

CONAN[®]

AND THE
LURKING TERROR OF NAHAB



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Contents

INTRODUCTION**2**

In This Adventure...

3

Preparing to Play

3

FOUL PORTENTS**5**

Goodbye Father Heretio

5

The Crazy Soothsayer

7

The Gravediggers' Tale

10

CHASING MIST**12**

Rattled Guards

12

The Stables Ablaze

13

A Taste for Flesh

16

The Terror of Nahab

18

UNDER A NEW MOON**21**

Blaming the Noble Houses

21

Missing Parts

25

Panic in the Streets

26

Brothel Butchery

27

Lynch Mobs

29

Blood of an Innocent

29

The True Terror of Nahab

31

Conclusion

31

LICENSE**32**

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Introduction

Welcome to the City of Nahab

THE CORINTHIAN CITY of Nahab has suffered greatly under the continued feuding of its noble families in the last decade. Waging small estate wars between themselves to establish control over trade routes and resource-laden foothills of the Karpash Mountains, the peasant-titled 'Nobles' War' has left many homes, fields and villages in ruin, and the city's ruling classes on the dangerous path to self-destruction.

Nemedian mercenaries came from the north to take advantage of the unrest and chaos caused by the Nobles' War. Their horsemen cut a swathe through the farm fields along the mountain passes, sparing not a single life as they did so. Then, when they reached the point where the Road of Kings meets the Karpash Mountain Way, they broke upon the walls of a small city: Nahab. With the Nemedian forces smashing at Nahab's walls; walls that were in ill repair after years of internal struggle, the city looked set to fall to the foreign invaders. But it was at Nahab that Corinthia's feuding nobility set aside their differences and stood their ground against these opportunistic warriors from the north, for it was to Nahab that over a dozen of the country's noble patriarchs sent their finest soldiers to battle the mercenary raiders.

In less than two weeks the combined forces of Corinthia's noble houses had shattered the resolve of their enemies, sending them back into the Karpash Mountains in utter defeat. With the Nemedian mercenaries in retreat, the country's noble houses looked set to once again take up the infighting and skirmishes that looked certain to devour the city and the country itself. However, such an outcome was averted when a single Mitran devotee at the head of an enormous throng of Nahab's citizens petitioned their country's noble patriarchs for an end to their incessant warring.

Tericos Heretio led a march of over a thousand common farmers, artisans and labourers to the headquarters of the noble families in Nahab. There he praised the combined might of the noble families, wrapping poisoned threats of revolt into his candied heralding. It was made clear that the people of Nahab would not stand for the Noble's War any longer. After the display of the power that lay in the nobles'

working together, Nahab's citizens would not stand back and watch the foundations of something so great fall apart.

The nobles could not help but listen to the combined voices of the common man, now spreading through neighbouring villages and cities like a blazing flame. Each of the ranking noble families that claims to have a right to the 'throne' of Corinthia sent ambassadors to Nahab to discuss a lasting peace between their houses, but with the debates came two years of argument, assassination and several marriages between families; however, Corinthia's nobility eventually came to a lasting peace agreement called the Accord.

The Accord was a collection of minor rules, laws, checks and balances that kept the nobles from clashing against one another in open warfare. The final agreement was confusing, self-defeating in places and said nothing at all about the commonplace backstabbing and behind-the-curtain power games the families played, despite having an entire section dedicated to the legalisation and monitoring of sanctioned duelling. It discussed the flexible boundaries of noble estates and the exact protocols used to expand territory. The Accord was more than 19 pages of dried ink and circumstance; it was the best example of how the noble families will *always* find a way to fight amongst themselves...no matter who is watching.

Meanwhile, Nahab swelled into the home of the noble ambassadors, growing fat off the trade and mining that takes place along the Karpash Mountain Way. Despite this, the city never grew in the way like Shadizar and Tarantia, remaining relatively small and manageable by the families that now controlled it.

Regardless of the Accord, Nahab remains a city of extremes, with peasants living ten to a home in order to save on tax and living expenses while nobles sit in block-spanning estates drinking rare wine and eating exotic foods. The peasants are treated commonly, but they still suffer from various family taxes and occasionally find their land being used as a bargaining or blackmailing chip between nobles. The noble families are constantly plotting and scheming against one another, leaving the peasants suffering in the chaos that these underhanded machinations create in the streets and fields of Nahab. There is a powerful rivalry

between the nobility and the peasants they rule over here and it makes for a very tense relationship between them all.

There will come a time where even The Accord will not be able to stay the hands of Nahab's citizens and the streets will run red with blood. Everyone in Nahab knows and dreads this, some better than others, but when the Nobles' War begins anew, all will suffer under the weight of all these years' worth of building and preparing. The city itself will be hard pressed to survive the maelstrom of revolt.

IN THIS ADVENTURE...

...Nahab has just suffered a major loss and someone plans to use the sorrow and grief to punish the nobles for the years of unnecessary torment. The unexpected and gruesome death of Father Tericos Heretio has plunged the entire city's peasant population into a state of grieving and distrust, with even some of the noble houses lowering their pennants in his honour. This show of respect is not enough for Sabiat, a lotus-maddened street-preacher who wishes to punish the noble families for all for their combined crimes.

Sabiat has uncovered a dark and sinister ritual that will unleash a flesh-hungry monster upon the city. Requiring a fresh corpse to fill with sinister energies, he has prepared for months to perform the ritual as soon as he finds a suitable vessel. With the death of Farther Tericos Heretio, Sabiat has found the perfect symbol for his crusade against noble oppression. The ritual grants the ritualist a degree of control over the animated creature and the madman plans to direct the risen abomination to strike at the nobles' holdings and eventually at them as well. While this occurs, Sabiat will proclaim that his darksome creation is the Hand of Mitra come to smite Nahab's evil oppressors.

Sabiat's creation is a horrific creature borne of pain, suffering and *hunger*. It hunts, stalks and kills according to its bodily needs and the direction given by the its creator. It will create a bloodbath in which fear and loathing will grip the hearts of Nahab's citizens as stories of the creature's victims, and eventually its actual identity, circulate through the city's streets. The city will begin to look for some way to sate the creature's increasing hunger.

With Sabiat and the city's rumourmongers spreading news of the creature's attacks, combined with the revolutionary ideals of the city's peasant population, it will not take long for mobs to form. Sabiat's plot to vilify the nobles starts the city spiralling into a chaotic revolt against the noble families. This will pitch lynch mobs against noble soldiers in bloody scuffles that can only end with a full peasant revolt in the streets of Nahab. Even if successful in their efforts to overthrow their noble masters, Nahab's peasants

will still find themselves plagued by Sabiat's terrifying creation.

Sabiat is not a powerful sorcerer or knowledgeable scholar; he is simply a crazed lotus-addict that is more than willing to kill anyone to keep his scheme from failing. He is a vile and devoted man that has done things to get his way more times than can be counted, which does not cease when the monster is unleashed. He is a zealous fanatic devoted to the removal of noble influence from Nahab. While this may be a worthy goal to aspire to, his methods are foolish at best and damning at worst. He views no life so high as to stand in the way of his goals, but is not willing to sacrifice himself in order to accomplish them.

Whether or not the city of Nahab is washed in the blood of the nobles, the monster defeated, the revolt crushed or Sabiat brought to justice is up to the actions, beliefs and political leanings of the Player Characters. Although dropped into a very difficult situation, the Player Characters are a neutral force that could easily sway the balance of power to one side or another in a city that is rapidly falling apart around them. The overall fate of Nahab and its citizens, both peasant and noble, may be in their hands as they attempt to unravel the mysteries of the *Lurking Terror of Nahab*.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Lurking Terror of Nahab is a scenario that gives players a break from clearing out ruins of monsters, hunting down treacherous pirates and the like. Unlike most Conan adventure stories, where the answer to any problem is a strong will and stronger steel, the problems in Nahab are difficult, but not impossible to solve in such a way. It will require the players and their characters to take a different approach to the situation unfolding in the city. Moral decisions and hard choices will block the path in this adventure rather than bands of brigands or secret doors.

For Games Masters who are worried their game is about to take a twist away from the clang of steel on steel or the fast-paced action of chasing down a pickpocket in a busy street: fear not, we have created a different approach in *Lurking Terror of Nahab*, but still one filled with many opportunities to come to blows. Some characters may wish to talk or bribe their way out of, others they simply *cannot* avoid. Nahab can be a dangerous place for newcomers, especially those that look like they have money. A good haymaker to the bridge of a back-alley bandit or two may be necessary as they move through the events of the adventure. This does not mean that a stout punch or quick blade can fix *every* situation the Player Characters meet, and

any who go into this scenario thinking that is the case will soon find themselves swimming in problems they never knew they had until they started throwing blows haphazardly. Depending on their views the biggest enemy of the scenario may not be a man or beast at all, but an ideal or the Accord itself. These things can be fought for or against with blood and steel, but cannot be killed or exalted with a simple blade or arrow. The keenest weapon the Player Characters have in this scenario may just be their minds and hearts.

A copy of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, a notepad, pencils and a full set of dice (at least one of each of the following: d20, d12, d10, d8, d6 and d4) will be needed to play *Lurking Terror of Nahab*. Players and Games Masters may also find a copy of *Conan: The Road of Kings* a good reference point for those who wish to have extra information at their fingertips, but it is by no means essential. It may also be helpful to have a few miniatures or counters and some form of map handy for when battles to break out, but these are also not essential.

Lurking Terror of Nahab combines several aspects of the roleplaying game into one cohesive stream of plotline complete with many situations and problems that the Player Characters may need a diverse set of skills to overcome or bypass successfully. A party of adventurers that is wholly focused on one facet of the game may have some trouble with it, while a more varied group might lend better to one another as it progresses.

Games Masters should read and become familiar with the entire scenario before attempting to immerse their players in it. This should allow the Games Master to fit each encounter together with the last seamlessly or to mesh the encounters with the sometimes-unexpected actions of his Player Characters. This is extremely important, as *Lurking Terror of Nahab* has a heavy degree of free-formed action that they could simply get caught up in and lose track of the bigger picture and the written events as they are supposed to occur. Nowhere nearly as structured as an adventure walking through an old ruined castle or sifting through a foe's lair room by room, the scenario is designed to unveil certain events and encounters upon the Player Characters in order for them to become entwined in a moral dilemma that hopefully will engross them on many different levels. Should the Player Characters get far too distracted, a crafty Games Master should be able to use subtle hints or altered encounters to get them involved with the written scenario.

Alternatively, Games Masters may want to expand on the events and settings in *Lurking Terror of Nahab*, creating a much larger campaign setting from this short adventure.

This adventure is designed for four to six Player Characters of between **4th and 6th level**, though since much of it relies on the moral choices of the Player Characters it can be easily adjusted or adapted to accommodate groups of higher or lower character level or attendance. Should Games Masters have fewer players they can easily use their own judgment to lighten the severity of some encounters while strengthening those for a larger group. The scenario was written a certain way, but Games Masters should have the final say in how it is delivered to their Player Characters to suit the feel of their own chronicles.



Foul Portents

THIS ADVENTURE ASSUMES the Player Characters have not yet been in Nahab, possibly just stopping by in order to re-supply on their long trip down the Road of Kings, perhaps on their way to Shadizar. They might have been waylaid by the growing number of Nemedian mercenaries in the Karpash Mountains and come to seek refuge in Nahab. Should any Player Character actually be from Corinthia, especially if that person happens to be of a noble family, the happenings of the adventure could involve the party that much faster. Even Player Characters with a level or two in the noble character class may find some interesting social obstacles in the city once things begin, so Games Masters should keep note as to how the party dresses, acts and overall holds themselves in public. For once it might actually be a benefit to be an unruly savage in the eyes of Nahab's peasantry.

GOODBYE FATHER HERETIO

The Player Characters will be nearly assaulted by a tithing collector one early morning on the streets of Nahab. It matters little as to where actually they are met by the young peasant, although it makes more sense outside of an inn, tavern or pub.

As the Player Characters reach the edge of the cobblestone street one early morning in Nahab, read the following aloud to the players:

The morning breeze is colder than common for this time of year and with it is carried the light scent of some form of incense or burning oils that remind you of a holy temple. There is a strange thrumming in the air, like a long and droning beat of a drum or of low bass chanting. The sky is a muggy grey and you sense it could rain at any time. It is time to get this day on and moving.

'Fair folk?' a young man's voice chimes out to you from behind as you are about to take that first step, slowly bringing your foot back down in its place...as if you know that this voice brings more than you wanted to deal with today. You turn to find a young man in Mitran priestly garb, an acolyte no doubt, with a large leather sack that you can hear jingles with coin.

