff disciplinary committee (which has the authority to pass erring staff over to either the secular or ecclesiastical law courts to face charges of heresy or sedition, whichever is more appropriate). The university is divided into several colleges, which are self-contained buildings. The largest colleges are Cardinal college, specialising in Theology, Louisienne college, specialising in Law, and Fontaine college, specialising in Medicine. Ste Joan college, which accepts women only, should also be mentioned.

There is considerable rivalry between colleges. Each college accommodates its own students, and has its own scholars and library. Occasionally it is necessary for students to utilise the facilities of another college, a process that is inevitably problematic and subject to long delays. There are two buildings that are intercollegiate: the Great Hall, and the Chapel. The Great Hall is used for lectures by visiting and occasionally resident scholars. The Chapel, the only university building untouched from its days as a monastery, is a shrine to Verena in her aspect as goddess of Learning, it is used for compulsory morning and evening worship each day (a hang-over from monastic tradition).

### Boatmen's guild

The Boatmen's guild can be found in a backstreet in the Port district. The guild was formed largely as a response to the activities of the Wagoneer's guild. Boatmen are generally independent souls, not given to staying in any one place for too long, but the Wagoneers were threatening to build a monopoly over transportation of goods from Guisoreux. The Boatmen's guild is therefore very unlike any other guild. It exists simply to secure cargoes for its members, though it isn't bothered who those members are, possession of a boat makes you a member. The guild is run by Simon Belmain, a retired Boatman who can be found either in the Hall of Commerce attempting to win cargoes, in the guild office, or in one of the alehouses by the river.

### Oratory to Manann

In a quieter part of Port district is this small building. It has no priest – Manann is not a major deity in a city so far from the sea – but it is visited infrequently by sailors

and boatmen, who offer prayers or offerings. Many of those who make their living through the sea make an offering here occasionally, generally before setting out on a risky voyage. The building is maintained on an ad hoc basis, a group of Guisoreux-based boatmen and their wives keep it clean, and if it is ever in need of major repair the crew of ships in port at the time generally pull the money together from somewhere to do it.

### Crypte de la chimique et épices

This shop in the Port district is a wholesaler of all manner of ingredients, mainly for food. The shop's main customers are hostelries and restaurants, especially chefs seeking unusual spices, however, the shop also stocks spell ingredients for wizards and alchemists, though this aspect of its stock is not highly advertised. This makes its stock (and potential customers) of interest to a number of people within the city. Cardinal Dumourieux has his agents keep track of customers (especially those purchasing ingredients for particularly dangerous spells) as a way of keeping an eye on magic-users within the city. The proprietor, Jenna Dimples, is a halfling and former alchemist's apprentice. She is unaware of the Cardinal's interest in the shop, but has been known to alert witch hunters if she receives enquiries about ingredients needed for dark or necromantic magic. She is always on the lookout for unusual stock, however, and might be interested in buying ingredients from adventurers.

### The Mercenary's guild

This barracks-like building in Sudpont comprises accommodation, common room, and practice yard for independent professional warriors in Guisoreux. The guild is quite informal, and was formed twenty years ago, largely for self-protection, during the conflict between Quissac and Montallier merchant houses. During what amounted to a private war on the streets of Guisoreux many citizens became accidental casualties, and mercenaries as a class were frequently held to blame, occasionally being mobbed by street gangs. Merchants and Nobles wanting to hire Bodyguards frequently call first upon the guild. Any unemployed fighter may take lodging here for 5 pistoles per night. Accommodation is in Spartan dormitories with bunkbeds. There are no meals provided.

### The Fencing School of Master Carpentras

Renaud Carpentras is a gruff Gasconne, a fencing master of the old school, who hold that Bretonnian fencing is the finest in the Old World and that in consequence there is nothing to be learnt from the so-called masters of Tilea and Estalia. Carpentras learnt his skills from De Gris, a famous Bretonnian master, and he in his turn learnt from another, so Carpentras stands at the end of a long tradition of Bretonnian fencing. Carpentras has nothing but contempt for Berant, who he regards as pretentious, and who he suspects of betraying secrets of Bretonnian fencing to foreigners. He also has contempt for those like Master Jandau whose schools he sees as little more than assassin's guilds. His students are fiercely

loyal to him, and duels between students of Carpentras and Berant are common.

### Bookends {*Le café littéraire*}

This is one of the finest quality hostelries in Sudpont, with sixteen rooms and a fair sized stable. The proprietor is Richard Duchamps, an ex-lawyer and graduate of the university. The bar is very popular with scholars, wizards, and the occasional student, who come here to enjoy a relaxed drink and chat.

### The Gowned Monkey {*Le singe savant*}

This Sudpont cabaret and bar is very popular with students. The sign depicts a monkey standing at a lectern wearing the gown, hood and mortar board of a scholar of Cardinal college. The cabaret acts are famous for their satire (often verging on the slanderous) of the university authorities.

### The Quill and Book {*Le livre et la plume*}

This is a scriptorium and booksellers, situated in a backstreet in Sudpont, and run by a Marienburger called Adolphus Schwartz. Adolphus has a small stock of set books from various College courses. He can copy out all or part of these books for students for a moderate charge. Adolphus also has contacts in Marienburg from whom he can attempt to order other books. What is less well known about Adolphus is that he is also one of the most talented forgers in Guisoreux. He supplements his income with productions of passes and letters of authority for various clients.

### Wagoneers guild

The guild building is in Sudpont, between the bridge and the *Place de Breton*. It is quite plain, but has a large courtyard and stables. The guild is an association of wagoneers operating out of Guisoreux, and on good terms with the wagoneers guilds in Marienburg, Parravon and Couronne, and can usually arrange for guildsmen to have loads to carry both to and from these cities. There is some rivalry with the Boatmen's guild, as both must compete for the lucrative orders of the merchant families.

### The South Bank: Vaudois district

Vaudois district is a small area south of Port district and adjacent to the University. Most visitors would simply think of it as part of Sudpont, its streets being much in keeping with those of the neighbouring district, but citizens of Guisoreux know what marks this place out as different. A few centuries ago the whole district was stricken by the plague, killing almost all the inhabitants. Ever since, citizens have claimed that the area is haunted. The reputation of the district is such that many refuse to enter its streets. A native of the city will swear that the streets of Vaudois feel intangibly different (before making the sign of the door and getting out of the district as soon as they can). The streets of Vaudois district are always empty after dark, and even thieves tend to think twice before attempting to burgle a house here. On the other

hand, some welcome the notoriety that comes from dwelling within Vaudois.

### Hautetour

The Hautetour has a grim reputation (only partly due to superstitious citizens) as a haunted building, and one now inhabited by wizards bent on meddling with forces beyond the pale. The tower is four stories high, and quite impressive-looking, visible from the Ile. It was originally part of the city's fortifications, though for mysterious reasons is now a good hundred yards from the city wall (historians maintain that this is because when the Carolingian wall replaced the earlier wall of King Louis, the course of the wall was changed, leaving only the tower as a reminder of where the wall had been, but the citizens prefer the more poetic tale that inhuman forces moved the tower to its current position). It is now the home of Guillaume l'Enchanteur, a third level Wizard, holder of a *Permis de Magique*, who styles himself as the most powerful Mage in Guisoreux. Guillaume has assembled a group of four other mages, two Alchemists, one other Wizard, and an illusionist. The five of them run an unofficial college of Wizardry, and take on ten apprentices a year. Guillaume dreams of having the status of a University College one day, and conducts himself as if it were already true, something resented by University officials. Few knock on the door of the tower by choice except for foolhardy souls seeking to become apprentices, and citizens superstitiously avoid even standing in its shadow.



### La Boite de Pandora

This shop is tucked away in a back-alley in Vaudois, and is rarely stumbled across by accident. Customers usually come here because they have been recommended to try it after searching for something everywhere else in the city. The shop is part junk-shop, part exotic eastern bazaar. Books, boxes, bird-cages, and a hundred and one other items are found stacked in apparently random piles throughout the shop's seemingly endless sequence of rooms. Almost anything can be bought here, and any items should be considered one step more available here. The shop is owned by Lisette Tanguay, a quiet, attractive woman in her twenties with a mysterious and rather shady past. The shop feels like (and in some respects is) the private collection of a compulsive buyer of curios and obscure items. Lisette is well-known amongst traders, merchants, and sailors in the city, and seems to make enough to live on by word of mouth recommendations.

### Picpus Clinic

A well-appointed but discretely secure building in a quiet corner of Vaudois district, the Clinic is an asylum, used by the nobility and merchant classes to shelter relatives who are insane. Here they can be looked after in comfortable surroundings, away from public scrutiny. Few relatives visit inmates once they have been left in the care of the Clinic, and only the family or legal guardian

have the authority to have an inmate released. Many of the inmates are placed here to be conveniently forgotten, and not all may have been insane when they were first sent here (though a year or two locked away in Picpus is likely to change that). The clinic is run by Dr Claude Desmoines, who is interested in researching cures for insanity. The cures he attempts are many and ingenious, but none have thus far been very successful.

### The Conventicle St Antoine

A nondescript building in Vaudois district, the Conventicle is the headquarters of the Order of St Antoine, Verenan clerics who have dedicated themselves to working as witch-hunters. The Conventicle is where their training for this ministry occurs, where they are schooled in the signs of witchcraft, means of conducting exorcisms, and the subtle science of weighing evidence and the statements of witnesses. The order eschews rabble-rousing and torture, and prefers to conduct its business in secret, so that the learned can make sound judgements unswayed by emotional distractions. The conventicle contains dormitories where postulants and members of the order returned from the field may sleep. It also contains very secure cells, guarded night and day by members of the order. Those awaiting trial are kept here. Few outside of the cult of Verena know of the existence of the order, and fewer still know the location of the Conventicle. The head of the order, Father Gilbert Jardine, reports directly to the Cardinal of Verena.

### The South Bank: Le quartier Viaud

Le quartier Viaud is generally agreed to be the oldest part of the city, and is largely made up of middle-class housing. It contains the Place de Breton, site of the famous Guisoreux market, which attracts peddlers from all over Bretonnia, as well as having many permanent stall-holders. The Place is traditionally seen as the centre of the city, and has a massive equestrian statue of Gilles le Breton, the city's most famous son.

### The Temple of Morr

This is a solidly-built low building of a dark stone in *Le Quartier Viaud* maintained by seven clerics under the watchful eye of Cardinal Cicere Marsallas, the mute High priest. The main entrance to the catacombs is situated here. Unlike temples to Morr in the Empire, the temple has several images inside, representations of various martyrs and saints. The faithful often come to offer their intercessions for the departed to those who have places of honour in Morr's kingdom. Although the various high temples of other cults have Saint's relics on display the cult does not, simply displaying images of the deceased. The Temple is essentially a shrine to all the saints, as all are in Morr's care now, even if some go from his kingdom to serve other gods.