'Pardon me for bothering you,' he says with a slight bow, 'but you look of worldly types that understand the dangers of the roads beyond. Late last eve, one of our fairest and most beloved fathers was brutally slain on the road between here and the Welling farm. Father Heretio was a great man and deserves a proper burial in the city cemetery...' he closes his eyes in silent prayer for just a moment before continuing, 'but his oath of poverty has seen it fit not to afford the plot for him.'

'So,' he holds out the large sack, 'we, his friends and congregation, are taking a collection from the people of Nahab so he may be placed in a proper tomb.' He snuffles back a tear or two before bowing his head, 'Please give anything you can, we thank and bless you in Mitra's name.'

The Player Characters do not have to give any money at all to young Martius, which will prompt him to simply walk off to the next passer by to give the same story. If the Player Characters pay attention to him when he speaks to anyone else, his story does not waiver in the slightest. Should he tell it to anyone from Nahab, they donate several silver pieces a piece and sometimes more. He is genuinely trying to buy a plot for the local peasant hero and anyone capable of succeeding a Sense Motive check (DC 10) will know he is telling the truth.

Should they give Martius even a single coin towards his goal, read the following response aloud:

'Oh thank you kind folk!' he proclaims with a deep bow, 'We are very close to being able to afford the burial. By the end of the processional, we ought to be able to inter him properly. There are no words in the tongues of Man to describe our gratitude. Fair thee well.' As he walks away he turns suddenly and beams brightly at you before moving along toward the growing sound of chanting that you realise must be the father's funeral march.

Should the Player Characters see a sack full of coin and choose instead to follow Martius, possibly taking it from him, should note that Martius will remain in the public eye for the rest of the afternoon. He is trying to make the money for the plot, which means that he has to be where the people are to ask for money.

Gathering Information at the Funeral

Gather Information Check Result	Information Gathered
5+	Servants of the nobles are treating the procession so poorly due to Father Heretio's role in making them aware of the power of the peasant class and how close this city was to revolution only a few years ago.
10+	The final donation came from a local street-side soothsayer and corner crier, Sabiat. He claimed that his donation was his 'life savings to the man who saved all of our lives.' Sabiat can often be found in The Tallest Tale, a nearby tavern just outside the cemetery.
15+	Father Heretio was beloved by most of the peasant families for his constant work against noble oppression, but it was well known he had many enemies in the noble houses...possibly even those capable of setting whoever murdered him to the task.
20+	There were a handful of unsavoury-looking types lurking near the cemetery gates. One was seen handing a large coin purse to the gate guards before disappearing into the shadows.

Acolyte Martius

Medium Human Corinthian scholar 2; HD: 2d6+2 (9 hp); **Init:** +2; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 13; **Parry DV:** 9; **DR:** —; **BAB/Grp:** +0/–1; **Atk:** Unarmed –1 melee; **Full Atk:** Unarmed –1 melee; **Dmg:** Unarmed 1d3–1 nonlethal; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Background Skills (Craft (writing), Knowledge (religion), Sense Motive, Spot), Background (acolyte), Scholar, Knowledge is Power; **SV:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 13

Skills & Feats: Craft (writing) +5, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +8; Dodge, Iron Will

Possessions: Mitran prayer book and beads, 3 silver pieces on person, 54 silver pieces in a large leather sack

Alternately, the Player Characters could ignore Martius completely and try to get about their day. This will be very difficult for them to do on this particular day, as Father Heretio was seen as a hero by the local peasantry and most have closed their businesses in order to attend his funeral. If the Player Characters try to move about the town they will get approached by no fewer than five acolytes all seeking donations for Farther Heretio's interment (use the same statistics as Acolyte Martius if necessary).

No matter what they do during the day, the Player Characters will eventually stumble onto the funeral precession of the recently deceased father. The procession is a sombre affair with dozens of grieving peasants walking alongside the wagon carrying the dead priest's humble coffin.

As the procession approaches, read the following scene aloud to the players:

A throng of nearly a hundred peasants and clergy move through the city street in a sombre parade. The murmuring of chanted prayer echoes over the clapping footfalls of

the cart's horse. You can see several people carrying large drums, striking them occasionally to keep the tone of the prayer constant. Some are even holding painted or woven portraits of what you can only assume to be the priest lying in that pine box.

As the funeral procession draws nearer there is a tumult near the back of the procession as a young acolyte surges forward with a length of parchment in one hand and a heavy sack over one shoulder. He leaps spryly up onto the cart and sets the sack down next to the father's remains. The young lad holds his hands up and the crowd becomes silent, all eyes turned his way.



'Friends and brothers!' he bellows gleefully, 'I have wondrous news! With one final donation of 50 silvers from one of our own Nahab locals...we have enough to buy a fantastic plot at the city cemetery for Father Heretio! Once again this city has recognised one of its beloved sons! To the cemetery!' he points his finger down a side street and with a rousing cheer the procession swerves toward the Noble Quarter of the city.

Should the Player Characters go along with the procession they will see a small band of armoured soldiers who momentarily try and stop the procession from entering the cemetery gates, only granting the cart access to the cemetery when a heavy sack of coins is handed to one of them.

The burial itself is a solemn ceremony performed by several acolytes saying prayers over the gravesite. Only after many of the attendant people throw a variety of items into the priest's open grave are the two swarthy-looking gravediggers allowed access to the body. With Father Heretio buried, several armed soldiers begin ushering the large crowd of peasants back into the streets.

Player Characters who succeed a Gather Information check may discover a few facts about this scene.

The scene is designed mostly to set the stage for the Player Characters, allowing them to see what this man really meant to the majority of the population and the darkening mood of the peasantry toward the nobles as a whole in the wake of his death. It also gives the Games Master an opportunity to have the Player Characters meet up with likeminded adventurers who might have been staying in Nahab long enough to meet Father Heretio and want to avenge his murder.

Overall the Player Characters should get a good sense of the tension in Nahab, possibly seeing a heroic or profitable opportunity in avenging the poor priest who was cut down before his time.

THE CRAZED SOOTHSAYER

After the funeral procession is over and the task to burying Father Heretio has been left to the gravediggers, many of the funeral-goers head over to a local tavern, The Tallest Tale, to get out from under the beginning rains. There they plan to drown the sorrows of their loss in frothy ales and roasted sheep flanks rather than in the brewing storm outside. The Player Characters should be ushered in to get them out of the weather, if not by common sense then by a few offered drinks from fellow mourners.

There will be an overtone of sadness, but as the drink begins to flow and the heads begin to swim...things lighten significantly. As the characters start to eat and drink with the mourners, they will hear much about the history of Nahab and how much Father Heretio meant to the peasant families here. There will be much drinking and carousing late into

the night. The pub will be filled with song and dance, many toasts to the priest and to his works, but very little wenching and whoring... it is not that kind of night.

Things will progress as noted until later in the night, when Sabiat will finally make his appearance. When the Player Characters are ready to move on to the next portion of the plot, read the following section aloud to the players:

With a crack of lightning outside to announce his arrival like the prophesy he often spouts, the doors swing inward with a burst of wind from the storm raging above and a middle-aged man of either horrible cleanliness or darker skin stomps in. He is soaked to the very bone, dark stringy hair clings to his face like black seaweed and his breeches drip mud in a filthy brown river from the knees down. He raises his arms and spreads his fingers wide, his reddish brown eyes searching the crowd for nothing and everything all at once. The pub is still and silent, with only the storm beating sound against the wooden shingles above.

'Mitra has spoken!' his voice undeniably Zamorian in accent, 'The storm is his fury! The rain, his tears!' He walks from table to table, peering at the patrons one at a time before moving on to another. 'We paid a year's wages to set his son in hallowed ground...when all ground he would walk upon was as Temple!' He shakes his head and hisses like a reptile with disgust.

'Nahab is plagued! Not by insects or sickness! By the noble blood that runs into the forges and creates the chains of our very lives! Tericos Heretio was the best of us... our port in any storm, our very voice of reason. Yet he was cut down in the night like any other wanton traveller! I tell you this, people of Nahab, why was no guard around when he needed them? Where were the noble soldiers who block us from our crops and take what they want in the name of tax and domain?'

He slams his fists down on the table he is standing next to, drinks topple onto him and he continues heedless of the new stain on his clothes.

'I will tell you why. It is upon the backs of you common men and your humbled wives that the nobles can do this, because we allowed them to do so! We have opened our legs and invited these rapists into our wombs and now they have taken from us the last obstacle to their tyranny!'

He falls to his knees in the middle of the barroom floor and raises his clenched fists to the ceiling.

'Mitra hear our prayers! Hear the sobs of our children and the roar of our men! Nahab needs your hand, the culling hand that will take the

ignoble nobles from our lands and give Corinthia back to her people! I beg of you!’ His voice echoes even in the small room and several patrons bow their heads in joined prayer.

The door opens again, yet this time it is filled with a half dozen armoured soldiers, two of which you immediately recognise from the cemetery gates.

‘Alright you old coot, it’s to the irons with you this time! Let’s be...’ the lead soldier shouts, but is cut off by a platter of bread pudding colliding with the side of his helmet, sending the sticky substance splattering in all directions. ‘Alright, who did it?’ No one steps forward, or even makes a gesture, yet the tension toward these guards is palpable.

‘If it’s to be that way,’ the guard says as he draws his cudgel, ‘Let’s go Sabiat, they’ll only make it harder on you.’

‘He speaks the truth! Get ‘em!’ a voice shouts and the first punch is thrown.

The Player Characters are about to be involved in a bar fight. The patrons, most of them drunk and filled with a great deal of anger by Sabiat’s speech, will lash out at nearly anyone, including each other and the Player Characters! The soldiers are trained to go after larger and more intimidating targets first, which will probably include the Player Characters, making absolutely sure they are forced to react. The patrons are simply using their fists, but the armoured soldiers are using cudgels to try and fend off their attackers. If anyone draws a lethal weapon, the soldiers will draw their broadswords and cut their way out of the bar.

Once the conflict ensues, Sabiat will slip away to assure he is not caught.

The fight will last until all fighting patrons are incapacitated, the soldiers have been incapacitated or everyone leaves. The soldiers will stay around until two of their number have fallen, then they will try to fight their way out of the pub to report the disturbance.

Sabiat

Medium Human Zamorian thief 6; HD: 6d8+18 (42 hp); **Init:** +6; **Spd:** 40 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 17; **Parry DV:** 13; **DR:** —; **BAB/Grp:** +4/+4; **Atk:** Stiletto +5 melee; **Full Atk:** Stiletto +5 melee; **Dmg:** Stiletto 1d4, x4, AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Zamorian qualities, Sneak Attack +4d6/+4d8, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +2, Special Ability (sorcerous protection); **SV:** Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 13

Skills & Feats: Appraise +6, Balance +8, Bluff +10, Climb +6, Decipher Script +5, Disable Device +6, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +5, Heal +4, Hide +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +5, Search +6, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +6, Survival +4, Tumble +8, Use Rope +6; Dodge, Eyes of the Cat, Fleet-Footed, Improved Initiative, Light-Footed, No Honour, Weapon Focus (stiletto)

Possessions: Two matching stilettos, 3 silver pieces, Father Heretio’s liver wrapped in leather and worn against his heart, scroll of summoning The Starved One’s

Notes: Sabiat is a middle-aged man from Zamora who came to Corinthia to seek a new life after his family was swallowed up by crime and slavery in Shadizar. After coming to Nahab he developed a very strong addiction to the black lotus nectar, causing him to lose grip on much of his own sanity and granting him ‘visions and premonitions’ that he happily cried out to the passing citizens of Nahab. He is not a complete lunatic, and tends to calm considerably after a cathartic purge of his current thoughts and feelings.

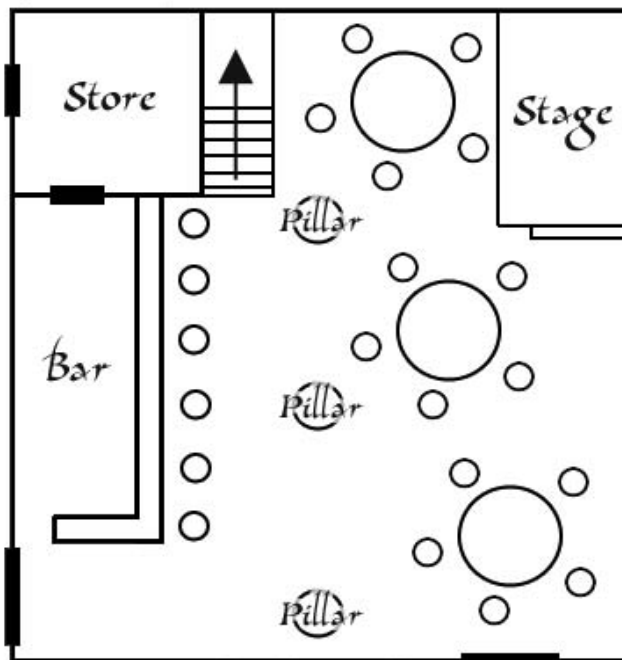
Sabiat is not just a madman who shouts and screams as a street corner soothsayer. He is a skilful Zamorian thief who once stole a very powerful scroll from a half-demonic witch in the bowels of Shadizar while trying to get his next supply of lotus. The scroll was written in a variety of languages that he only had begun to decipher when the Nahab noble guards caught him with the illegal lotus extract and threw him in the stocks for a full week. It was during that week that Sabiat cleared his mind of lotus, going through a painful and difficult withdrawal that sparked a deep hatred of the nobility here.

It was that hatred that gave him the tenacity to finish deciphering the scroll, which described a very powerful ritual of dark rebirth, the ritual he planned to use to set ‘The Starved One’ upon Nahab, veering it toward the nobles as the scroll described was possible. He memorised the process and then struck out upon the peasant roads in search of the perfect specimen.

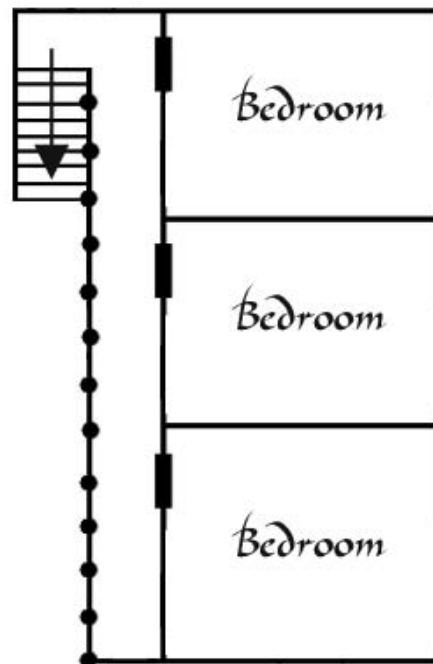
When Sabiat explained to Father Heretio how he would make all of the nobles suffer, how they would all be damned for what they do, Heretio scolded him and tried to explain that violence was not the way: that Sabiat was better off ignoring them and living his own life peacefully. So angered was Sabiat at this that he instantly chose the priest as the subject of the ritual, killing the priest easily with a few well-placed stiletto plunges. Over the next two days Sabiat prepared the body by removing the proper organs and pieces of flesh, then washing the whole body in dark apple vinegar. It was ready and so long as Sabiat had the liver, the home of the priest’s displaced spirit, The Starved One would ravage the town where he wished and he could blame the nobles.

THE TALLEST TALE TAVERN

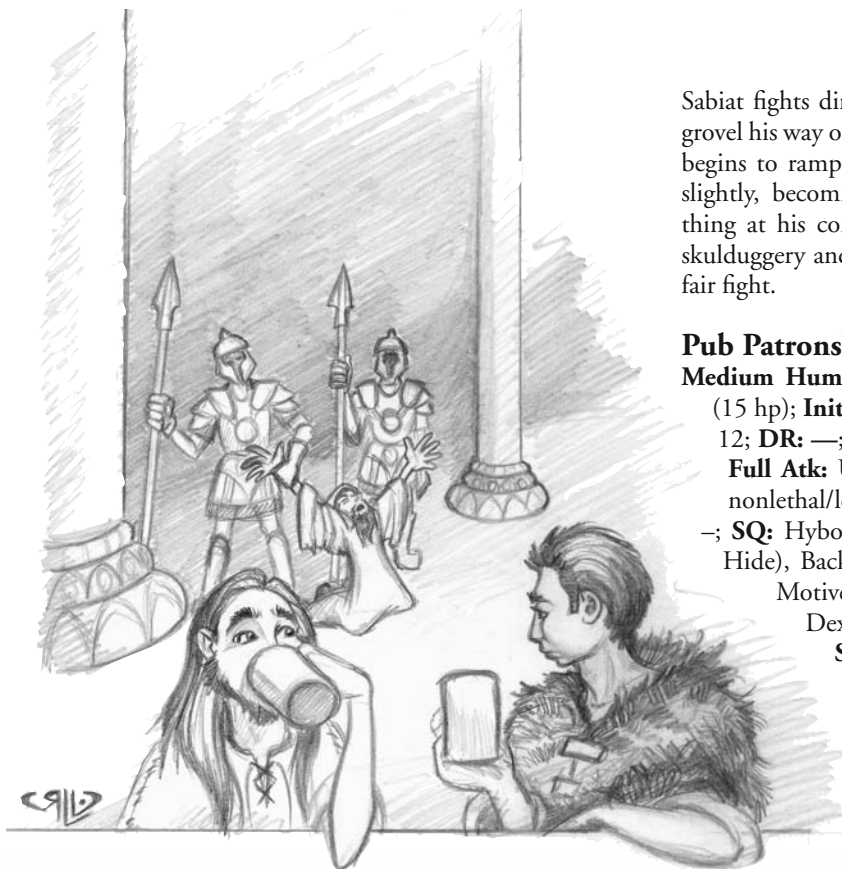
Ground Floor



First Floor



FOUL PORCENCUS



Sabiat fights dirty when he has to, but would much rather grovel his way out of most situations. Once The Starved One begins to rampage as he directs it, his demeanour changes slightly, becoming heady with the power of the demonic thing at his control, however, he would still prefer to use skulduggery and backstabbing to any form of straight up or fair fight.

Pub Patrons (10)

Medium Human Corinthian commoner 3; HD: 3d8+3 (15 hp); **Init:** +1; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 13; **Parry DV:** 12; **DR:** —; **BAB/Grp:** +1/+4; **Atk:** Unarmed +4 melee; **Full Atk:** Unarmed +4 melee; **Dmg:** Unarmed 1d6+3 nonlethal/lethal; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Craft (various), Hide), Background Skills (Craft (various), Hide, Sense Motive, Spot); **SV:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills & Feats: Bluff +3, Craft (various) +4, Diplomacy +6, Hide +5, Knowledge (local) +6; Brawl, Dodge
Possessions: 3 silver pieces

Noble Soldiers (6)

Medium Human Corinthian soldier 4; HD: 4d10+12 (36 hp); **Init:** +2; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 14; **Parry DV:** 15; **DR:** 5; **BAB/Grp:** +4/+6; **Atk:** Cudgel +6 melee *or* broadsword +7 melee; **Full Atk:** Cudgel +6 melee *or* broadsword +7 melee; **Dmg:** Cudgel 1d8+2, x2, AP 2 *or* broadsword 1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborean qualities, Adaptability (Bluff, Intimidate), Background Skills (Escape Artist, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Spot), Formation Combat (heavy infantry); **SV:** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills & Feats: Bluff +4, Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +2, Spot +3; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword)

Possessions: Leather jerkin, steel cap, broadsword, wooden cudgel, 19 silver pieces each

The Player Characters have a choice; fight the soldiers or escape and leave the patrons to their own devices. If they stick around to help the patrons they will quickly become local heroes among the peasants, who show their appreciation by buying them as many drinks as they can drink and a week's stay at The Tallest Tale. If they leave, the innkeeper, who escapes at the first sign of conflict, will attempt to draw their attention (Spot check DC 10) to the cellar where he is hiding people who do not want to end up in the stocks. Unless the Player Characters do something unexpected in this situation, it should leave them in the cemetery's vicinity for the next segment of the scenario.

In the off chance that the soldiers actually win the fight without the Player Characters getting away, they will be arrested just long enough for one of the soldiers to notice that Sabiat is not among the unconscious. One of them will see the muddy footprints leading to the back door and will investigate, crying out 'he's out here!' when he looks outside. The soldiers will immediately drop their pursuit of the Player Characters and run after their primary target instead. Once they leave, they will not come back, having been apprehended by The Starved One, who is now loose and *very* hungry. Once the violence has died down, the innkeeper will come back in and offer rooms at his tavern to anyone who was involved, especially the Player Characters, who are heralded as strangers willing to help a bunch of peasants they have never met.

THE GRAVEDIGGERS' TALE

No matter the turn of events the night before, the Player Characters will awaken to a cacophony of shouts, crying and similar outbursts outside. If they stayed at The Tallest Tale, they and several other patrons will wake up to the same noises and no doubt wander outside to see what the commotion is.

If the Player Characters managed to get away from the area last night and are elsewhere in Nahab, the scene will remain the same. The Games Master will have to remember that the Player Characters will need to walk to the area before getting to the actual scene at the cemetery gates. Otherwise, the introduction scene is the same.

When the Player Characters go outside or open their shutters to the street, read the following section aloud to the players:

There are several people running through the streets, careless of the muddy puddles staining their clothing as they splash through them. They all seem to be headed toward a single point: the cemetery.

'What is going on?' a nearby citizen asks one of the runners.

'It...is...' a young woman, tears in her eyes, stops briefly to catch her breath and to answer his question in heaving breaths, '...unbelievable. Somebody...stole Father Heretio's body last night!' She points in the direction of the cemetery, 'Come on! The gravediggers are there now!'

With that she picks up the edges of her mud-soaked skirts and continues running followed closely by the curious man.

What she said is true, to a certain degree. Heretio's body is gone, but not as a result of grave robbers. Although the mysterious cloaked men seen buying their way into the cemetery earlier in this scenario were indeed grave robbers, they are not responsible for the priest's disappearance. The Starved One awoke and went after the parts it needed (see The Starved One for details, pg. 18) in the grave robbers and then escaped to await further orders.

When the Player Characters arrive at the cemetery they will see a large crowd forming around the twisted and broken gates, which are hanging from their split hinges. Most are peasants shouting and waving their fists at a ring of four soldiers trying to keep the crowd out of the open archway, their broadswords drawn but not bloodied.

There are the two gravediggers who were present at the burial standing amongst the peasants, trying to explain what they can to the growing crowd. When the Player Characters join

the crowd and listen to the gravediggers explain what is going on, read the following section aloud:

The crowd surrounding the two gravediggers is tightly interwoven, but from where you are standing you can hear their trembling voices clearly. There is more than a touch of fear in their tone.

‘Yes, yes,’ the older of the two gravediggers says to the crowd, ‘that’s what I am telling you! We got there this morning, Ruya and me, and there it was...a massacre. Not only was the Heretio’s grave open and very much empty, but there were other dead bodies everywhere.’

‘It was horrible,’ the other adds, ‘there were five of them. All bent and broken like a rag doll. They were *missing* parts too!’

‘One was missing an eye, another had his guts ripped open and strewn about like he was *pulled*,’ the first continues, ‘no two were killed the same way.’

The younger gravedigger’s voice turns dark in tone, ‘I know what a blade does to a man. These men were not killed by soldier or assassin...they were torn apart, as if by an animal or *by hand*.’

A rumble passes through the crowd and the gravediggers waive their leather gloved hands at them to keep it down.

‘Now, we have a lot to work to do,’ the older says with a sigh, ‘five more holes to dig.’

The crowd parts to allow them to walk down the cemetery wall line, toward another entrance a few dozen paces away. The murmur throughout the crowd is that of fear and genuine sorrow that the priest’s corpse has not only been disturbed, but taken.

The gravediggers, Horace and Ruya, will take a few minutes to catch their courage before entering the cemetery through the service entrance. This will give the Player Characters a chance to speak to them alone if they wish to. If they do, the gravediggers will begin to tell the same story as above; but they will stop if interrupted. Depending on how they approach the subjects, the gravediggers know the following:

- ❖ The slaughtered grave robbers were wearing the tokens of the noble houses.
- ❖ None of the precious items in Heretio’s grave were taken, just the body.
- ❖ None of the grave robbers’ missing body parts have been found; they were taken.

For 50 silver pieces the gravediggers will let the Player Characters in through the service entrance and show them the scene. If the Player Characters can afford it, haggle or intimidate the men into letting them into the cemetery. The gravediggers give them quick directions to where it is from there, but they will not go with them, explaining that it is a punishable offence to smuggle peasants onto noble property.

The cemetery is crawling with noble soldiers, so the Player Characters may have to sneak between mausoleums and the like to get to Heretio’s violated grave. If they are caught on the property, a conflict with the soldiers guarding the cemetery is certain (use the Noble Soldier statistics on pg. 9).