Grave robbing has become a significant problem in Guisoreux, and in response to this the Viscomte has established the "Black watch", a group of watchmen whose task it is to patrol the graves by night. The Black watch are based in quarters at the rear of the Temple. In

addition, and less well publicised, the Temple frequently houses templars of Morr of the Raven Knights, recuperating from missions in the field.

### The High Temple of Verena

This imposing building dominates the skyline of *Le Quartier Viaud*. The Temple's four towers give spectacular views across the city, and were reputedly built to rival in height the spire of the Sully Cathedral. The Temple is a beautiful building, and many visitors stand lost for words in the Court de Justice in front of the main entrance, simply admiring the glorious architecture. As well as its beauty, the Temple famously contains the shrine of St Gregorius the Silent, priest of Verena, scholar and judge. Those faced with an intractable problem and needing wisdom often come to touch the saint's reliquary and offer a prayer for guidance. The great library of the Temple, containing many rare and unique volumes is open to students at the University or scholars who make a donation to the Temple funds. The Courts of Ecclesiastical Law, where cases against clergy (of any cult) are heard, are also attached to the High Temple. The Temple is the seat of the Cardinal of Verena, Gibaud de Rennes, who also acts as its High Priest. In practice, however, the Temple is run by the Precentor, Pierre Joplais, as the Cardinal has weightier matters to attend to. Unknown to the general populace, the Order of St Antoine bring suspected witches to the Temple court to face careful examination from their superiors. Such investigations occur at night and are never publicised, to prevent disturbance from the mob. It is possible that the semi-mythical "Iron Brand", if it exists, is guarded in the Temple vaults.



### The Office of the Guisoreux Gazette

The Gazette is a new development, and is really the brainchild of Antoine Chabot, a devotee of the new printing technology. Chabot is rather a maverick, a scholar (but one who did not finish his studies at the university) and a would-be inventor and engineer, who is entirely gripped by the idea of giving information direct to the masses by means of a printed paper. He is perhaps best described as a super-demagogue, whose cause is the dissemination of news and informed discussion to the educated people of the city. Antoine is no democrat, he

does not seek to reach out to the ignorant masses, but to the literate and educated. He does seek, however, to challenge complacent and incompetent authority figures, especially the faculty of the university, and the governor. He employs students to act as reporters, and has been known to reward any citizen who comes to him with a good story. None of this would, however, be possible without the financial backing of Lucien de Pasquier, the Marquis of Ferande. De Pasquier is a long-time rival of the governor, and sees Chabot's Gazette as a means of discrediting Brossard. He exercises little direct editorial control over the paper, but encourages criticism of Brossard.

### The South Bank: Le quartier Berbare

Berbare district is one of the poorer districts in the city, with many guesthouses, and for this reason tends to be home for the city's immigrant population before they are assimilated into the melting pot that is Guisoreux. The residences in this district vary enormously in size and design, and the occupants are likewise varied. The whole district has a slightly bohemian air, and the various inns and restaurants of the area offer a variety of national cuisines. Tileans, Estalians, Wastelanders, Gascognes, Norse and Imperials, all can be found living within a stonethrow of each other. There is a significant Navarrese presence in Berbare, and a (surprisingly) stable gypsy community. The Monalesco family arrived in the city about ten years ago, and have become a permanent fixture, most well-known for their abilities as street entertainers. It is rumoured, however, that many citizens go to "Grandmother" to have their fortune told. The Monalesco family has also carved out a niche for itself in the city's underworld, their reputation as thieves and swindlers is not entirely due to prejudice. Despite the volatile mix of its inhabitants Berbare is a reasonably peaceful district, and fights here are rare.

### The shrine of Sigmar

This small building off one of the streets of Berbare is maintained by Bernhard Mann, a cleric of Sigmar sent here by the Grand Theogonist to care for those of Sigmar's folk who lived in the city. He periodically suffers racist abuse at the hands of Bretonnians as opinion turns against the Empire, and the shrine is regularly defaced. Such occasions give the Brotherhood of the Hammer an excuse to flex its muscles, but Bernhard has little real contact with them or influence over them. Few visit the shrine, and some of the immigrants who do do so under cover of darkness.

### The Homely House

This hostelry is run by six Halflings. It has 6 Single and 10 Double rooms, and the ground floor is a restaurant catering for both residents and non-residents. Pip Rosycheeks, the proprietor and cook is also a cleric of Esmeralda (and unofficial spiritual leader of the halfling community in the city), and her cooking is renowned.



### **Beyond the Walls: The Faubourgs**

The suburbs and slums extend far beyond the city walls, almost to the village of Sarcelles-en-Bretonneux in the north. Collectively they are known as the Faubourgs, though there are identifiable districts within them, the most notorious of which being Le Dédale: the maze, on the south bank. This is largely made up of slum dwellings, and is only rarely patrolled by the watch, and then in daylight and in large numbers. The streets are populated with beggars, street urchins, bawds and whores. By night only the bawds and the whores remain on the streets, and these in the areas nearer the edges of the district. It is the centre of much of the city's underworld activity, and home to the Thieves Guild, or Halegrin. All residents of the maze are suspicious of strangers and prefer not to pry too closely into anyone's business. To the North of the river the worst area is Mendigots or "Beggars" district, which is a slum in even worse condition than the Maze. In some areas of Mendigots district it is impossible to discern streets, as rubble and filth fill the roads, and overflowing cesspits add to the stench. There are areas near the centre of Mendigots that the Watch have never entered. The district is populated by beggars, street urchins, the maimed, workless and homeless. It is a hotbed of insurrection, where agitators are common, and it is from Mendigots that the infamous "Guisoreux Mob" emerges to riot and loot in the streets of the city.

However, the faubourgs are not simply havens of criminals (though this is certainly the perception of the upper classes). Many upright citizens live in the faubourgs, especially in Louffiat. The Louffiat district is situated just outside the city walls at the northern edge of the city. The main Oisillon and Bordeleaux road leads through here, and it is the sight of the starving children of Louffiat (by no means the hardest done-by in Guisoreux) that nobles shut out behind drawn curtains as they rattle past in their coaches on the way to the court. It has long been a lower class residential area, and is a little more well-established and less deprived than the Faubourgs of the South Bank, or Mendigots to the east (indeed it now

has a certain rustic charm about it). It is reasonably quiet during the day, as its inhabitants usually work as casual labourers in the centre of the city. The houses are in reasonably good condition, but quite crowded together, creating many narrow alleyways and enclosed courts. At night, the district can be rougher, as the labourers wander back home via the local alehouse to spend their pay.

The faubourgs are not only frequented by those who live there, many of those who live within the city walls regularly visit the faubourgs, and not only to sample the fleshpots of Le Dédale. Wine is not taxed outside the city walls, therefore people who don't have much money go and drink in the taverns in the faubourgs, and there are many situated by the gates to take advantage of this trade. The wine is usually locally-produced, from vineyards not far from the city. While it tastes all right, it doesn't age well. For some people, however, the cheap wine is a vital source of drink since the city doesn't have limitless supplies of clean water.

### **The Priory of Shallya {Le prioré de Shallya}**

The Priory is a modestly-built complex buried in the middle of the houses of Louffiat. It has a moderately large garden, forming an unexpected open area in the midst of the winding streets. The Priory was established a couple of centuries ago as a place for the cult to take care of the sick and suffering where the noble visitors to the Cathedral did not have to see them. Over the decades it has become a place where the Cult places "difficult" clergy, who refuse to toe the line. Many radical Shallyans have been sent here to be immersed in serving the needs of others (and hopefully to forget any crazy political ideas they may have picked up). It is a complex of low, plain stone buildings within a low garden wall. The Chapel building is the largest building, and incorporates the quarters of the priests and priestesses in its East wing. The other buildings include an orphanage for street children, and an infirmary. The garden in the centre has flowerbeds and a small orchard of apple trees. It is tended by the children of the orphanage, supervised by the blind Brother Paulus. The Prioress is Theresa Rapheloni, a middle-aged matronly Bretonnian of Tilean ancestry. The Priory has many supplicants from the poor of Guisoreux, but few other visitors. Even the Physicians guild maintain only the slightest of contacts (in general they are only interested in procuring the bodies of those about to die of an interesting ailment).

### **The Dove {La colombe}**

The Dove is an average quality hostelry and alehouse, the best in the Louffiat district. It is owned and run by a woman called Pitié, who was a foundling raised at the orphanage. She is a devout follower of Shallya, and says grace before every meal. The Dove has a staff of three, eight single, and eight double rooms. Pitié will only give a double room to those she is sure are married.

### **René's {Chez René}**

René's is an unsavoury-looking inn in the Maze run by a large balding ex-Wrestler called (surprisingly enough) René. Fights are common here, and as a rule René only

intervenes if swords are drawn. He keeps a large club and a loaded blunderbuss under the bar. The inn is a well-known contact place for the Halegrin, who often meet in a back room.

## The Temple of Ranald

The Temple is in the cellar of a run-down shop called "Pierre the Pawnbroker's" in the Maze. It is used by many members of the Halegrin, as well as those within the faubourgs who wish to pray for better fortune. Pierre appears to be an older man, who walks with a cane. He is a fence for the Halegrin, who value his "eye" for valuables. Few know that he is in fact in his thirties, and a level four cleric of Ranald. No one knows that he is also "The Ghost", the infamous cat burglar who has for years plagued the nobles and merchants of Guisoreux. Pierre uses money given to the Temple (as well as that from his own escapades) to distribute to those particularly badly off in the faubourgs (especially families of those imprisoned in the *Fort-de-Justice* or elsewhere). He sees this as part of his service of Ranald the Protector, after all, money offers the best protection of all. These actions have earned him the love and respect of the poor of Guisoreux, and he has little fear of the temple ever being discovered by the authorities. He has some contact with the Indigents of Louffiat, but they maintain their own shrine, and only approach him in cases of emergency.



## The Fort-de-Justice

This massive stone fortress, situated on the south bank just outside the city's east wall, was originally the counterpart of the Grand Chatelet on the north bank, intended to act as a defensive position against attack from the south and east. Now, however, although it continues to house half of the City Garrison troops, its main role is as a huge prison housing some of the most famous prisoners of the kingdom. The prisoners here are generally political ones, the common criminals are housed elsewhere. The fortress is seen as a symbol of the oppression of the poor and is hated by the peasantry. In the Fort, it is rumoured, are cells from which no one has ever come out. The stories of the sadistic torturers of the Fort are legendary. While none of this can be proven, it remains a fact that only three men have ever successfully escaped from confinement here.

## The Catacombs

Beneath the town vast catacombs house the city's dead. The catacombs are ancient, their origins lost in the mists of time, but since anyone can remember they have been watched over by the cult of Morr. They are

accessible from entrances in the temple and a number of shrines throughout the city, where funeral services are held. In the well tended parts priests and acolytes of Morr pace the tunnels and tend to the crypts. What is less well known, however, is the fact that the true extent of the catacomb network is largely unknown. Beyond the most used areas, tunnels wind their way for miles. The catacombs watched over by the cult of Morr comprise only a small area of a maze of interconnected passageways and chambers constructed for a multitude of purposes by a multitude of different tunnelers. The most obvious of these underground networks being of course the city's sewer system. It intersects with the older catacombs at many points, though in theory any direct connections between the city's graves and its sewer system have long been sealed up.

Nearly every house in Guisoreux has a cellar, though in practice the less privileged households of the city tend to place less value on the correct storage of classic vintages; more often than not they are used to provide cramped and cheap accommodation, often for students (in fact, it is from this common use of subterranean rooms that students have acquired their nickname to the public: *les taupes* – 'the moles') who appreciate being able to hide their indulgences from the gaze of decent society. Fairly common too are underground passages which run between blocks of houses, entered from cellars or semi-secret entrances (sometimes through fountains, innocuous side doors, trapdoors in alleyways and even, if you don't mind the smell, a privy). Rich merchants pay to have a private tunnel put in from their house, ostensibly to go to worship or save themselves from the hazards and exertions of open air travel; in reality, they feel the need for an emergency escape route from the mob. It is no secret that such access points to the catacombs exist which are not guarded by the cult, but everyone prefers to believe that the network of passages is less well-used and less extensive than is in fact the case. After all, no-one likes to think that the trapdoor in their cellar might be all that separates them from gangs of Grave-robbers or worse. The majority of people are familiar with only a small number of tunnels used for regular journeys; it is good sense not to divulge the secrets of the tunnels to all and sundry. Robberies and rapes frequently take place in the darkened tunnels, and a fair number of people have simply gone into one tunnel and never come out the other end. Rumours abound of pale-faced gangs of cut-throats, apparently calling themselves *les fossoyeurs* ('the gravediggers') who work exclusively in the tunnels, digging their own secret passages to break into other, normally safe routes. But those who have looked into the many darker corners of Guisoreux's hidden labyrinth hear of far more exotic and dangerous things than a few footpads lurking in burrows.

Few citizens would know that there are actually no less than six rivers and streams that flow into the Ois in Guisoreux; four to the north of the Ois, two to the south. The names of only three are remembered: the Erc and the Guif to the north, and the Chandet to the south. All have long been sealed off and channelled into the sewage system, but a few scavengers still make a living ferreting in them for trinkets. Whole streets have simply collapsed into the ground in some areas, as the combined effects of

poor drainage, flooding and excessive tunnelling take their toll and those who survive quickly rebuild on top. These streets - and their skeletal inhabitants - can be found by those who search hard enough, still recognisable as homes and businesses.

For centuries these tunnels have been used as meeting places for those who seek to escape the prying eyes of the King's authority. Clandestine affairs, secret business deals, treacherous plots, drug-crazed orgies, all have taken place in the catacombs. Thieves, students, rakes, and lovers routinely use the passages nearer the surface to pass the Louisian wall at night for their various purposes. Stories of escaped prisoners who still wander the catacombs seeking a way out are legion. Elsewhere, where light never challenges the dark and slithering things feast on unguarded bodies, chaos and evil make their home.

## The Underworld

Criminal activity in Guisoreux is dominated by two main groups: *The Halegrin*, or Thieves Guild, who operate out of the Maze, and the *Chiens Noires*, or Black Dogs, who dominate the North Bank of the city, though have their power base in Mendigots. The Halegrin are a traditional "gentlemen's organisation" who enforce "Thieves law" in all areas of the city that they can. This essentially entails non-interference in any operation by guild members, protection of guild members, and a tithe of 20% of the profits to be paid to the guild. They seek to control burglaries and organised theft (petty theft doesn't really concern them), racketeering, smuggling, counterfeiting, drugs, and prostitution. They do not condone excessive violence, and will actively seek to eliminate known cut-throats and murderers. They have a nominal allegiance to the cult of Ranald, though in most cases this is mere lip service. The Halegrin are led by a slim innocuous looking man known only as "*L'Arabe*". The guild has a finger in most pies, but is facing a serious threat from the Chiens Noires. The Black Dogs are a gang (though verging on the size of a small army) who draw their members from the poorest of the poor. They are involved in smuggling, and are notorious for their racketeering. Many members of the Black Dogs also act as footpads throughout the whole North Bank. They have none of the scruples of the Halegrin and no religious affiliation (though some may worship Khaine). They are led by *Jaq "the Knife"*, who dreams of forcing the Halegrin out of the south of the city and effectively ruling the streets. Jaq is not committed to any of the pseudo-revolutionary groups based in Mendigots, but is in broad sympathy with them.

A few more more minor groups should also be mentioned. The Mendigots or beggars themselves are a force to be reckoned with, forming a beggar's guild, they call themselves *the Argotes*, from the Argot that they speak, and are lead by the Grand Coesre. The Argotes act mainly to protect each other from the more violent residents of the district, but are also an efficient spy network, selling information to the Chiens Noires and the Halegrin. The "*Indigents*", or "poor men" are cultists of Ranald the protector, based in Louffiat. These cultists

have strong links to some of the agitators in the city, though tend to advocate a more subtle opposition to the authorities than the wholesale slaughter advocated by many. There is a degree of mutual respect between them and the Halegrin, and an established enmity with the Chien Noires. The Indigents are particularly concerned to protect the sisters at the Priory from attacks by the Black Dogs, a situation that is inherently embarrassing for the Prioress.

Finally, the *Monalesco* gypsy family have established themselves within Barbare, earning the grudging respect of the Halegrin. They generally confine themselves to theft and charlatanry, though they also organise a modest amount of smuggling. Like the Halegrin, they eschew violent crime, though are more than ready to defend themselves against aggressors.

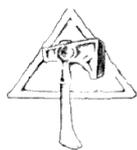


## Secret Societies

There are a number of secret societies that meet in Guisoreux, most famously within the catacombs, but there are other places. Some of these societies have an affiliation to Chaos, but others have no such "cultic" aspect. Most of these groups are either anarchist or orgiastic in nature. It is important to bear in mind in both cases that although there may be a broad similarity between such groups and cults of Slaanesh and Tzeentch in the vast majority of cases there is no direct connection. Scions of noble and merchant houses with lots of money and few responsibilities are likely to indulge in drinking, sex and drug-taking, because they can, and they are likely to do it in secret so their parents will not cut off their allowance. Similarly, in a despotic monarchy there are many people who for a variety of motives will plot to bring it down. No secret machinations of the chaos gods are necessary to explain these groups. Players with experience of chaos cultists in the Empire, however, will probably jump to conclusions. This mismatch between expectation and reality makes for good play, and should not be discouraged.

*Le club de l'enfer* (The Hell club) is a dangerous anarchist organisation centred in Guisoreux, though with agents throughout Bretonnia. The members tend to be upper of middle class, and they are lead by an aristocrat called Charles du Breuil, who for personal reasons has become implacably opposed to the Bretonnian monarchy. The group meet wearing KKK style black robes, often in the catacombs, plotting the downfall of the King.

Ultimately they seek to end Le Breton's line, and perhaps the entire monarchical system, and they have several schemes afoot to bring them closer to this goal. What (if anything) they would seek to raise up in the place of the monarchy is unclear (and in all probability different members of the group would have different ideas, ranging from anarchy to dictatorship). The group's symbol is the black sun.



**The brotherhood of the hammer** is an anarchist group loosely associated with the small and persecuted Sigmarite community in the city. In fact, it has very little connection with the cult or any recognisable Sigmarite teachings. The group is comprised of young men of Imperial, Wastelander, or Border Princes origin. They consider themselves "spiritual" or "true" Unberogens, brothers of Sigmar. Although originally formed as a vigilante group to protect Imperial immigrant communities, they now simply get together as a gang and pick fights with Bretonnians (ie most of the inhabitants of the city). This anti-social but relatively harmless approach has changed in recent years due to the influence of Anders Doort, a Wastelander who has effectively become the leader of the brotherhood. Anders claims to be an agent of the Emperor, and has led the group in missions designed to destabilise Royal authority within the city and the Kingdom as a whole. Unbeknown to the brotherhood, Anders is actually an agent of Cardinal Dumourieux, who is using the group for his own ends.



**The "Pushers of the wheel"** are a large rag-tag group formed from the very dregs of Guisoreux's poor. It is the "Pushers" who form the core of the feared "Guisoreux mob". The members of this group are the disaffected and desperate, and tend to fall in behind whoever the demagogue of the day might be. The "Pushers" is simply the latest in a series of such groups that have arisen when a gifted agitator has started stirring up feelings in the faubourgs. Usually such groups build themselves up to the point when they rampage through the city, looting and destroying. When the watch and city garrison crush the mob, and the agitator is executed, the survivors retreat back to Mendigots to lick their wounds and wait for the next time. The "Pushers" are centred around Brother Hugh of Couronne, a gifted demagogue who used to be a priest of Verena. He believes that Verena's justice can

only come if the people rise up and seize it for themselves.

## Princes, paupers and prelates

Who to know (and pretend not to know) in Guisoreux

### Blaize, Duc de Guisoreux

The King's Uncle is Duc de Guisoreux, and rules over the Duchy of Guisoreux (ie the lands east of Guisoreux, not the city itself). Since the end of the regency, he has retired into virtual obscurity on his estate, and is rarely seen either at court in Oisillon, or in Guisoreux, though he maintains a mansion on the Ile. It is rumoured that he is on bad terms with his nephew the King, which could explain his low profile. He is still a relatively vigorous man of fifty, but has no heir, so when he dies his lands will revert to the royal domain. Despite his infrequent appearances he remains well loved by the people, who see him as a fair ruler.

### Victoire Breville, Viscomte de Brossard, Governor of the city

The city is still officially the capital, and therefore ruled directly by the King. However, being too busy hunting, fishing and partying hard to actually do much of this boring ruling business, he has a governor to do the menial job of performing his ceremonial duties.

Brossard was appointed to rule Guisoreux by Charles III in the year of his accession to the throne. Being a scion of a minor branch of the Blois family with a complete lack of ambition he was seen as a safe pair of hands for this onerous duty. However, like many other royal governors, the aged Brossard is ill-suited for the position. The Viscomte's wits have begun to wander and he is publicly derided by those about him (though not within his somewhat poor hearing) and through him it is the king that is being criticised. His position seems quite secure nonetheless, an important fact being that the governorship of Guisoreux is seen as something of a poisoned chalice at court. For one thing it requires you to live in Guisoreux (and the whole point of moving the court was to avoid ever having to smell the place ever again), and for another, the city is all but ungovernable. Theoretically the governor exercises absolute authority in the City, however, as a Viscomte, he has little personal power relative to the City's other powerful residents.