On reaching the actual scene, the grave robbers’ bodies have been dragged into a line and covered with cheesecloth, much of which is now sodden with blood and is already attracting flies. There are several things that can be discovered at the scene with the proper skill checks. The following are facts that can be told to the players if they make the checks listed in parentheses after the fact.

- ❖ There is a distinctive set of tracks inside the grave of a man’s bare feet. (Search or Spot DC 12)
- ❖ The bodies have 104 silver pieces on them, so their murderer did not rob them. (Search DC 10)
- ❖ One of the grave robbers (the one missing his eye and four teeth) was wielding a broadsword like the ones carried by the noble soldiers (Search DC 13)
- ❖ No two bodies are missing the same parts (Heal DC 15)

The scene is a grisly one, with the rain having pounded much of the blood and other bodily fluids into a sour-smelling mud that is now alive with vermin. The grass around the gravesite is stained red in a wide semicircle, but there are very few other signs of struggle in the grave. The coffin lid was obliterated into tiny pine fragments strewn about the area.

The Player Characters will only get to stick around for a short time before the soldiers will notice them and move to apprehend them. Unless they want a fight on their hands that will label them as fugitives in Nahab they will want to make their escape.

The Player Characters may only be slightly interested at this point, intrigued by the chain of events, or maybe even outraged that such a crime could occur in such a civilised city. Whatever the case, they can go about their own way for the rest of the night. If they were caught at either The Tallest Tale or the cemetery they might have more encounters with the soldiers who have been given their descriptions and ordered to apprehend them for their unruly behaviour.

Chasing Mist

THE CITY OF Nahab has suffered a great loss and a great tragedy in the murder of Father Heretio and the following theft of his corpse, so there will be a massively encompassing sorrow and depression in much of the peasant population wherever the Player Characters decide to go and spend their coin and free time. Very few people will go out of their way to be helpful or friendly. It should make for a rather boring evening or two for the Player Characters.

One thing that should be omnipresent during this section of the adventure are bellowing town criers and the constant buzz of rumours everywhere there are ears to hear them. They have been seeded with catchphrases and biased information by Sabiat, so the following sorts of cries echo throughout the peasant blocks of Nahab over the next day or so.

- ❖ 'Murders continue! Two nobles killed in market district!'
- ❖ 'The Hand of Mitra has come! He punishes who we cannot!'
- ❖ 'The Terror strikes again! Nobles beware!'
- ❖ 'City guards admit the Terror is real!'
- ❖ 'Noble houses offer fortune for Terror's head!'

Sabiat has sewn his fellow town criers with the knowledge that some unstoppable creature, which has become known as the 'Terror', is stalking the streets of Nahab targeting her nobles. He is using these messages to begin priming the peasant population for the next stage of his plan.

The Terror has indeed left three more grisly murder scenes in the span of time it takes for the Player Characters to get to this point. A noblewoman was torn in two in the garden of her own estate; a young noble couple were discovered in the market district at night, the man's spine was bent double while the woman was decapitated; the last was a noble soldier, who had one of his arms torn completely free from his body and his ribcage crushed. The Starved One has performed some horrific acts in the past 48 hours and word of its attacks is spreading quickly.

If the Player Characters have any way to speak with or to the nobles of Nahab, they will offer a 5,000 silver piece reward to the brave soul that can bring back the Terror's head on a spear. However, even this veritable fortune has failed to entice a single peasant to come forward to try and collect on the reward or even inquire about it. It seems that the peasantry is convinced the Terror is simply attacking nobles and that they have little to worry about.

The nobles are similarly beginning to worry that this is the case, but also what can be done to stop this creature. For the first time in many years, the nobles of Nahab are afraid.

RATTLED GUARDS

Once the word of the Terror and the reward it carries has begun to spread all over the city, the Player Characters will eventually find themselves approached by a trio of noble soldiers. This encounter is designed to give the Player Characters an idea of what they are truly dealing with, rather than some amorphous monster.

While the Player Characters are relaxing in a bar or pub eating a meal, read the following aloud to the players:

The door opens and a trio of armoured figures enter the establishment, looking over the assembled patrons. When they see your table, the three noble soldiers begin swaggering your way. You recognise one of the men from someplace or another.

'Can I speak to you?' their leader asks and you immediately remember that he was one of the guards at the cemetery. The strength has left his voice completely and has been replaced with shock or worse. 'We need to speak to you and your comrades at arms.'

You can see that all three soldiers are speckled with gore and are the colour of spoiled milk; the wideness in their eyes and the perspiration on their brows is the sign of true fear.

If the Player Characters do not send the men away, read the following section aloud to the players:

At your nod, they pull up chairs to your table and the lead guard begins to speak again, his voice quivering. They all seem one step away from hysteria.

'We have seen it, the Terror. It is very real. Oh Mitra save us!' the man takes a hasty gulp before continuing, 'it walks like a man, though it had a lope, like a mountain wolf. Thick arms and a barrel chest, over which it wore the rags of a blouse and coat. I never saw its face, just heard its growl and smelled the death on it. We were just patrolling the grounds, there were five of us, and it dropped down from the rooftops like a cat.' He pauses to calm down before going on. 'That is when it just started lashing out with those arms, grabbing, clawing, tearing. Grachis and Benevio did not have a chance. We ran the moment it spoke. It said our names, it *knows* who it wants to kill!'

'If it said anything else I would not know; I could not hear it over the screams of my dying men.'

By this time the whole establishment the Player Characters are in has leaned in to eavesdrop on the horror story and the guards are all but catatonic in their chairs. The reality of what was said sinks in over a few minutes and the patrons begin to murmur to themselves. There is a tense moment when the door flies open, causing everyone to jump in their seats, spilling many drinks.

Sabiati enters the scene and points an accusatory finger at the guards. His plan is working too well for these three to earn any sympathy for the nobles.

Once the Player Characters realise who it is in the doorway, read the following aloud to the players:

'It has named them!' Sabiati bellows maniacally as he steps into the room, 'The Terror will have them! We cannot let them stay!'

The madman shuffles forward until he is just a few feet from the terrified guards.

'It will come and kill us all for protecting them! Let them go to their noble employers for safety! Let them hide in their wine cellars and libraries,' Sabiati shouts, 'anywhere but here! We are not safe! Not with them here!'

The crowd begins to mull and boil with the soothsayer's intentions, the gravity of the situation weighing heavily on the three men. Where you once saw three strong-willed soldiers you now see a trio of the most fearful, defeated and utterly hopeless men. The crowd begins to move on them, on *your* table, but the lead guard clears his throat, checking them momentarily.

'We will go,' the soldier croaks out as they scoot to their feet and begin to back towards the doorway, 'but you are never going to be safe...not ever...' they leave silently and the crowd waits tensely, as if the Terror would be waiting right outside the door. The screams do not come and, minutes later, business resumes.

The pub roars back to life in a short while, with many rumours and gossips passing around concerning the newly described creature. Many have begun claiming that it is only targeting nobles and with Sabiati nearby to bolster these beliefs about the Terror the divide between the nobles and the peasants has begun to widen. In the next few days, when Sabiati is ready to spring the other half of the plot on the city.

It will not take long for the Player Characters to find out about the three guards being brutally killed just a block or so away from where they met them. The details are fuzzy, but one thing is very clear; the Terror ripped them limb from limb in a side alley.

The Three Guards

Pironel, Rathicus and Juxti are the three noble soldiers that left the establishment to go find 'other places to hide'. Sabiati's words condemned them back out into the streets, where they will meet a very unfortunate end at the hands of The Starved One (directed by Sabiati to fulfil his prophetic predictions). Should the Player Characters actually follow them out into the city they should witness the attack and Games Masters may even involve the Player Characters in it (see pg. 18 for details as to how to run that encounter, if necessary).

This will be the first of a few encounters where the Terror does *exactly* what Sabiati proclaims it will, which should begin to turn a few wheels in the players' heads concerning some form of connection between the two. If not, they soon will wonder why this crazy street crier is always surrounded by carnage, but also how he knows where it will happen.

THE STABLES ABLAZE

The city stables, where the Player Characters may have had to stash their steeds if they have any, is one of the largest buildings in the centre of Nahab. Owned by a consortium of noble houses, the stables rent stalls and sell horses to those passing through Nahab.

It is a massive building some 200 feet long and half that wide, with rows upon rows of two-horse stalls lined with a mixture of straw, feed and manure. Two dozen peasants man it at any time: shovelling waste, adding fresh straw and grooming the horses that stay here. It costs two silver pieces a week to rent a stall, three if the hands are to groom the animal during its stay. Nahab sees a lot of travelling visitors, so it makes perfect sense that their stables are always in magnificent shape.

This scene takes place during the evening, when the Games Master thinks the Player Characters are ready for a little excitement, read the following aloud to the players:

The night air is noticeably warmer this evening. With not a cloud in the sky, the new moon's eye gazes blankly down upon the world. The sky seems a little brighter than usual, the stars twinkling a little less, as if the night itself was being illuminated.

Then the smell hits you. Smoke. Fire.

You look around until you notice a growing orange glow over the tops of the buildings a few streets away. Dark clouds of smoke billow up from what can only be a very large building on fire. That is when you hear it: a horse whinnying in terror and pain. The stables!

Assuming the Player Characters have mounts in the stables, or that they would not simply sit back and let such a horrible tragedy take place without at least trying to lend a hand, they can reach the stable after a few rounds of jogging.

When they arrive there are already a dozens of men with buckets running back and forth from the well to the blaze trying to fight the growing sheets of flame devouring the stable walls. Several horses are running panicked in the streets, throwing the reins of their handlers. There are a handful of injured young men lying on the street, being cared for by a pair of young women. A beautiful woman is crying and pointing at the burning stable. The area is chaos.

At the edge of the chaos is a familiar face, Sabiat, who is standing atop an empty rain barrel preaching about the stable's horrible taxes and unfair wages. This fire somehow in Sabiat's words, is being blamed on the nobles.

The firefighters are fighting a losing battle. Between the numerous oil lanterns inside, the manure and the dry straw, all they can hope to do is keep one wall from collapsing in upon itself.

Of the 50 or so horses in the stables when the fire started, only 25 threw their reins and escaped into the streets. There is a 50% chance per Player Character with a mount at the stables of their mount escaping the blaze. If this is so, there is only a 10% chance per individual mount that it was caught by one of the handlers. If a Player Character's mount is not in the blaze, but also not being held by a handler, it means that it has gotten free and is no doubt within a block or two running around panicked.

If a Player Character wishes to help the handlers rein in some more of the wayward mounts, it will require a Handle Animal check (DC 15) per horse to be caught. While there is no immediate reward, it is a very helpful gesture and could earn the Player Character much esteem with both the nobles and the peasant stable hands.

Among the injured young men are the two stable boys on hand when the fire began. One has suffered a rather nasty spill onto a pitchfork, the other has a bit of smoke in his lungs. A Diplomacy check (DC 13) will encourage one of the lads, Puernis, to explain that they saw something in the back of the stable *eating* one of the horses, so they went and brought back one of the owners who was subsequently attacked by the Terror. The boy turned and ran away but when he tripped on a pitchfork he dropped his lantern.

He is afraid the owner is going to beat him for setting the stable on fire.

The women, Beatrice and Havarra, are servants of the Mitrans faith, skilled healers, and are helping wherever they can with the wounded.

They would gladly accept any help with the dozen or so peasants who

have inhaled too much smoke or suffered flash burns from blowing straw embers. Again, this is not generally rewarding in any way other than the relationships it will create.

The beautiful crying woman is Clemnestra Piorre, the wife of the owner who went inside the building with the stable boys just before the fire began. She is hysterical and is repeatedly shouting that someone needs to go in and rescue her husband, Mikolos. The Player Characters can see many peasants openly sneering at her, just another sign of the growing tensions.

Sabiat is proclaiming against the nobles again, trying to turn some of the fire fighters away from the burning building because it is a home of oppression. He is angering any of the truly moral people here trying to stop the fire to keep anyone else from getting hurt, but a few peasants have rallied to his words despite the whinnying of dying horses inside.

Should the Player Characters decide to go inside the blaze, either to search for survivors, their own mounts or at the behest of Piorre, they must first pass a Will save (DC 16). Once inside they must succeed a Reflex save (DC 14) or suffer 1d4 fire damage each round from burning embers or the lick of flames. If they make it inside and can stay for longer than two rounds, read the following to the players aloud:

The fire is intense, but through the smoke and heat you can see a hulking man-like shape holding another, smaller man in both hands, one meaty hand wrapped around both wrists and the other holding an ankle. Through the distorted air and smoky haze you cannot make out any true features, just shapes.

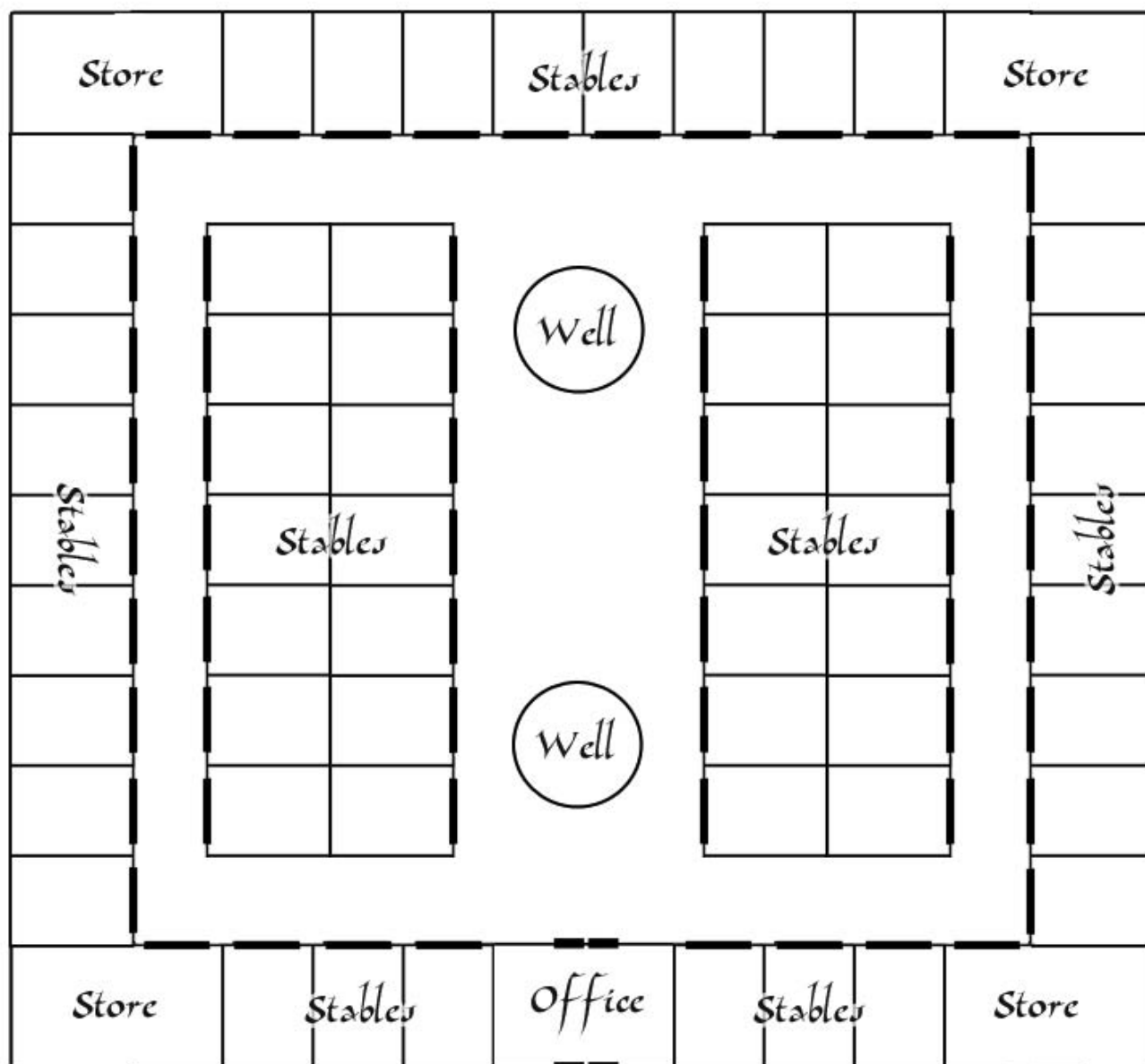
Then, with a growl you can hear over the roaring fire and whinnying horses, it speaks.

'Mikolos Piorre!' it bellows, pulling its arms aside and splitting the smaller man into two unequal halves. A pile of entrails hits the ground with a disgusting sizzle, then what can only be the Terror drops the two pieces of the fresh corpse and leaps half the distance between you. You can see its flesh is blackened and smouldering, its eyes grey with boiling fluids and its hair a smoky mass fogging its head like a foul-smelling scarf. It gives a twisted and blackened snarl and you can see rows of human teeth inside its widening maw.

All of a sudden, the Terror whirls on one blistering and shoeless foot and bolts back into the flames. In three long leaping bounds it crosses the blazing stables and crashes through the wooden wall like it was paper. Disappearing into the night, its exit did more than surprise you, it has weakened the very structure of the building you are in!

Even if the Player Characters do not enter the burning stable, they will get a chance to see the Terror leaping away in great hulking bounds from the back of the building. It will

THE STABLES



Main Entrance

leave a smoky trail from its own burning flesh and several greasy footfalls where its cracked and burnt feet touch the cobblestones. It will not be hard to track the Terror to its next destination, once the Player Characters are finished helping or investigating the stable fire.

What has really happened at the stable is that Sabiat needed to step up the exposure of the Terror a bit more, making it absolutely impossible to ignore. He needed to strike somewhere that peasants would get hurt while targeting something of noble origin. The stable was the first thing that came to mind, so he instructed The Starved One to attack the noble-held horses inside. It was supposed to be a simple

attack on the horses that would be interrupted by the peasant workers, who would be slaughtered. When the fire broke out, Sabiat could not believe his good luck. Not only were the peasants now in danger as a result of noble actions, but the fire also summoned dozens of witnesses. Although he would have liked to have spared the stable its ashen fate, he saw it as a necessary loss in his war against the noble presence in his city.

A TASTE FOR FLESH

Following the trail of greasy footfalls, foul-smelling smoke or even the panicked cries of the people it has passed is a relatively easy task, requiring only occasional Search checks (DC 10) to keep up the hunt. The Starved One has suffered a great deal of visceral damage from the fire at the stables and is now under the basic instinct to *feed* in order to regenerate.

The Starved One adds the flesh and organs directly to its own by means of devouring it to regenerate, rather than simply growing back new flesh (see pg. 18 for details on The Starved One). It needs a variety of different flesh types at this moment, so it has fled to the one place in Nahab to have such a variety: the butcher's smokehouse.

The Starved One moves fast enough to have a healthy head start on anyone trying to follow it, so it will be well into its feast when the butcher yells for the guard. Although theoretically it would not take very long for creature to devour enough flesh to repair its own, for the scene's purposes the creature is still in the smokehouse when the Player Characters arrive. Unless they have taken more than an hour or so to get there, then the creature is waiting for instruction from Sabiat several city blocks away.

Eventually, the Player Characters should reach the butcher's house and smokehouse, where the following section should be read to the players aloud:

A slightly overweight man wearing a nightshirt and holding a wide, sharp cleaver greets you at the squat pair of buildings.

'It is here! The Terror is in my smoker!'

Sure enough, there is a massive rent hole in the wooden walls of the smokehouse issuing thin trickles of spiced smoke. From the inside you can hear what might be very heavy breathing or wheezing, or possibly the chewing and swallowing of something inside.

'Why is it doing this?' the butcher asks nervously, 'I'm not a noble! I only have a handful of noble clients, why does it want me?'

His shouting gathers a few of the other peasants and passing folk into a small crowd mulling about the area.

A dozen pairs of fearful eyes watch and wait as the occasional growl or deep wheeze rumbles out of the smokehouse. A mixture of fear and curiosity fills the air, as some braver souls walk closer to where the Terror lies waiting, only to leap back when a strange sound breaks the silence from within.

'Stand aside,' a rough-looking Cimmerian says as he shoulders through the small crowd, 'this beast is ours!' he says as he draws a large war sword. In his mail shirt you are reminded of the barbarians of the north. His sneering face is a map of old scars traced in some kind of war paint and he snorts in your direction. 'You will not be getting a half-silver of that reward, not while Viragu the Neverbroken is here! You understand what I'm saying?'

Viragu has with him three other Cimmerian swordsmen, all apparently prepared for a big battle. You are not sure to be afraid for or of these barbaric brutes, but they seem to be waiting for an answer out of you...

During this time Sabiat will have finished his preaching and will recall The Starved One to wherever he is currently whisking away to. Meanwhile, read the following to the players aloud:

In an explosion of wooden planks and smouldering hickory chips, the front door of the smokehouse splinters outward under the bulk of the Terror! It is carrying a large slab of smoked meat in its mouth and is loping on all fours like a giant ape. Where it was once burnt and blistered it is now fully healed, long grey hair hangs greasily in its face and you can see bulging muscles filling out its frame in an oversized mockery of the human body. With a low growl it darts to one side, knocking aside a handful of peasants who were frozen in fear. In the blink of an eye it is lost in the darkness, with only the screams of those it passes to gauge its distance.

'You rotting dogs!' Viragu screams, 'You lost us our kill!' He and his comrades begin to snarl and step your way, blades drawn.

'You will pay with your lives!' he bellows as they charge...

Viragu the Neverbroken and his three huntsmen have been tracking the beast for two days now trying to make the fortune the nobles have offered. When the Player Characters' conversational exchange with them gives The Starved One a chance to escape, it triggered the Cimmerian's stereotypical anger, causing them to fly into their Fighting Madness and attack the Player Characters.

Cimmerian Huntsmen (3)

Medium Human Cimmerian barbarian 4; HD: 4d10+20* (40 hp); Init: +2; Spd: 30 ft.; Dodge DV: 15; Parry DV: 15*; DR: 5; BAB/Grp: +4/+8*; Atk: Broadsword +9* melee; Full Atk: Broadsword +9* melee; Dmg: Broadsword 1d12+6*, 19–20/x2, AP 3; Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); SA: —; SQ: Cimmerian qualities, Fearless, Versatility (–2 Penalty), Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge; SV: Fort +9*, Ref +6, Will +4*; Str 19*, Dex 14, Con 20*, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills & Feats: Climb +5, Hide +6, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Survival +8; Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (war sword), Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (war sword)

Possessions: War sword, mail shirt, 7 silver pieces each

Viragu the Neverbroken

Medium Human Cimmerian barbarian

6; HD: 6d10+20* (50 hp); **Init:** +2; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 17; **Parry DV:** 17*; **DR:** 5; **BAB/Grp:** +6/+1 and +11/+6*; **Atk:** Broadsword +12* melee; **Full Atk:** Broadsword +12/+7* melee; **Dmg:** Broadsword 1d12+8*, 19–20/x2, AP 3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Cimmerian qualities, Fearless, Versatility (-2 Penalty), Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge; **SV:** Fort +11*, Ref +7, Will +5*; Str 21*, Dex 14, Con 22*, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills & Feats: Climb +7, Heal +3, Hide +6, Intimidate +9, Jump +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +6, Survival +8; Cleave, Diehard, Dodge, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (war sword), Mobility, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (war sword)

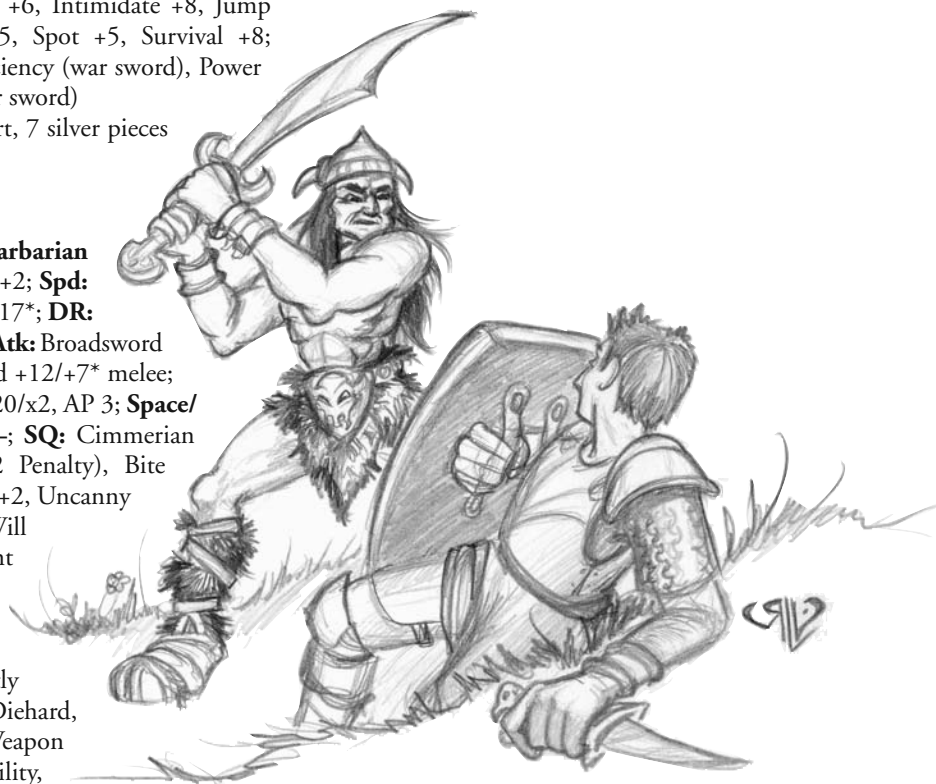
Possessions: War sword, mail shirt, 29 silver pieces

* Adjusted figure to take into consideration their Fighting Madness, which will expire in six rounds for the huntsmen, seven for Viragu. See the *Conan the Roleplaying Game* book for details on the Fighting Madness feat.