### Henri Armagnac Dumourieux, Prime Minister, Cardinal of Shallya

The Cardinal is one of the most powerful inhabitants of the city. He has official duties at the Administratum which keep him tied to the city, though he is often at court, close to the centre of power. However, he is also convinced that Guisoreux, and its volatile population, is key to the control of Bretonnia as a whole. It is here that subversive ideas originate and subversive people congregate. One who would rule must keep a careful eye on Guisoreux. The Cardinal is also Dean of Cardinal College at the University. As a Cardinal, he is outside

Royal authority (at least in theory), although his devotion to the King and his personal integrity are unquestioned (at least in public).

### Daniel Talbot, Archbishop of Myrmidia

A devoted follower of Myrmidia since his youth, Talbot is a man of fifty who still routinely defeats initiates in swordplay. Talbot is officially the High Master of the Cathedral-Academy, and acts as an advisor to the King on military matters. His influence is, however, limited by the personal antipathy between himself and the Marshal of Bretonnia, François de Semblancy. His refusal to support the De Semblancy, the cult's traditional political allies, has made him many enemies within the cult (including the Cardinal). As a result, he is only rarely at the Oisillon Palace.

### Gibaud De Rennes, Cardinal of Verena

The Cardinal is Chancellor of the University, and Supreme Justice of the Courts Ecclesiastical, in theory holding the authority to prosecute any cleric (of any cult) in the country. He is in his fifties, an aristocratic-looking man, who dresses in the simple robes of a Verenan scholar-priest, though always of the finest material and tailoring. He cultivates the image of a rather otherworldly scholar, always far more interested in the minutiae of the past than in the here and now. In fact, he is a shrewd reader of the political scene. He is very wary of Dumourieux and his political ambitions, but is at pains to avoid any direct confrontation. De Rennes reveres Verena in her aspect as "The Eternal Light of Justice", following an obscure theological tradition that sees Verena as the guarantor of stability and well-being in society. In essence, De Rennes is actually worshipping Alluminas, and his concerns are primarily to preserve the status quo and avoid disruption and change in the social system. He is conservative by natural inclination and conviction, and very concerned to maintain the position of the King against those who might threaten it. Despite his conservatism, he is willing to take drastic action if necessary, as long as he judges that the disruption caused by his actions will be less than that he seeks to prevent.

### Cicere Marsallas, Cardinal of Morr

The Cardinal is a devout and austere man of advanced (though unguessable) age. Formerly a monk in a contemplative order attached to the Cult, Marsallas is mute, communicating when necessary by writing on a small slate in chalk. Of undoubted holiness, Marsallas is far removed from political concerns, and resents the occasions when he has to travel to Oisillon. He should not be thought of as blind to political machinations within the cult, however. He is very aware of the various clerics seeking to replace him, and is very willing to intervene in any cases where he suspects a cleric of heterodox practices. Marsallas takes his responsibilities as watchman of the Kingdom's dead very seriously, and is swift to act on any rumours of necromancy or undead activity.

### Dr Guillotine

The ingenious Dr Guillotine is a rather eccentric professor of Medicine at Cardinal college. A notoriously abstract thinker, he has been known to refer to patients as "impaired machines" to their faces, and sees his work purely in terms of maximising the efficient functioning of the human machine. Dr Guillotine's fondness for mechanics has led to his most famous creation: the "guillotine", which he maintains is the most efficient way of permanently ending the functional capacity of the human machine, and certainly far more dignified than all those messy axes, which are frankly barbaric. The governor has been making a great deal of use of the newly invented guillotine to quell dissent among the poor, and the king himself viewed the first demonstration of its efficiency.



### Henry Rolland

Henry Rolland, who represents the Artisans and Merchants Guilds, holds much of the power amongst the small middle-class. However, he is not personally the most powerful of Guisoreux's merchant princes, and there are several members of the Merchant's guild more powerful and rich than he is. Rolland holds on to his position largely through force of personality (he has a tendency to play up the trappings of power, making himself appear more important than he really is), and through the support of House Montallier. He is not particularly capable, and tends to simply act as a puppet of François Montallier. In an area where Montallier has no interest, Rolland's own petty and vindictive nature tends to guide his actions. In any decision where he has freedom of action he is notoriously susceptible to both bribes and flattery, but has a long memory, and will often act against anyone who has slighted him in the past.

### Sire Jerome Dubras, Garrison Commander

Jerome is the commander of the City Garrison, a veteran soldier from a lesser noble family. He worked his way through the ranks, eventually being knighted at the age of 30. He has fought in more battles than he cares to remember, and few of them have been clean fights against another army, most have been suppressing peasants. In campaigns like these, Jerome learnt to fight dirty. He is a tough fighter, respected by his men, and feared by the general populace. He is quite grim and taciturn, a look

enhanced by his scars and the patch he wears over his right eye. He neither takes nor leaves captives, looking on the city as a battlefield. As far as he is concerned, if his men have to be sent in, anyone wandering the streets is a fair target.

### Luc Seigny, Watch Commander

Luc is a straight-forward, no-nonsense man from a lower-class background who has worked his way up through the ranks. His post is not one coveted by many, and he is quietly efficient, meaning that he is fairly secure. He has taken advantage of this by using what opportunities come his way to embezzle funds for himself. He refuses to take bribes, as he realises that this would give someone a hold over him, and this has falsely given him the reputation of being incorruptible. He is fawningly deferential to nobles in their presence, but often ridicules them behind their backs.

### François Montallier



François is indisputably the richest man in Guisoreux. House Montallier has trading links with almost every country in the known world, and dominates the Merchant's guild. The family mansion is one of the largest in Blanchemaille district, previously the ancestral home of a duke.

François is the proud patriarch of the House, expecting deference from all, and always lending money to bankrupt nobles (in return for certain considerations: "one good turn deserves another" as François says). He is rumoured to be involved in smuggling operations in Guisoreux, having links with the Halegrin, and, even more notoriously, to be involved in grave robbery. Naturally, nothing has been proved, François keeps the best lawyers in Guisoreux on an annual retainer. House Montallier is also renowned for its long-standing enmity towards house Quissac.

### Simon Quissac

Simon is the head of House Quissac, the second largest merchant family in Guisoreux. He was the second son, and wasn't expected to inherit, being sent out on trading ventures as a young man, even travelling as far as New Coast. However, his elder brother Richard was assassinated in the same attack that killed his father Jean. No one was prosecuted for the murders, but it was widely known that the perpetrators were House Montallier. The two Houses have been in conflict for centuries. House Quissac was originally the more powerful, but following the Merchant Wars of Guisoreux it has been eclipsed by House Montallier. Although open warfare has not broken out for several decades, assassination and sabotage is still relatively common on both sides. Simon is a fairly easy going man, and quite friendly, but he is determined to avenge the deaths of his father and brother.

## The Military and Guisoreux's defence

Guisoreux has always been strategically important due to its position guarding the Guisoreux gap. It is therefore the base for a number of military units, as well as being home to various prestigious guards units. Off-duty soldiers are a common sight in Guisoreux, as (in the more well-to-do areas) are off-duty guardsmen and military officers. Many of these units have long-standing rivalries, and duels are not uncommon. Such duels of honour between members of rival regiments are officially condemned by senior officers but unofficially encouraged.

Guisoreux used to be a fortress city, but nowadays the walls are not well maintained. Threats are now more likely to come from the volatile population rather than an invader. Although it is quite rare for the army to become involved in police actions, the City Garrison are regularly used to reinforce the city watch. The army is however used to being called in whenever the Guisoreux mob is rallied by some rabble rouser and a major riot is in the offing. On such occasions the army is given free reign, and usually put down the disturbances with considerable brutality. Good citizens are sometimes left wondering whether they and their property would have been safer in the hands of the mob. The Viscomte regards a few innocent bystanders killed and/or raped and some minor housebreaking to be a small price to pay for the restoration of order.

### The City Garrison

The garrison is made up of professional mercenary troops from a variety of backgrounds. The bulk of the garrison are Tilean mercenary companies, and Imperial Landsknechts, though there are a sprinkling of Estalians too. They answer to the Governor, and are always commanded by a minor member of the nobility. The post is not much coveted, and generally goes to a second or third son trying to make a career in the military. The garrison primarily patrol the walls, though they also patrol the main streets, and have legal status as watchmen. They are distrusted and feared by the local populace, in part because of their foreign origins, but also because of their role in providing "muscle" for the watch.

### The Standing Army

The Royal army of Bretonnia is based in the Chateau of Lunéville 5 leagues away from the city. The troops are Bretonnians, and are professionals, trained to a high standard. In time of war these troops form specialised units or command militia infantry. The army is located in several fortresses throughout Bretonnia, but the core unit, the Royal Dragoons, are stationed here. The army is under the command of Count Bernard de Vennoy, Lord High Constable of Bretonnia, who outranks the Viscomte and is answerable only to the King. For this reason the army is only rarely used in police actions. The Dragoons are well known for their brutality, but this is generally seen as something to their credit, driving fear into the hearts of Bretonnia's enemies.

## The Governor's guard

The small guards unit is made up of Switzer mercenaries. They are usually employed to defend the Palais-Royal, though also function as a bodyguard for the Governor. There is a degree of tension between the Governor's Guard and the Musketeer Cadets, who have overlapping responsibilities. Generally, however, the social class differences between the two preclude duels. Brawls between members of the Governor's Guard and the City Garrison, however, are relatively common.

## The Musketeer Cadets

The Cadets are an elite unit, who form the King's personal bodyguard, and before the move of the court to Oisillon were responsible for the defence of the Palais-Royal. Their headquarters is still in Guisoreux, and they still have a nominal duty to defend the palace, though in practice this simply involves sending someone to stand on duty at the gates. The Cadets are exclusively drawn from the nobility, and are under the direct command of the King, whose life they are sworn to die defending. They have a long-standing rivalry with the Cardinal's guard.

## The Cardinal's Guard

The Cardinal's guard are an elite unit of troops who act as the Cardinal's personal bodyguard and also defend the Cathedral. For obvious reasons none are devout followers of Shallya, and most are simply professional soldiers. They are only 30 in number, and are under the Cardinal's direct command, acting only to defend the Cathedral and Cardinal's Palace, the contingent here also provide the Cardinal with a bodyguard for his trips to Oisillon. There is another contingent based in Couronne guarding the Palace and Cathedral there. They have a long-standing rivalry with the Musketeer Cadets.