The Cimmerians will fight until their Fighting Madness wears off, or until they are incapacitated. Should they come to their senses, they will try to escape with their skins as intact as they can; after all, there is a 5,000 silver piece reward still running loose elsewhere in the city!

If the Cimmerians manage to defeat the Player Characters, they will not commonly go for deathblows unless there has been a reason for them to do so. Instead they will rifle through the Player Characters' possessions any take and coin, valuables and jewellery they may be carrying. These Cimmerians are truly despicable men and often loot as bandits in their travels, so stealing from a handful of adventurers is nothing to them!

After the fight, no matter the results, several peasants will come running the Player Characters' aid. While they are being patched up or simply tended to, a quick Spot check (DC 15) will reveal that someone is lurking in the darkness across the street watching the scene. Should someone have the Eyes of the Cat feat or similar abilities to see through darkness, they can make an opposed Search roll against Sabiat's Hide skill roll (see pg. 8 for Sabiat's statistics) to discover the identity of the lurker.



If the Player Characters leap to action and go after the lurking Sabiat, who will only stay for a moment or two to decide what to do about these meddling adventurers, he will escape through the back alley network between the blocks. He will drop one of his signature stilettos, however, which is part of a matched set that Sabiat always carries with him. In fact, this was the very weapon that delivered the killing blow to Father Heretio (for the purposes of any magical auguries, divinations and the like).

Sabiat has decided that the Player Characters are a nuisance that are becoming too much of a crutch for the peasants to fall back on. He needs the people of Nahab, and eventually all of Corinthia, to rise up on their own against the nobility. If the peasants have the help and guidance of adventurers like the Player Characters they will never have the will to fight on their own.

Sabiat has decided that it is time to eliminate the Player Characters and he plans to use The Starved One to do it. By crushing them with the very being that the peasants are hoping they will defeat, Sabiat plans to break their spirits and move on the next stage of his scheme. Once the Player Characters are out of the way and no longer coddling Nahab's citizens, they can be encouraged to take matters into their own hands.

THE TERROR OF NAHAB

This encounter should happen the next morning, in plain view of as many peasants as possible. Sabiat needs a great deal of exposure for this to work properly, so he will instruct The Starved One to attack the Player Characters the next time they are outside and in public.

To drive home the fact that the Terror is attacking wantonly because the nobles have not been removed yet, Sabiat himself will be at the scene, preaching to all who are watching in horror that this is the case. It might be enough to sway the opinions of the crowd against the nobility. If the players do not already suspect Sabiat of foul play by this time, this scene will probably do it. If not, they may fall into his scheme as well and turn against the nobility after their run in with The Starved One.

The Starved One is a very powerful creature that is extremely dangerous in close combat. The Player Characters will have a difficult time defeating it straightaway, quite possibly even at all. This will be, no doubt one of the deadlier combats that the Player Characters have been in during the course of the adventure.

When the Player Characters are in a good place to be publicly attacked by The Starved One, read the following to the players aloud:

The sun is bright and wispy clouds drift across the horizon to cling to the peaks of the nearby Karpash Mountains. The smell of a baker's bread oven draws you down the street. It has been a hard past few days; today somehow feels different.

Then the first screams erupt from behind you. With each increasing cry of horror the sounds draw closer, so you spin to investigate the source of the commotion, only to wish you had not.

The Terror is speeding toward you, knocking aside food carts and citizens alike. In the light of day you can see the creature in all its horrible details. It is huge, almost half-again the size of a man and nearly as wide at its hulking shoulders. Its arms are longer than normal and are wrapped in sinewy and hulking muscles that are of varying colours, textures; some even have fur upon them.

Its legs are stocky and packed with more coiled muscle, with one foot ending in blackened talon-like nails and the other actually stopping in what could be described as a hoof. It twists its savage head on the thick-corded neck and looks down at you with a ghastly roar.

The inside of its mouth is lined with a field of badly arranged teeth several rows

deep on both jaws; most teeth are human, but you can see a few horse, dog and even perhaps the yellow incisors of a rat or two joined with the others to form a massive tearing and chewing surface that you would guess could smash stone. It closes its horrible maw and that's when it hits you like a Hyperborean wind... This thing's face is very familiar. The Terror is Father Heretio.

As it swivels the slightly deformed but recognisable face of the Mitran priest around, several others recognise him as well. Some gasp, some cry, others stand slack-jawed in disbelief, but only one speaks.

'Behold! The Terror has come to claim them during the bright of day!' Sabiat proclaims from atop a nearby woodpile as the creature rears back to attack...

The fight will be fast, bloody and savage. The Starved One has been instructed to put all the Player Characters down before devouring any of them, so it will attack any target it can every round until all of the Player Characters are incapacitated. After that, it will move to eat them, though Games Masters should remember the unexpected end to this scene.

The Starved One (aka The Terror of Nahab)

Large Humanoid Undead; HD: 10d10+16 (76 hp); **Init:** +5; **Spd:** 40 ft., 30 ft. leap; **Dodge DV:** 15; **Parry DV:** 17; **DR:** 3 natural; **BAB/Grp:** +6/+1 and +13; **Atk:** Claw +13 melee; **Full Atk:** 2 Claws +13/+8 melee *or* bite +13; **Dmg:** Claw 1d6+7, x2, AP 1 *or* bite 2d4+7, x4, AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 10 ft. (2)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** Undead properties, Flesh Consumption/Regeneration, Controlled Spirit, Frightening Visage; **SQ:** Uncanny Dodge; **SV:** Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 24, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 3
Skills & Feats: Climb +15, Hide +8, Jump +15, Listen +10, Spot +13, Swim +8, Tumble +8; Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Track
Notes: The Starved One is an ancient demonic spirit that can be summoned forth into a fresh corpse. By trapping the corpse's spirit in its liver and removing the organ, the summoner can control the actions of The Starved One to a great degree.

Always retaining a certain amount of features from the host corpse, The Starved One also takes on the physical properties of anything it manages to devour. The strength, resilience, even the physical appearance of the flesh becomes a part of The Starved One.

Should The Starved One ever reclaim its host's liver and therefore its spirit it will become free-willed. This has happened only a few times in history, with The Starved One eventually committing itself to destruction somehow due to the maddening cycle of self-digestion and eternal hunger.

The Starved One is a savage, animalistic combatant, very bestial in nature rather than humanoid, as its frame might suggest. It uses its great strength and indomitable resistance to

permanent injury to its advantage, gladly taking lesser blows to grapple with a particularly delectable morsel. Besides its ability to devour and regenerate flesh, it also causes significant damage with its claw-like fingers and rows of crushing teeth.

Undead Properties: The Starved One is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, necromantic and mind-affecting effects. They are not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, energy drain, or any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless.

Flesh Consumption/Regeneration: The Starved One is in an eternal state of decomposition through self-digestion, making its very existence a constant agony of hunger and decay. Every day The Starved One loses 10% of its maximum hit points at sunrise as parts of itself decay into open wounds and missing musculature. To combat these effects, The Starved One must devour organs, flesh and bone to regenerate lost tissue. Eating specifically what is missing (if it missing an eye, it eats an eye; a foot...a foot; and so forth) it regains one hit point per three hit points of damage (or the equivalent) it inflicts with its bite attack. If simply feasting on dead or prepared meat, it regenerates 1d10 hit points per minute of non-stop feasting. This regeneration then re-grows the missing flesh with attached amounts of the substance devoured. So, if The Starved One is missing an eye and devours the eye of a cow...it will regenerate its eye as a cow's eye.



Should The Starved One's host corpse ever reach 0 hit points it will collapse into a heap of rotting meat and organs, but will rise again at the next sunrise with 1d6 hit points and an insatiable hunger to feast and regenerate fully. Only through the sunrise self-digestion hit point loss can The Starved One truly be destroyed.

Controlled Spirit: The Starved One obeys the commands of the bearer of the host's spirit, contained in the original husk's rune-carved liver, without fail or variance from the letter of the commands given. Only if The Starved One is being commanded in a confusing way or has the opportunity to devour the host's liver will it ever usurp control for 1d3 rounds, even then only if it succeeds in a Will save (DC 15). Should the liver change hands or fall out of the possession of the summoner, The Starved One will immediately fight itself for control of its next course of action: Roll d10, 1–5 the host wants to be free of control and goes after the liver to devour it (see below), 6–10 The Starved One demon takes a chance to punish its summoner and goes after the original holder of the liver until he or it is destroyed.

Should The Starved One ever get to devour its host's liver, it will suffer 1d3 rounds of confusion while the spirit regains control of its new and agonising body. After that time, the original being is in full control and awareness of The Starved One's undead form.

Frightening Visage: The Starved One is a vile-looking, twisted undead host to a demonic spirit; it causes palpable Terror in those who it attacks in melee, forcing a Will save (DC 14) with failure resulting in a panicked fleeing for 1d3 rounds. Once this check has been passed, the target does need to make another for the rest of the combat, but failing it leaves him open to having to take it again when next attacked.

The fight with The Starved One should be brutal, but once the Player Characters have had their fill of fighting it, the heavy noble infantry arrives. Hearing all of the commotion, especially with Sabiat's anti-noble preaching, a local detachment of noble heavy infantry will come to the scene in order to try and dispatch the beast. They are well armed, armoured and could really cause a world of hurt to The Starved One if the Player Characters have been doing particularly well. They immediately begin to attack The Starved One while simultaneously trying to protect any fallen Player Characters from being eaten. Their arrival was unsuspected by Sabiat, who now must alter his plan in order to make the most out of this without making these noble soldiers martyrs.

If any player wishes to expend a Fate Point to cry out for help as the Player Character is knocked unconscious the Games Master should bring in the Infantry early as a response. Being that The Starved One will not care if the Player Characters are dead or

near death before he begins to feast upon them, their Fate Point expenditures should mean something in the conflict.

Elite Noble Infantry (4)

Medium Human Corinthian soldier 6; HD: 6d10+18 (48 hp); **Init:** +1; **Spd:** 20 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 15; **Parry DV:** 16; **DR:** 7; **BAB/Grp:** +6/+1 and +8; **Atk:** Broadsword +9 melee; **Full Atk:** Broadsword +9/+4 melee; **Dmg:** Broadsword 1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** -; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Bluff, Intimidate), Background Skills (Escape Artist, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Spot), Formation Combat (heavy infantry); **SV:** Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills & Feats: Bluff +4, Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +2, Spot +3; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword)

Possessions: Mail hauberk and scale corselet, broadsword, 26 silver pieces each

When the infantrymen arrive, The Starved One will revert back to its first and foremost orders, to kill the nobility. It will therefore focus its attacks upon the infantrymen until no noble target is available. When The Starved One is down to less than ten hit points, it will look very damaged and Sabiat will begin to worry if his plan may have backfired. In response he will turn his back on the fight for just a moment in order to speak to the spirit-liver he has tucked in his shirt, at which point The Starved One will have a new set of directives concerning the fight.

If this takes place, read the following narrative ending to the players aloud:

With a throaty, rattling cry the Terror grabs one of the noble soldiers in its talon-tipped hands and the sound of bending metal screeches out between the poor man's screams. Scooping the struggling body over its shoulder like a metallic sack of grain, the Terror immediately leaps high into the air with his prize. With animalistic grace the beast scrambles up the side of a nearby building, only to disappear over the rooftop as it bounds away with its meal...