## City Watch

The City Watch are charged with patrolling the City's streets and maintaining law and order. They are recruited from the local populace and lightly armed. The watch is roughly 800 strong, and patrols are of four to seven men. In the event of serious disturbances the watch are strengthened by units from the City garrison. The watch are based in the Watch Barracks building in Bassin district. The watch commander is under the authority of the garrison commander and the Viscomte. The watch are very deferential to anyone who looks wealthy, and generally obnoxious to everyone else. Most watchmen are from the lowest classes of society, and are notorious for their corruption and cruelty. The watch sergeants tend to be more reliable. The watch will intervene in any armed conflict or one involving more than two combatants or a member of the well to do classes. Duels are technically illegal, but unless a watch sergeant is present a patrol is unlikely to prevent anyone looking wealthy from duelling. Duels between members of military units are a different matter, the watch will be quite eager to arrest any of these self-styled "professionals".

## City Militia

The City Militia are a very different body to the Watch, formed by concerned citizens who deplored the ineffectiveness of the watch. They are semi-professional and from a bourgeois background. They only patrol the middle-class residential districts and the dockyards and warehouses. Those who are scruffily dressed are far more likely to have a hard time from the militia. Well-dressed and well-spoken people (and in particular members of the armed forces (but not the City Garrison)) are likely to be treated better. Foreigners are more likely to be treated sympathetically by the militia than by the watch (in that the militia are less likely to assume they must be troublemakers and arrest or lynch them immediately).

## The City Walls



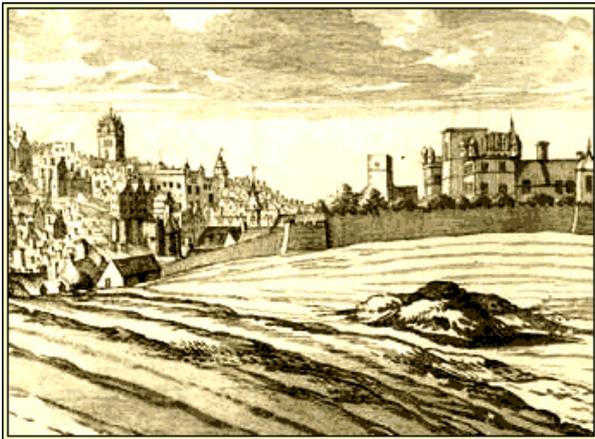
The original city walls, erected by King Louis VI le Bel some 900 years ago, have by now been largely replaced by the New Walls of Edouard I, built 400 years ago, which slightly extended them and strengthened them. Militarily, however, the walls are now largely redundant. The faubourgs have extended a considerable distance beyond them, so that almost half the city's population would have to abandon their homes in the event of a siege, further crowding the population within the walls. Unless the faubourgs and their population were completely abandoned to the mercies of the enemy (a not unrealistic option, given the typical Bretonnian attitude to the lower classes) Guisoreux is no longer capable of withstanding a siege. The city gates are closed at eight each night until six the following morning. Once the gates are closed they will only be opened for members of the watch,

Templars, Royal Guard, Garrison troops, and those with written authority from the Viscomte, the Cardinal, or the King. The walls may have ceased to be a viable defensive system, but they still impede passage through the city for those who do not know where the gates are.

The walls are generally in a reasonable state of repair, but there are places where the facing has worn away to such a degree that they can be scaled with relative ease. In addition, there are a number of inns and other buildings that straddle the walls, allowing patrons to leave on a different side to the one they entered. The city garrison are supposed to patrol the walls, but this duty is now largely symbolic, and often not undertaken at all. Garrison troops are more likely to be found standing guard at gatehouses than marching up and down battlements. The governor has requested funds from the royal treasury to repair the walls, but this is not considered a priority (certainly nothing to take precedence over a good palace ball) and the request has got lost somewhere in the royal administration. In any case, everyone knows the primary military threat in Guisoreux is that its uncontrolled rabble will burn the place down, not that it will fall to some foreign invader !

# The Beast of Guisoreux

A WFRP adventure by Mark Saunders



## Setting the scene

The PCs arrive in Guisoreux to find the whole city buzzing about just one thing: the beast.

Guisoreux is being terrorised by a mysterious and gruesome murderer, known only as "La Bête" - the beast. The victims are always women, who are strangled with red silk scarves, and have their hearts cut out. The beast strikes every three days, and has claimed six victims so far. The first five were nobodies: prostitutes and beggar-women. This meant that the lowlifes were terrified, but the upper classes didn't really take notice. The sixth victim has changed this trend, however; she is Elise Croisy, a gentle-born medical student from the College de St Joan, killed the night before the PCs arrive in town. The whole city is now in uproar.

The common people know that nothing has been done because nobody cares what happens to them, and see the entire incident as showing the injustice of society. Many women are now terrified to leave their homes at night. A rumour is circulating that the beast is some perverted aristocrat who gets his kicks out of strangling women. They point out, with some justification, that no common killer could afford six silk scarves. Agitators exacerbate the fear and resentment felt on the streets, creating a high level of tension throughout the city. PCs may see mobs throwing rotten fruit at nobles' coaches, or the watch beating up an agitator.

The gentry and rich merchant classes are demanding that something be done about the beast, and believe the incident serves to highlight how dangerous the city is becoming, and just how incompetent the watch is. They are now beginning to travel with bodyguards. The university authorities have imposed strict curfews on students (which are largely ignored). The prevailing belief amongst the upper classes is that the beast is one of the revolting masses, or perhaps a gang of them, and that the most effective solution to the problem is to send the city garrison in to remove undesirables from the city.

Watch Commander Luc Seigney is at his wits' end. He has doubled the size of night-time patrols in most districts of the city (much to the disgust of members of the watch, who aren't getting much sleep). He is coming under increasing pressure to resolve the situation or it will

be taken out of his hands. Seigney knows that any use of the garrison troops would probably make the whole situation explosive – surely bringing open warfare to the streets of the city. The unfortunate Commander's troubles are compounded by the rumour that the watch is in some way behind the killings – which explains their inability to stop them.

Major underworld figures, especially *L'Arabe*, are concerned that in the current climate the city garrison could be sent in to clear out The Maze and other disreputable areas. While the *Chiens Noires* welcomes the chance for a brawl with the Garrison troops generally, the idea of units of professional mercenaries systematically destroying large swathes of the faubourgs is not one relished by its inhabitants. *Jaq* is not quite prepared for a full-scale war with the powers that be. In addition to these concerns, the beast's reign of terror is discouraging the well-to-do from venturing out at night. Brothels and gambling dens are suffering, prostitutes are getting killed, and the wealthy are not leaving houses empty at night. In short, it's bad for business.

Either Luc Seigney or *L'Arabe* could approach the PCs with an offer of a reward if they can stop the beast. Pick whichever patron the PCs are likely to respond to best. If the PCs are truly noble (or suckers for a good sob story) you could also have them be approached by Henri Croisy, Elise's father, mourning his daughter, and demanding justice.

## The truth about the beast

The beast is actually the product of a Khornate cult in Guisoreux. Cults of Khorne usually do not manage to stay secret for long, erupting in a frenzy of violence sooner or later, and this is what is about to happen eventually to this cult. The cultists call themselves "*The Brothers of the Blood*", and are a group of six young men from Guisoreux's upper and middle classes. Their leader is Stephen Montalier, eldest son of the merchant prince Francis. The six are all students at the University, and unlike their friends who engaged in sex, drug-taking, and wild partying, they took an oath to explore the most extreme experience of all: death. Stephen, a student of Dr Guillotine, had long been fascinated by public executions. He used to read last testimonies of murderers, talk to executioners, and dissect corpses. He came to believe that killing and being killed were profound spiritual experiences, and that powerful supernatural energies were released by it. As a medical student, he sought a biological basis for this, and believed that he would find it in the nature of blood. He was a gifted student, and Dr Guillotine allowed him access to restricted and heretical books in his study of blood. In these books, Stephen found the information he was seeking. There was power in the blood of the freshly killed, and secret Khornate rituals allowed the killer to unleash it. Shortly after, the brotherhood was formed. Their first victims were nameless beggars, caught, brought back to the laboratory, and ritually killed. The brotherhood found that drinking the blood gave them an indescribable rush. But Stephen was not content. The books he had read hinted at more intense experiences still. He needed more information than he could get from Guillotine. He arranged a trip to

Marienburg to study there for six months, and while there somehow unearthed the knowledge he needed. Stephen met with a Khornate cultist, and promised his soul to Khorne in return for a ritual that would give him the intense experience he craved.

Stephen returned to Guisoreux 19 days ago. He initiated the other members of the brotherhood into the worship of Khorne, and explained the ritual he had been taught. They would kill a young girl every third day by ritually strangling her, cutting out her heart and bringing it to Stephen to eat, until all of them had killed. The cycle would then begin again, and they would kill every second night. Finally they would kill a girl every night. When Stephen eats the eighteenth heart, he will receive the gift he has been promised. Stephen killed the first girl himself, a whore at the Docks. He found that Khorne granted him strength in the killing, and an intense rush. The others have felt a similar sensation, and the brotherhood call the experience “the bleeding”.

Elise was killed by Roger de Noirforte, the youngest member of the brotherhood. He is a liberal arts student at Cardinal college, intending to take up law. He had been uncertain of the new direction in which Stephen was taking the group, and went out drinking with friends, including Elise, on the night he was to kill for the brotherhood. They were fooling around, singing and making a nuisance of themselves on the way back, and were chased by the watch. The group became separated, but Roger and Elise stayed together, dodging down the back alleys of *La Jongleur*. Roger felt the rush of the bleeding coming on him and its effect, combined with the alcohol, was enough to seriously excite him. He raped Elise, but finding that the Blood God’s influence was too strong, he took out his ritual scarf and strangled her, before cutting out her heart, wrapping it in her cloak and running back to the laboratory. None of the rest of the brotherhood are aware that the killing was so irregular, though they are shocked and impressed at Roger for taking things a stage further and increasing the intensity of the killing by picking someone he knew. Roger himself has been overcome by guilt. The cycle of killings has been completed once, and it is Stephen’s turn to kill again now, two days after the last killing. The ritual murders are beginning to have a physical effect on him now as he begins to show signs of his corruption. Although he does not know it, the ritual will in time transform him into a Bloodletter. Stephen has already become uncannily strong and fast, his eyes have a red glint, and his skin is beginning to take on a strange texture. As a result, he is not leaving his rooms except at night to go down to the laboratory for the ritual.

### The plot thickens...

The last few weeks have also seen another new arrival in the city : Brother Hugh de Couronne. Brother Hugh is a gifted demagogue, a heretic and ex-priest of Verena. Appalled at the injustices done by the nobility, he called for observation of the spirit rather than the letter of the law, and questioned the doctrine of “absolute favour” that the Bretonnian cult holds to (this is the belief that a properly crowned King enjoys Verena’s absolute favour as the supreme guarantor of justice in the Kingdom). He

was declared a heretic, excommunicated, and handed over to the secular authorities for trial as a traitor. However, before he could be executed, he was freed by the peasants who heard him speak at his trial. Brother Hugh is now an outlaw and a wanted man. His views have hardened in the light of his experiences, he calls for the establishment of true justice by overthrowing the nobility. He calls on the poor to unite and claim their destiny as the “sword of Verena”, sweeping away corruption and injustice. The moment has come for “the turning of the wheel”, when the oppressors will be trampled under the people’s feet. Hugh is hidden somewhere in the Faubourgs, where he finds a ready audience for his views. News of his presence has, however, spread throughout the city. Some in the upper classes believe that Hugh is behind the murders; he arrived in the city at about the time they began, and he has made no secret of his approval of violent action to hasten the moment of the turning of the wheel.



### Days 1&2: The game’s afoot...

It is assumed that the PCs are contacted and begin investigations on day 1, the day after Elise was murdered.

### The bodies

The PCs will have no real leads initially. Obvious things to investigate are the bodies and the scenes of the crimes. The only body that remains unburied is Elise’s, and her family has possession of it. Examining it will require good roleplay – above all, a concern to respect her dignity throughout.

Assuming the PC’s can examine the body, they will find that she has been strangled and had her heart cut out. A successful Int roll by a character with some medical

knowledge (Heal Wounds skill) will confirm that she was strangled to death first, then had her heart cut out. The murderer was no surgeon, and the cuts are messy. The body has been washed, so little else can be discovered. Talking to either the watch or her parents also elicits the information that she was raped before being killed, and that her cloak (black with a butterfly brooch fastening) was missing. The watch can take PCs to the scene of the crime, but little can be found there beyond bloodstains.

The previous victims were nobodies, and little can be gained from attempting to trace them if the PCs try (though feel free to throw in details of the squalor and poverty in which these women lived if they do try to trace them). The watch can tell them, however, that none of the previous victims (the majority of whom were prostitutes) appear to have been raped. The scenes of the previous crimes varied and followed no discernible pattern (though feel free to show PCs five points at random in *Berbare*, *Sudpont*, *Le quartier Viaud*, and *La Jongleur*. A particularly vigorous interrogation of watch officers also reveals that some of the bodies showed signs of more expert heart-removal than others. The first in particular appeared to be done by a skilled surgeon. The watch attach no importance to either of these two facts.

The scarves are very fine quality, and, if the PCs take the time to track them down, they can determine that they were probably sold by the exclusive tailors *Besance & Roue*, whose premises are in the *Northpont* district. The shop's clientele is made up of the wealthiest nobles and merchant princes in Bretonnia. Louis Besance can confirm that they sell the blood-red scarves, and can reveal the prohibitive price at which they are sold, but cannot narrow down the list of potential customers much. He refuses to divulge who his customers are on principle (though he has exact records of who has bought what), but will tell his questioners that they have been bought by around twenty of the wealthiest families in the kingdom. (In fact, Louis can be more exact if he is leaned on heavily, but this will require authority from someone more exalted than a mere group of adventurers: there are only three households in Guisoreux who have bought the scarves, and only one who has bought more than five. House Montalier had bought three of the scarves about a year ago. A few weeks back (the day after Stephen returned from Marienburg) a servant put in an order for twenty.)

## Elise

The best leads the PCs have at present point them to the university and the Guild of Physicians, Surgeons, and Apothecaries. All they will have to go on is that Elise's killing (although clearly following the same pattern) was different to the others, and that the killer (or killers, if they believe there may be more than one) might be a surgeon.

Elise was a medical student at the College de St Joan. From talking to friends, PCs will be able to establish that she was a mediocre student, but popular, and like most students liked to party hard in the city at night. She had no known partner, but several close friends (one of whom is Roger de Noirforte – but don't mention his name except in a list with others). On the night of her murder she was

drinking out in *La Jongleur* with a group of six or seven others. On their way back to the university, rather the worse for wear, someone started throwing stones at windows on the way. By the time they crossed the path of a watch patrol they were having a shouting match with half the street. The watch pursued them, and they split up. Luc d'Orblienue was caught by the patrol, fined for disturbing the peace, and let go. The others got back without being caught. None of them saw anyone else until the next morning, when they heard that Elise was dead. Don't make much of Roger at this point – if questioned he says the same as everyone else, but seems very distressed. If the PCs get suspicious, have another student imply that Roger may have had a crush on Elise.

Following up on surgeons is difficult. If presented with appropriate authority, the Guild can provide the PCs with the names and addresses of all registered surgeons in the city (note however that none of the killers are on the list, as none of them have graduated). The university is less helpful. Each college has a separate Medical faculty, and students, all of whom are learning surgery as part of their studies. Direct inquisitive PCs towards Dr Guillotine, at Cardinal college. The doctor will show them the laboratories with pride (complete with dissection tables, pickled organs, and a smell like a slaughterhouse). He will even invite them to attend a dissection if they seem interested. He gets bodies of executed criminals from the governor, a deal negotiated thanks to the success of his new invention. Once the bodies are no longer needed, they are given over to the cult of Morr to be buried. At any one time there will be at least three or four bodies in various states of dismemberment within the laboratory. Should the PCs investigate, record keeping of bodies is not exact. The number of bodies handed over to Guillotine is not recorded, only the number of bodies handed over to the cult afterwards. Guillotine himself does none of the record keeping, leaving it to senior students, and is not particularly interested in where the bodies come from. In other words, once a body appears in the laboratory it is quite easy for it to disappear, handed over to the cult as a body used for scientific research.

Dr Guillotine will proudly discuss his invention at length if asked. PCs should be disturbed, but not suspicious, about the laboratory and Dr Guillotine. The Doctor is fascinated by the human body, loves dissecting, and has a real enthusiasm for medicine and for efficiency in all things. However, he should come across as almost completely amoral. He has no thought of the human consequences of any of his actions; he sees advancing the study of medicine as an end in itself.

There will be no leads pointing to Stephen as yet. If the PCs want to exhaustively work through a list of surgeons they are free to do so, but it will not help them much.

## Hugh

At this stage the PCs will have very little to go on. They are on the right track, though they do not know it, so it is time to confuse things a little. Feed the PCs rumours about Brother Hugh, including the detail that he arrived at about the same time as the murders began, and that he has been preaching about the murders and using them as a

cause for revolution. If they need a further incentive, suggest that he has been sheltered in the past by Jaq “the knife” (even if the players think the allusion to Jack the Ripper is a little forced they should be intrigued enough to investigate).

Finding Hugh will not be easy, after all he is a wanted outlaw and the PCs are the sort of people who might be out for a reward. The best point of contact is through the Chiens Noires, who know where he is being hidden and can be persuaded to make an introduction. They are unwilling to do so if they think the PCs may be trying to betray Hugh to the authorities. The best approach is initially to offer money to establish that the Chiens Noires know where Hugh is, and then to convince them that Hugh is a possible suspect in the beast murders. As outlined above, the Chiens Noires have as much desire to see the whole affair wound up quickly as anyone else.

Assuming the PCs do get to meet Hugh, they will first be invited to attend one of his meetings. Hugh directs people in a house in the shantytowns of Mendigot. This is a great chance for the players to hear an expose of the realities of life in Bretonnia, so make the best use of it. Hugh is a gifted speaker, and his description of the inequalities of society is illustrated by true stories of peasants flayed alive for stealing crusts of bread for starving families, judges bribed by nobles to overlook the indiscretions of their officials, and the collusion of the religious leaders with the corruption and injustice. Hugh also makes reference to the Beast murders in his speech – for him they are illustrative of the general corruption of society, where the poor die unlamented in their droves but if just one of the privileged elite dies the response is to lash out indiscriminately.

*One girl dies, and nothing; two, three die, and nothing. No-one cares. Why? Because they are poor, and because our rulers despise us. So four die and five die and still no-one stirs, no-one says here is murder, here is foulness, here is something to be avenged. Why? Because secretly they would all like to be out cutting the hearts out of the poor every night. Why not? They take the food from our hands, the clothes from our backs, the roofs from our heads. They deny us justice, they work us into the ground so that they can dine in luxury. They have already taken our freedom, our life, our hope, why not rip out our hearts too? But touch one of them, kill one of their little whores, and suddenly they want to burn down the whole Faubourgs! Is this justice? Is this the land of the Most Just King? They call me a heretic, but I say you who take injustice and call it justice, you are the heretics!*

Following the meeting, the PCs may get a chance to talk to Hugh. He knows nothing of the murders apart from what is circulating amongst the population, but he agrees they are terrible crimes, and thinks the chances for real justice for the murdered women are non-existent. “Do you know their names? Has anyone even bothered to find that out? No, all that matters is that the sixth girl had wealthy parents.” It should be obvious after talking to Hugh that he is sincere. He may well be fanatical enough to kill for his cause, but he would not murder those he considers innocent in order to kick-start a revolution.

## Days 3&4: The pace quickens

The PCs should be feeling by now that they have chased a few leads but are getting nowhere fast. However, events are about to overtake them. Pick up the pace over the next two days, throwing one clue at them after another, only giving them time to start investigating before the next piece of the puzzle is revealed. The PCs should start to gain an idea of what is going on, and hopefully also start to feel that they are racing against time to stop further killings. On the night of day 2 another murder occurred, and this one was far from being a nobody. Stephen, accepting the “challenge” set by Roger, of killing a personal acquaintance, has murdered Helene Quissac.

### Murder most foul



Once more a murder has occurred that appears to break the pattern, yet is apparently following the same modus operandi as the others. Helene Quissac was walking through Nordpont with two bodyguards. Stephen had been following from a distance, but caught up, and began to hurl insults at her. Helene ordered one of the bodyguards to see him off. Stephen ran him through with his rapier, then leapt at the second bodyguard, ripping his throat out with his teeth. He then ran after the now terrified Helene, pulling her into an alley where he strangled her with a scarlet scarf, then tore her heart out with his claw and ate it there and then. Seized by a frenzy of bloodlust, he began to tear her body apart before he heard someone discover the corpses of the bodyguards, and fled.

Assuming the PCs are working closely with either the watch or the Halegrin they will be alerted to the murder early enough to view the body before it is handed over to the family (either at the scene of the crime or at watch headquarters). Any PCs viewing the corpse should make a CI test or vomit violently. Helene appears to have been strangled (presumably by a human) but then savaged by some sort of beast. Teeth and claw marks are obvious on her body, and her chest has been completely ripped open, her rib cage pulled apart, and her heart torn out. One of the bodyguards was killed by a skilled duellist (by a single thrust of a rapier – there are no other wounds) the other seems to have been thrown to the ground by something with strong enough to break ribs, and then to have had his throat ripped out.