If the Player Characters or their infantry allies manage to incapacitate the beast, it will fall apart into meaty chunks that will reassemble into The Starved One again the next day. If the Player Characters themselves take the pieces, then Sabiat will try to arrange for some kind of distraction nearby in order to sneak in and snatch the pieces so they can reform and feed in the morning. He is an exceptional thief, but will not endanger himself. If somehow caught trying to take the remains, he will simply explain that he wishes to bury them

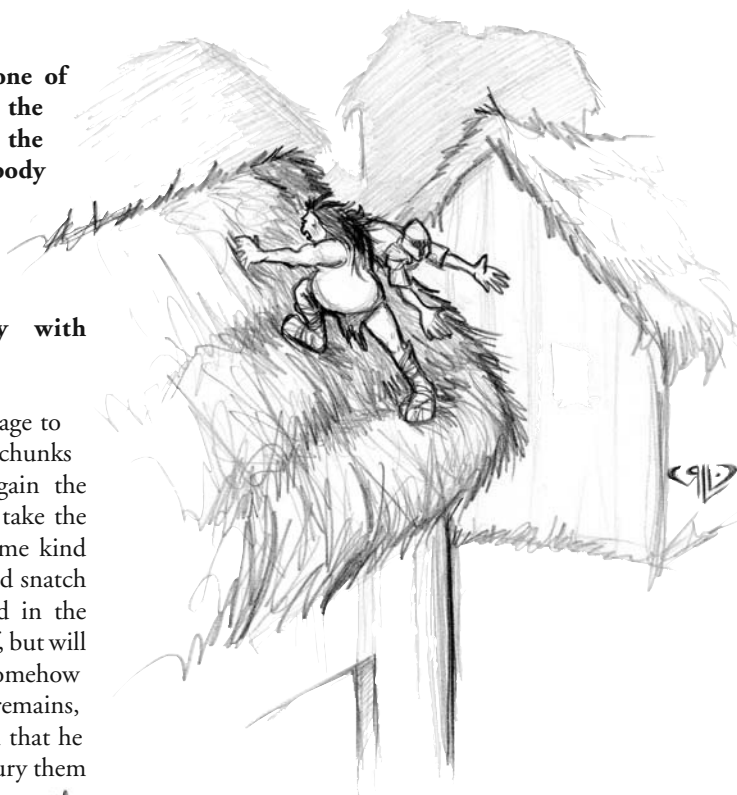
properly in Father Heretio's plot, especially as he paid so much for it; not to mention that the esteemed priest deserves as much.

If The Starved One escapes, the Player Characters will be indirectly blamed for the loss of any infantrymen in a very vocal show of disdain. This will, of course, do nothing for the public opinion of the nobles.

Sabiat will escape as soon as he can no matter the ending of the battle. He knows that he is wanted by the nobles for his treasonous behaviour, has no doubt piqued the curiosity of the Player Characters and needs to begin to spread rumours and lies in order to fulfil his overall plot. He will actually vanish into a side alley as soon as he feels the combat is about to end. If the Player Characters can somehow manage to follow him, Sabiat will be headed to the marketplace to begin his open ridicule of the noble houses and spreading the idea of revolution to the people there.

The Starved One will attempt leave the area completely and hide for the rest of the day in an old warehouse, should the Player Characters have a way to follow it. It will feast on the infantryman it captured before escaping, regaining between 24–36 hit points before the Player Characters arrive, maybe more if the Games Master feels it would have time to grab some livestock or some such in the interim.

By nightfall both The Starved One and Sabiat will be well hidden in Sabiat's subterranean hovel (see pg. 31 for more details).



Under A New Moon

NAHAB HAS BEEN transformed into a paranoid state of locked doors and boarded windows throughout the noble quarter with the rapidly spreading tales of the Terror's true identity. Fearing that Father Heretio has risen from the grave to continue his fight against the nobles and their constant infighting, they have summoned every guard and soldier to protect them. The noble quarter had not seen this many active infantry since the days of the Nemedian horde.

Should the Player Characters spend a great deal of time wandering the noble quarter they will run into several patrols of the common noble soldiers (see pg. 9) and the occasional elite heavy infantry (see pg. 20) that will treat any group of Player Characters not currently containing or in the employ of a noble very poorly. They are, after all, beginning to expect a peasant uprising and well-armed adventurers who have already been in several bloody fights since they came to Nahab are not a welcome sight in such times. If the Games Master feels like his players want a little more action, he should feel free to drop in a small skirmish between the Player Characters and some half-drunken soldiers. Things are pretty tense for them, so nearly any excuse to let off some steam will get them to draw blades.

Everywhere else in Nahab the peasantry are huddled in the streets listening to the constant stream of blame and prejudice that Sabiat's well-placed town criers have been spreading. Word of Father Heretio's return have ripped through the Mitran congregation, with some actually beginning to use the moniker 'Hand of Mitra'. Even though it was quite obviously an undead beast of some terrible appetite for destruction, they are able to delude themselves into believing it is doing their god's work.

Sabiat's propaganda machine is in full effect on the streets, shouting out the bleak and vilifying statements that hopefully would turn Nahab's peasants into an army of the oppressed. Everywhere there are gatherings of peasants listening to the condemning cries. They are fuelled by Sabiat's catchphrases and the panicked reactions of the people, making them all the more susceptible to his machinations.

In the common places of the city the Player Characters can hear the town criers spreading their tales to anyone who listens. Whenever they enter a new scene or section of town (at least until the *Lynch Mobs* encounter on pg. XX) the Player Characters will hear some or all of the following widely spread tales.

❖ **'The nobles are to blame for Mitra's vengeful hand!'**

- ❖ **'The Hand of Mitra cleanses Nahab of noble filth! We are casualties in a war we never wanted!'**
- ❖ **'Protect your families! Protect your friends! The Terror will not harm those who are free of noble influences!'**
- ❖ **'Others cannot undo what a generation of apathy has done! Find your strength and stand as one!'**

The city is now more divided than it ever has been before. Armed soldiers patrol the routes between the noble quarter and the rest of the city, shops closed from fear or lack of employees and an overall miasma of tension is thick anywhere there are citizens. The city has always been known for its segregated social castes, but with Sabiat's plot unfolding perfectly there is something far deadlier lurking in the streets than the Terror: a peasant revolt.

THE VOORMENT ESTATE

Soon after the Player Characters' first direct conflict with The Starved One, Sabiat will be ready to begin his final assault on the nobility's stability in Nahab. His plan is actually quite simple: to unleash the Terror upon one of the noble households.

By attacking the Voorment House and killing everyone found inside, making specific care to kill the peasant servants as well, Sabiat can openly blame the killings on the Terror's growing disgust of kowtowing peasantry and the nobility they serve. The scene will be grisly and terrible, which is the perfect breeding grounds for the type of fear and horror that Sabiat needs to push Nahab's peasants to revolution.

The Voorment noble family have been employing peasants to work in their house as maids, butlers and general servants for many years and have gathered a particularly nasty reputation for public beatings and corporal punishments of their workers. They are wealthy beyond normal means, having made their fortune in agriculture and textiles. Balazar and Regina Voorment were horrible people who lived horrible lives – some would say they fully deserved their fate at The Starved One's hands.

The Terror leapt onto their balcony, crashing through their bedroom windows. Still suffering many wounds from the battle with the Player Characters earlier, it did not even waste time killing the Voorments before it began feasting upon them. Their screams were loud and bloodcurdling, summoning

the house's guard and most of the peasants living inside to arms. Never thinking the Terror so bold, they ran upstairs to confront their masters' attacker.

Before they reached the top floor The Starved One burst out of the bedchamber doors to begin the slaughter of the assembled house members. It was a bloodbath. A handful of the guards escaped by using the peasants as cover to slow down The Starved One, who then hid in the lower floor of the building in their fear-maddened state.

Sabiat, having heard the screams and seen several groups running the direction of the house, has commanded The Starved One to escape, knowing that he needs the ugly scene of carnage to be found, rather than risk his precious instrument being harmed before the revolution begins. The reward for the Terror had not been claimed, so many of the arriving groups may look more than ready to take it on when they arrive.

If Viragu and his huntsmen were not previously defeated, they will no doubt be running to this scene as well and may or may not notice the Player Characters. If the Games Master wants to stage a little rematch in a side alley before the scene starts he should remember that the Cimmerians are far too engrossed in the possibility of making 5,000 silver pieces to care if the Player Characters are there or not. If the Player Characters do not engage them, Viragu will not attack until *after* they discover the Terror has left the area.

When the Player Characters arrive, they will be greeted by a growing number of peasants listening to one of Sabiat's rants. Read the following aloud to the players:

There is a group of well over a dozen peasant commoners surrounding the front gates of a large estate. Once again Sabiat is here, standing on something to set him above his listeners, waving a torch around his head and repeatedly pointing it at the house behind him. The house itself has several pinpricks of light from other torches or lanterns bobbing in and out of view in the windows and you can see no fewer than five soldiers milling about the front door with swords drawn.

'The Voorments have been punished for their abuse of your friends! Some of you here even have felt the sting of their whips or the weight of their chains! The Terror, our Hand of Mitra himself, Father Heretio the Avenger has come and shattered the bondage they have submitted us to!' Sabiat takes a moment to draw breath, his chest heaving with the excitement and energy of his speeches. Behind him several bodies, some of children are being taken out of a side door and brought to a large cart in the street. Sabiat's eyes widen, glowering with hatred.

'Look! What is this? The noble lackeys have put down their blades to pick up the dead?' Sabiat looks closer, using his torchlight to illuminate the scene for his fellows. 'But Lord and Lady Voorment did not have any children! Who then, what family is being carried out for the meat wagon?' He claps a hand to the side of his face, 'The Athemus boy! His parents lived with the Voorments, servants all, and were no more a noble than any of you here!'

'It cannot be! The Athemus family were as we!' Sabiat proclaims and looks sternly at the house, 'Unless it targets us as it did those adventurers! Targets us for our inability to stand up, our grinding patience while being set to the millstones and fields for the likes of those it hunts!'

Murmurs pass through the crowd as Sabiat speaks; the tone grows dark and angry.

'Father Heretio has turned from the hand to the fist, Mitra will no longer protect us from his minion,' he spins and throws his torch forcefully into the yard of the estate, landing just a few feet from a soldier, 'we must protect ourselves!'

'Alright then,' the soldier says as he and two of his fellows walk toward the group of simmering peasants, 'that is just about enough out of you! Get out of here! All of you!'

'How can you still treat us like this?' Sabiat cries accusatorily at the approaching guards, stepping down to become one with the crowd, 'How dare you!'

The crowd around Sabiat begin to disperse as the guards pick up their pace, with many of them shouting curses and profane suggestions as they disappear into the streets. In moments there are simply guards, a few straggling onlookers and you.

'Hey, you there!' one of the guards says, lifting his helm to get a better look at you in the darkness, 'You are the folk who toughed it out with the Terror, are you not?'

Depending on the Player Characters' reputation in Nahab thus far, whether or not there is a noble in the group and how well they fared against The Starved One in their previous encounter will determine how they will be approached.

Fantastic Reputation: If the Player Characters have been working with the nobility, or fared exceptionally well against The Starved One, they will be treated like welcomed relief on this dark and sinister night. The chief house guard, Sigur Greyn, will ask the Player Characters to come in and have a look around. Their opinions and expertise are seen as prized, so they are given the run of the house almost immediately.

Good Reputation: Whether fighting bravely against The Starved One, dealing moderately well with the nobility or having a noble in the party, the Player Characters have gained a decent reputation with the noble circles. The chief guard will allow them onto the premises in order to make sure they are not peasant troublemakers, while hoping they can deal with any problems that occur.

Bad Reputation: If the Player Characters did not fair very well against The Starved One, have fought against noble soldiers openly or have been supporting peasant groups in plain sight of nobles, the guards will order the Player Characters to leave the area immediately. If they refuse, the few guards in the area will try to apprehend them.

Terrible Reputation: If the Player Characters have fought and killed members of the nobility before, the guards will give battle cries and immediately attack.