The PCs will by now be wondering what on earth they are up against – a man with a savage dog? A werewolf? And perhaps they will be suspicious that this is a copycat killing (after all, it breaks the sequence of a killing every third night). Should any of them make enquiries about the Quissac family, anyone can tell them that they are the second most powerful merchant family in Guisoreux, once the most powerful, but ousted by their ancient rivals the Montalier family.

## The guilty conscience

Just as the PCs are puzzling over the latest murder, news will reach them of a suicide. A student in Cardinal college, Roger de Noirforte, has hung himself in his rooms. He was found this morning, and has left a suicide note that apparently links him to the murder of Elise Croisy. This should be enough to take them back to the University, even if they had made no previous connection with Roger.

Roger was a popular figure in Cardinal college, known by everyone. A third son of a family of minor nobility, he was studying Liberal Arts in preparation for a career in law that would please his father. He was close to Elise Croisy, and one of the friends who went out drinking with her the night she was murdered. He was the only one of the group who was a member of Cardinal college. Some of his friends knew he was very attracted to Elise, but no-one suspected he might have wished to kill her. Some of Roger's fellow students know that Roger was a member of a secret society called "The Brothers of the Blood". The society is very exclusive, with membership by invitation only, and its makeup is secret, though all members are assumed to be students in Cardinal college, and it is rumoured to have been founded by students in the faculty of medicine. Such secret societies are relatively common in the university. All have gruesome names ("The Alley-Stalkers" is another society) and exist to provide a forum for members to indulge in whatever disreputable desires they have. They are all officially discouraged by the university authorities, but never actually banned because it is believed that they provide a relatively safe environment for the sons of the rich and powerful to engage in a bit of whoring and drug-taking.

Roger's suicide note reads as follows:

*I know what I'm doing. I can't live any more with the guilt. I think I loved Elise, I think I wanted her for something more than a fuck and the rush of the blood. I never meant to kill her. I never meant to give in to the voice in my veins. I never thought the blood would be so powerful. When I felt the blessing I couldn't stop. I can't stand what I'm becoming. Nothing I can do will bring her back. I wish it hadn't been her.  
Tell my father I'd have made a crap lawyer anyway.  
Roger*

By now, the PCs should be feeling that they are getting somewhere. They will realise that they are up against a group of killers, probably centred around the medical faculty of Cardinal college. They may investigate Dr Guillotine at this point if they haven't before. If they have, they may return with some sharper questions. Over the next day or so, they will hopefully begin to identify Stephen Montalier as a key suspect.

## Investigations

Getting a list of Cardinal college medical students is fairly straightforward, but will not help the PCs unless they know what they're looking for. None of the students will admit to being a member of a secret society or to knowing who might be a member. None of the cultists is stupid enough to give themselves away in an interview. The only thing that chasing down all the medical students will achieve is to show that one of them, Stephen Montalier, hasn't been seen for about a week and no-one knows where he is.

Asking Dr Guillotine about his students will reveal that he knows absolutely nothing about their personal lives, but is very enthusiastic about their research interests. The two senior students are Stephen Montalier, who is engaged in a study into the properties of blood, and Jean Vasselles, who is researching one of the Doctor's favourite fields: amputation and death. Vasselles is conducting research on animals to determine how long a body can be kept alive when various limbs or organs are removed. The eventual purpose is to attempt to reattach these limbs or organs (perhaps with new ones) but Dr Guillotine finds this the least interesting area of the research. He hopes that the governor may release convicted criminals to him for tests on live humans. Should the PCs interview Jean they will find that he has been highly influenced by Guillotine. Research initially aimed at restoring lost limbs or organs has been diverted from this practical application into a pure research project with only a tenuous connection to any practical use. Montalier has been researching the properties of blood, and in particular the theory that blood contains the mystic energy of life. He has recently returned from spending time with a colleague of Dr Guillotine's in Marienburg and seems to be on the verge of some sort of breakthrough in his research – perhaps he has discovered a way of releasing the mystic energy in blood. Dr Guillotine hasn't seen Stephen since a brief meeting following his return from Marienburg. PCs will be able to determine that Stephen's return from Marienburg coincides exactly with the beginning of the murders. Dr Guillotine will, if pressed, admit that he let Stephen have access to a text from the restricted section of the college library: the *Liber Sanguinis* printed in Nuln, of uncertain authorship. The book deals with the properties of blood, but also covers elements of Khornate theology and ritual. Guillotine understands that such a text should not be available to just anyone, but doesn't see why a gifted student should not have access to all information in his field. Besides, he doesn't see that the "blasphemous mumbo-jumbo" in the book can really do anyone any harm, and it may possibly contain some valid scientific insight in amongst the superstitious nonsense. If the PCs are contemplating doing anything rash, it should be stressed that Guillotine is a protege of the Visconte, and in the absence of hard evidence of Guillotine's direct involvement in Chaos, opposing him is likely to have unfavourable consequences.

Should the PCs have realised that the lab is a perfect place for hiding bodies or body parts they may wish to search it and enquire about access to it. As might be expected, the lab has plenty of bloodstains and body parts,

but the most interesting find is a bloodstained lady's cloak (black, with a butterfly broach fastening) in a corner. The cloak is soaked in blood, as if it had been wrapped around a piece of meat. Dr Guillotine and his two senior students have keys to the lab, and may sign release papers for bodies. Before his trip to Marienburg, Stephen Montalier was doing this regularly. Painstaking comparison of paperwork between the lab and cult of Morr records and those of the city executioner will reveal that Stephen was signing release forms for more bodies than the lab had actually received (most PC groups will not have time for such an investigation however, unless they can spare an academic to spend an afternoon arguing a case for seeing the papers and then comparing the two).

Direct questioning of Louis Besance about the Montalier family (particularly combined with hints that he is protecting someone about to be exposed as a cultist and a mass murderer, when he could be heroically aiding in his arrest) will lead to his revealing the information given above if the PCs have not already found this out. Finally, anyone can tell the PCs that the greatest enemies of House Quissac are House Montalier. Should they make enquiries, it can be confirmed that Stephen Montalier is a skilled fencer as well as a gifted medical student.



### The witness

There was a witness to the killing of Helene Quissac. If the PCs have somehow missed out on all of the above clues, this final encounter will hopefully give them the evidence they need to link Stephen Montalier to the killings. Petit Matt is a 5' stevedore, the shortest stevedore at work on the docks, but built like a brick wall. On the night of day 2 he was "doing a job" for Jaq the Knife on the North Bank. He was to rough up a tradesman to encourage him to pay protection money. He saw Helene Quissac with her bodyguards being insulted by a well-dressed young man armed with a rapier. As he watched, Helene ordered one bodyguard to attack. The bodyguard was run through by the young man, who then licked the bodyguard's blood from his fingers. The man suddenly changed, his skin seemed to become a dark red colour, his head grew elongated, and his jaws became very large. His left hand transformed into a claw. Matt will admit that he was scared stiff, and stayed rooted to the spot (i.e., failed his Cool test). The man then jumped onto the first guard and ripped his throat out, before chasing after the woman and dragging her off into an alley. Matt ran, staying in the nearest bar babbling incoherently about demons in the streets until he had drunk enough to get his courage back. Then he went on to

the tradesman's house, only to find that the man had hired a couple of mercenaries as bodyguards, who beat him up and handed him over to the watch. Matt started telling his story as soon as he sobered up, but no-one believed him until he said he was sure the woman he'd seen was Helene Quissac.

Matt will give a description of Stephen (average height, well built, very well dressed, fair hair) but only if offered freedom and protection will he admit he recognised the man as Stephen Montalier.

### The dream

This encounter is really only necessary if the PCs haven't identified the lab as the site where hearts are brought back to. The PCs are approached by one of the acolytes of Morr. Cicere Marsallas, the high priest, has had a dream that worries him greatly, and wishes to share it with the PCs. On the night of the murder of Helene Quissac Cicere was visited by the Lord of Dreams. He showed him the city, with a great skull suspended over it. As he watched, he realised that the skull was actually a cup shaped to look like a skull, and that it was slowly filling with blood. He saw faces rising to the surface of the blood: the faces of the women who have been killed (he recognised them because the Cult of Morr buried them). The cup was now almost full to the brim, and more faces appeared which he didn't recognise, but by then the cup was overflowing, pouring blood onto the streets below. Wherever it touched a building it burst into flame. As Cicere is mute, he has had to communicate this to an acolyte by sign-language, and the acolyte will tell the PCs the dream in Cicere's presence. Cicere is deeply worried that some dark force is behind the killings. If he thinks he can trust the PCs he will give them the pendant of St Bartholomew, a plain stone ring, rough-hewn. When a death is occurring that will take a spirit away from Morr's realm the pendant begins to warm up. It gets warmer the nearer the bearer gets to the killer, and if it actually touches them, they will be burnt by it. The effect lasts for 6 hours following the killing. The pendant must be returned to the Temple within 10 days (if it isn't, Morr's blessing will be removed from it).

### Day 5 – the final killing

By the evening of Day 4, the PCs should know that a murder is probably due that night, that Stephen Montalier is one of the killers involved in what is probably a Khornate cult, and either know that the heart will be taken to the lab after the killing or have a pendant that will lead them to a killer. Discourage attempts to hassle House Montalier (bear in mind that the merchant house is one of the more powerful groups in the city, and even the Governor would think twice before attempting to pressure them).

Stephen is hiding somewhere in one of House Montalier's properties, but the PCs won't be able to find him without tracking him.

The PCs should hopefully realise that their best hope of finding the killers is to either stake out the lab (they can use Dr Guillotine's key to gain access), or to wander the streets with the pendant waiting for the next killing to occur. In this case they will find Walter too late to prevent

the killing, and will chase him back to the lab (if they're getting really stuck you can allow them to follow the drops of blood from the heart). Either way, they should be present in the lab for a final showdown with the cultists.

Here's an approximate timetable for the evening:

10.00 pm Jean Vaselles locks up the lab.

11.00 Walter escorts his sister Clemence back home from the theatre. Stephen and the three other cultists open up the lab and begin preparations.

11.15 Walter kills Clemence and cuts out her heart

11.20 Walter begins heading back towards the lab with Clemence's heart.

11.35 Walter arrives in the lab. He unwraps the heart, and presents it to Stephen. Stephen transforms and eats it, while the other cultists chant.

12.00 The ritual is over, the cultists tidy the lab, and Stephen locks up.

The best plan for the PCs is to find somewhere to hide in the lab and attack the cultists when they are involved in the ritual and unprepared. (Hiding in a cupboard or something will probably work, but hiding under a bench will not, as the cultist's preparations mainly involve clearing a large space in the centre of the room and marking out the symbol of Khorne in blood on the floor). Alternatively, they may try to kill off the cultists in the lab and wait for Walter (this is the only way they are likely to get a live cultist to confess to the authorities).

As soon as the cultists are attacked, Stephen will transform into his Bloodletter form and the PCs will have to make a fear test (this will happen after the first surprise round of combat). While Stephen is alive, none of the other cultists will surrender or flee, and they will do all they can to protect him.

Should the PCs somehow fail to get to the lab, the killings will continue every other night for the next three killings, then every night for the last five. The killings will become progressively more shocking (and there will continue to be personal connections between the cultists and their victims). It is likely that before the end it will become obvious who the cultists are, forcing them to go into hiding somewhere in the bowels of Guisoreux, emerging only to kill. Eventually, Stephen will complete his transformation into a Bloodletter, and the cultists will emerge to wreak havoc on the streets. They will all be killed, but only after inflicting slaughter on a grand scale. If the PCs choose to take out the cultists piecemeal – staking out the lab and eliminating one after every killing, this will accelerate the process (and you should make the PCs pay for taking the cowardly option by reducing EPs and giving them all guilty consciences).

## Aftermath

The aftermath to the adventure is a vital part of the PCs' learning experience about Bretonnian society. The key issue is that the whole affair is a hot scandal for about two weeks – the University and House Montalier are seen to be tainted with Chaos, etc. However, absolutely nothing is done about it, and after two weeks, no-one even wants to talk about it. The PCs might have received a reward for their work if they were to approach the Watch or The Halegrin, but after two weeks no-one will thank

them for mentioning their involvement. In fact, if Luc Seigney is their patron, he will warn them off saying anything about it in a friendly fashion. The fact is that Dr Guillotine has a powerful patron, and House Montalier are far too influential for this incident to really hurt them. So once the initial fuss has died down, anyone mentioning the incident is either spreading malicious gossip and slanders about a faithful servant of the crown (Guillotine), which may result in a not-so-friendly visit from the Watch; either that or they will be seen as acting against the interests of François Montalier, one of the most powerful individuals in the city. Montalier is likely to be more subtle in any action he takes, but probably more deadly. As well as having several agents in his household who could deal with problematic PCs, he bankrolls several important (but bankrupt) nobles, any of who could easily be persuaded to do something about the PCs (*"I've just seen a wanted poster saying that I've been declared an outlaw in the domains of the Comte de Lanais – that's ridiculous, I've never even been there" "Do you think the bounty hunters will stop to ask first?"*).



## NPCs

### Stephen Montalier Cultist (ex Physician's student, ex Duellist)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	53	45	5	5	11	60	3*	54	62	53	64	52	40

\* When Stephen transforms he has an extra bite attack, and his left hand becomes a claw. He also causes fear in all non-cultists.

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic (Khorne)

APPEARANCE: Tall, blonde, handsome; always dressed in the height of fashion. Very proud of his (extremely expensive) rapier, which he wears everywhere. Since his descent into the worship of chaos began, Stephen has begun to change. His skin has become noticeably redder, and his hair is beginning to fall out. His teeth are becoming more prominent, and his eyes have a red glow. He has begun to feel intangibly menacing.

SKILLS: Charm; Ride; Read/Write; Etiquette; Heraldry; Consume Alcohol; Dodge Blow; Secret Language: Classical; Specialist Weapon: Fencing sword, Garotte; Strike Mighty Blow; Strike to Injure; Strike to Stun; Silent Move: Urban; Concealment: Urban; Heal Wounds; Surgery, Theology. Other skills as GM deems appropriate.

POSSESSIONS: Excellent quality clothes, Very Fine Rapier (worth around 200 GCs. The hilt is in silver, with intricate scrollwork, and the balance is perfect, giving the user an extra +5 I in combat).

### Walter de Moreil Cultist (ex Physician's student, ex Duellist)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	65	67	5	7	11	62	2	51	56	42	56	54	47

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic (Khorne)

APPEARANCE: Whipcord-lean, tall and with jet black hair. Walter is quite vain, and also considers himself one of the greatest swordsmen in Bretonnia. He is very aggressive, always picking fights, an archetypal duellist.

SKILLS: Charm; Ride; Read/Write; Etiquette; Consume Alcohol; Secret Language: Classical; Specialist Weapon: Fencing sword, Duelling pistol, Fist, Parrying Weapons; Strike Mighty Blow; Strike to Injure; Strike to Stun; Dodge Blow; Silent Move: Urban; Cure Disease; Heal Wounds; Surgery.

POSSESSIONS: Excellent quality clothes, Rapier, Left hand dagger, pair of duelling pistols, powder & 10 shots.

### Dr Guillotine University lecturer (Scholar, ex Physician)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	32	30	3	3	8	46	1	59	52	71	68	64	43

ALIGNMENT: Neutral (nominally Verena, but in fact he has very little interest in religion)

APPEARANCE: In his sixties, short and round, a very energetic man, with a shock of uncombed white hair protruding out around the sides of his head, balding, with tiny wire-rimmed glasses. Always wears his academic

robes. Dr Guillotine is an enthusiastic and compelling lecturer, and increasingly called to attend court functions, demonstrating new inventions (his offer to give an anatomy lesson at court has yet to be taken up, however).

SKILLS: Read/Write, Scroll Lore, Secret Language: Classical, Cure Disease, Heal Wounds, Manufacture Drugs, Prepare Poison, Surgery, History, Identify Plant, Linguistics, Magical Sense, Rune Lore, Engineering (self-taught, and focusing on medical mechanisms).

POSSESSIONS: Academic robes, small library of medical textbooks, surgeon's tools.

### Hugh of Couronne Heretic and Rabble rouser (Demagogue, ex Priest of Verena (lvl 2))

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	42	45	4	4	9	58	2	43	68	47	45	58	79

ALIGNMENT: Neutral (Verena)

APPEARANCE: A surprisingly normal and undistinguished-looking man, in his thirties, with mousy hair, dressed in muddy and torn priest's robes, with a sword hanging from his rope belt. It is hard not to like him, as he has an easy-going and unassuming manner. Hugh is transformed whenever he speaks, however, becoming compelling and emotive. His oratory is inspired and powerful; and he can make an impact on all levels of society. Hugh is equally relaxed and at home pleading his case in legal terminology before a judge as he is telling stories of injustice to beggars.

SKILLS: Read/Write, Secret Language: Classical, Scroll Lore, Theology, Arcane Language: Magick, Cast Spells: Clerical 1 & 2, Meditate, Public Speaking, Identify Undead, Magic Sense, Blather, Charm, Story Telling, History, Law, Silent Move Urban, Concealment Urban.

Spells: Gift of Tongues, Magic Alarm, Open, Zone of Silence, Cure Light Injury, Steal Mind, Strength of Combat, Aura of Protection, Zone of Steadfastness.

MP: 20

POSSESSIONS: White Robes (now v. muddy & torn), sword medallion, book of holy texts, sword.

### 3 Cultists (Cannon Fodder)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	43	42	4	4	9	41	2	40	30	40	40	30	40

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic (Khorne)

APPEARANCE: All are men, in their late teens or early twenties, and all are well-dressed.

SIGNIFICANT SKILLS: Ride; Read/Write; Specialist Weapon: Fencing Sword, Garotte; Silent Move: Urban; Strike to Stun; Consume Alcohol.

POSSESSIONS: Rapier or sword.

# *The Guisoreux Gazette*



*being a publication for the  
distinguished and enlightened minds  
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## **The Beast kills again!**

Murder of banker's daughter brings street death toll to six.

Elise Croisy, daughter of prominent merchant banker Henri Croisy, was murdered on the streets of Guisoreux last night in the latest horrific attack by the killer known as "the Beast". Mlle Croisy, a medical student at the University, was savagely killed in an unprovoked attack as she returned to her halls after a quiet drink with friends in Jongleurs district. Her mangled body was discovered by the watch in the early hours of the morning. Respect for the feelings of Mr & Mme Croisy, and consideration for the stomachs of our gentle readers prevent our describing the degrading and abhorrent injuries inflicted on Mlle Croisy in this brutal attack, but as well as sustaining multiple knife wounds (which removed internal organs), she was strangled with a red silk scarf. This distinctive garment links her death to those of five other young women killed over the last weeks. The Beast, the vicious killer behind the multiple deaths continues to elude justice, continuing his reign of terror as he strikes every third day.

Until further notice, University students are not allowed out of their halls after dark, and the Watch advise women not to walk the streets unaccompanied. How much longer must innocent citizens be forced to hide behind locked doors, terrorised by the murderous gangs that now control our city's streets? The Gazette declares that enough is enough. Elise Croisy's death must be the last. It is time that order was restored to this city. We urge our readers to call on Governor Brossard to send the Garrison troops in to exterminate the lowlifes and murdering scum who terrorise our city. We all know where these people live, and we have turned a blind eye for too long. Let's see some real Bretonnian justice in this city.

## **The Honourable Guild of Printers of Guisoreux**

(formerly the guild of Town Criers)

The noble and honourable guild of printers of Guisoreux have been established in Guisoreux for over one century. As well as printing this fine publication, the

printers of Guisoreux are able to publish letters, handbills, posters, affiches, pamphlets and complete bound books on any subject (treasonable matters excluded). The guild sets out a standard rate of charging per word so that all clients can be assured of fair treatment and the quality of the finished product can be guaranteed to be excellent. The guild of printers represents all the many people associated with the printing trade in Guisoreux and labours tirelessly to make their voices heard, to advance their position and help influence decisions at the highest levels that affect their daily business. This is done through our excellent relationships with several well-placed noblemen who, as well as being frequent clients of the guild are also sympathetic to the plight of the honest and hardworking printers of Guisoreux. These include the Comte de Vauclusan, whose account of his adventures in the overseas colonies, "The natives eat Worms here," was turned into a small book with illustrations which sold several hundred copies. An enterprise from which he netted a tidy profit as printing services were provided free of charge by the excellent Master Gerard Chauvette in recognition of his special relationship with the Guild. The printers Guild also maintains constant relationships with many other active guilds in Guisoreux including the Esteemed Guild of Papermakers and Suppliers and the Ancient Smith's Guild. The guild of printers of Guisoreux also has links with merchants and guilds of other Bretonnian cities, with permanent representatives in Navarre, L'Anguille, Couronne, Bordeleaux, Quenelles and until a recent unfortunate accident, Pavarron.

For all enquiries please contact Master Gerard Chauvette at the Sign of the Book, rue de la Tete d'Or. The Guild of printers of Guisoreux – no font is too big.



### Guisoreux Gazette Public Notices

Situation Vacant – A bright and inquisitive person is required to gather information about recent events in and around the city. Experience in dealing with nobility and commoners alike is essential. Some assignments may require own transport and means of protection against injury.

Coming Soon : a report by Rabi Doln on how Chaos worship is stronger than ever in the Imperial provinces.

# Guisoreux-la-belle