House Voorment Guards (4)

Medium Human Corinthian soldier 4; **HD:** 4d10+12 (36 hp); **Init:** +2; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 14; **Parry DV:** 14; **DR:** 6; **BAB/Grp:** +4/+5; **Atk:** Cudgel +5 melee *or* broadsword +6 melee; **Full Atk:** Cudgel +5 melee *or* broadsword +6 melee; **Dmg:** Cudgel 1d8+1, x2, AP 2 *or* broadsword 1d10+1, 19–20/x2, AP 3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Bluff, Intimidate), Background Skills (Escape Artist, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Spot), Formation Combat (heavy infantry); **SV:** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills & Feats: Bluff +4, Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +6, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +2, Spot +4; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword)

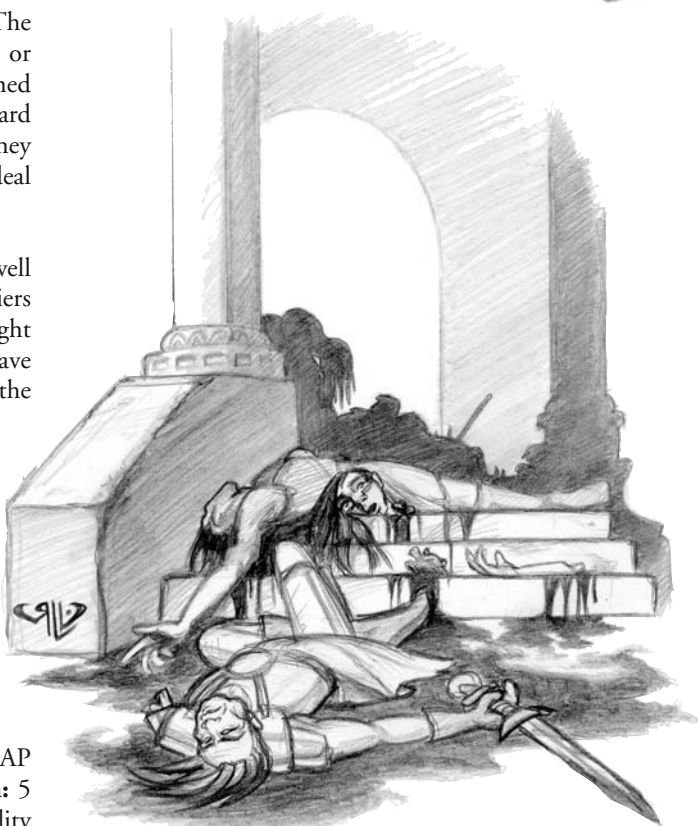
Possessions: Mail shirt, steel cap, broadsword, wooden cudgel, seven silver pieces each

Sigur Greyn, Chief of the House Voorment Guards

Medium Human Corinthian soldier 6; **HD:** 6d10+12 (42 hp); **Init:** +1; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 15; **Parry DV:** 16; **DR:** 6; **BAB/Grp:** +6/+1 and +8; **Atk:** Broadsword +9 melee *or* cudgel +8 melee; **Full Atk:** Broadsword +9/+4 melee *or* cudgel +8/+3; **Dmg:** Broadsword 1d10+2, 19–20/x2, AP 3 melee *or* cudgel 1d8+2, x2, AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Bluff, Intimidate), Background Skills (Escape Artist, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Spot), Formation Combat (heavy infantry); **SV:** Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills & Feats: Bluff +4, Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +4, Spot +5; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword)

Possessions: Mail shirt, steel cap, broadsword, wooden cudgel, 26 silver pieces



If there is any kind of battle in front of the Voorment estate it will no doubt be short and brutal. When it is concluded, or if the Player Characters are invited in to look around, or even if they sneak in to look around, read the following aloud to the players as soon as they enter the dark household:

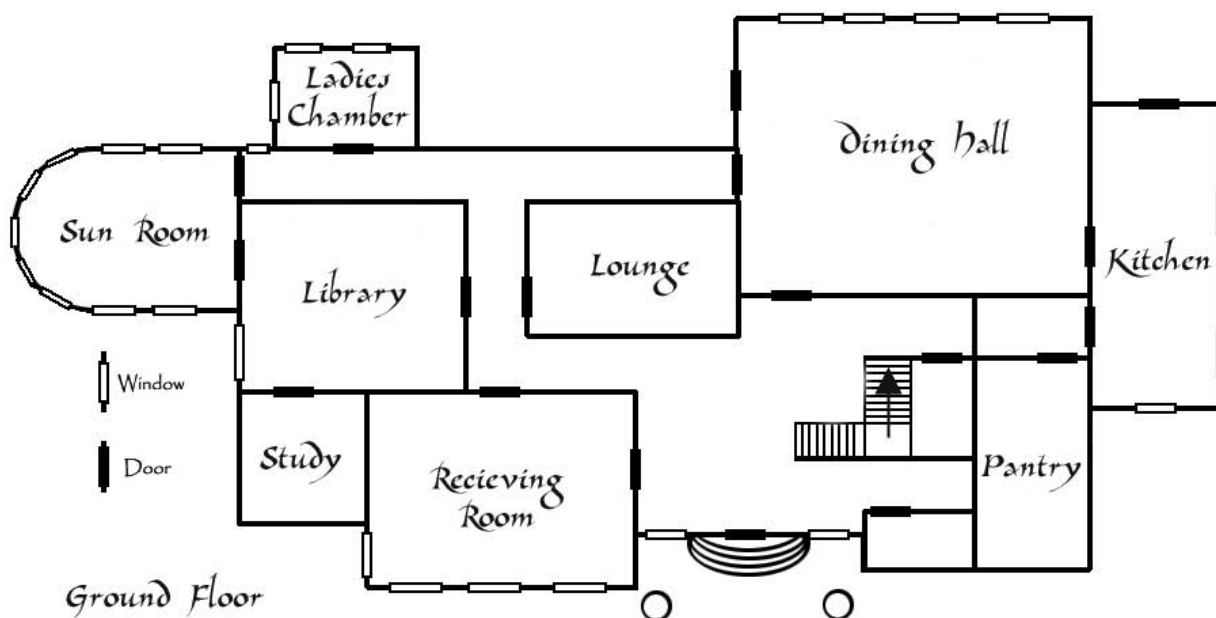
The heady smell of beeswax smoke from snuffed or toppled candles, mixed with blood and offal from a dozen rent corpses fills your nostrils as you enter the Voorment estate. The house is dark, the only glow coming from a pair of torches in sconces outside the large windows. The room flickers with every blow of a breeze outside, casting eerie shadows across fresh pools of gore and ichor. With each step, the soles of your boots suck at the floor.

Your eyes slowly adjust to the darkness to reveal the horrible backdrop of slaughter. In moments you take in the scene, shocked that just one creature could do all of this...

The house is in a terrible state. Very little of any worth is left in the downstairs hall. Blood, spilled entrails and discarded body parts cover nearly every surface. Sabiat instructed for it to make a mess and it wholeheartedly obeyed.

Should the Player Characters wish to go upstairs, anyone choosing to use the beautifully carved ebony staircase will need to make a Reflex save (DC 10) or Climb check (DC 12) in order to do so without slipping in the pools of gore running down the

THE VOORMENT ESTATE



stairs. Anyone that falls suffers 1d6 points of damage from the fall. Moving through the house, no matter how carefully, will coat the Player Characters in a film of blood and worse.

Should they manage to get upstairs, they will find the mauled remains of the Voorments. Anyone willing to brave the horror of the discovery can see that the couple have had very specific parts of their bodies removed. In fact, a Search or Heal check (DC 15) will show the characters that a great deal of the pieces missing were the very same parts of the creature they had damaged, or saw damaged in their recent fight with the Terror. This should give them a very good idea exactly why this thing eats the way it does.

In the bedroom, which saw proportionately less combat, the following can be found on the listed Search check results.

While the Player Characters are investigating the Voorment estate they hear a ghastly roar outside. The Starved One has just finished with a group of guards and adventurers outside and is about to make its escape. If the Player Characters simply run to the door and go outside, continue to Missing Parts on pg. 24.

If they go to a window to see what is happening, read the following aloud to the players:

The hulking Terror stands under a lit street lantern in all its gruesome horror, bellowing to the lightless moon above. One of its arms is missing, several of its organs have fallen loose from its misshapen torso and two

Searching the Bedroom

Search check result	Item(s) Discovered
10 or less	3d6 gold coins
11–15	A string of Khitan pearls (worth 150 sp)
16–20	A golden necklace (worth 225 sp)
21–25	A locked box (DC 18 to open) with 540 sp inside
26+	The ownership writ to the Voorment flax field (worth roughly 100 sp per month)

large spears are jutting from its back. Around its feet, some crawling slowly away while most are deadly still, are a half dozen unfortunate guards, peasants and travellers like yourselves.

If the Player Characters have ranged weaponry they should be able to get a few shots off here and there to annoy the creature, but Sabiat has already given the order to prepare for the next major attack. This means The Starved One will not linger long after finishing off the rest of the guards and the interloping adventurers, before bounding away into the night.

MISSING PARTS

Whether running out of the Voorment Estate, tracking down Viragu's party, or some similar event designed by the Games Master, the Player Characters will find at least one recent site of The Starved One's activities. Depending on where and who it has killed, the scene will vary. Ranging from total massacres to brutal battles where the creature was fought bravely for a few moments, these scenes will have any

THE VOORMENT ESTATE



number of shed limbs, organs and blood strewn about. They are grisly scenes of carnage that will continue to spread until something stops Sabiar's plots.

At any of these scenes the players have the opportunity to pick up a variety of clues as to the nature of The Starved One, possibly even enough for a scholar to look up similar demons or animates in their own tomes and writings. When the Player Characters reach one of these scenes, such as the outside the Voorment Estate for instance, read the following section aloud to the players:

Another bloody scene unfolds before you. The bodies of the dead are in pieces, tossed about like refuse. The flies have already started descending on the remains. These

attacks are becoming bolder and more open each time you hear of one.

As you look around at the carnage time and time again your mind stops seeing the death and the horror and begins to see patterns. Not patterns in how the bodies or their parts are lying, but of the negative spaces; you start to see the whole puzzle before you. A puzzle with pieces missing...

The Player Characters should be prompted to make Search and/or Heal skill checks to look over the scene a little closer with an analytical mind rather than the initial horror that often consumes a normal person when viewing such gruesomeness. Should they wish to take 20 on these rolls they will need at least one Will save (DC 13) to keep from vomiting while sifting through the mauled bodies. Those who have six or more ranks in the Heal skill can ignore this saving throw. Compare their skill checks below, keeping in mind that the results should be cumulative.

Examining the Terror's Victims

Search Result	Heal Result	Findings
10–15	1–5	All of the removed parts are nowhere to be found.
16–20	6–10	All male victims have their abdomens torn open.
21+	11–15	The abdomen tears are not missing flesh, merely opened to gain access to the insides.
–	16–20	The organs inside are pulped and mixed around, as if the Terror was quickly looking for something specific in each one.
–	21+	No male body has its liver. The Terror took/ate all of them.

While this information may seem rather random and odd to most players, it will make a great deal more sense when they later discover the significance of the liver. It also might spark some interest in a Player Character who has the ability to research or otherwise discover facts about the supernatural. There are very few demons or undead in the world that specifically target the liver and a Player Character can quickly narrow it down to The Starved One if they apply some of the other facts they have hopefully picked up by now. Knowing about The Starved One, how it works and that

it must be still controlled if it is looking for its liver could be very useful tools in the events to come.

Even those less scholarly types could benefit from such knowledge. Macabre as it may be, knowing that the creature has a weakness for livers could give the Player Characters an edge the next time they face the creature, or the ability to set a trap for it. Whether or not a trap like this will actually work is up to the Games Master, but Sabiat will no doubt command The Starved One away from such an ambush quickly.

PANIC IN THE STREETS

With talk of a peasant revolt brewing, a demonic creature stalking the streets and the scores of heavy infantry gearing up for a seemingly inevitable conflict, Nahab has become dangerously tense. Wherever groups of citizens are found outside the confines of their homes or businesses, the threat of violence is present. This is the exact sort of response that Sabiat wanted. The peasants are nearly ready for his final blow; all they need is a few more selected attacks to push them over the edge.

The next day or two (depending on how the Games Master wishes to run the events: fast and action-packed, or dramatic and suspenseful) will see a series of brutal and public attacks on the peasants most directly related to the affairs of nobles and noble businesses. The Starved One will descend upon several shops and noble houses, making short work of them while dozens of peasants look on in shock and dismay. These attacks, expertly timed with the accusing statements of Sabiat and the town criers, will set the stage for several small back alley attacks on nobles by those who believe their propaganda.

The Player Characters will have several opportunities to witness, stop or even join some of these minor peasant attacks. Some might wish to stay out of the way of trouble, which might even be possible for some groups of characters. Groups of thieves and pirates may not care whether or not the local farmhands are rebelling against their landlord, but a group of honourable fellows seeing what looks like a harmless old man being beaten to death by four brutish thugs may choose to rally to arms on his behalf. Their reactions to the growing violence can vary, but Games Masters should at least give the Player Characters the opportunity to involve themselves in at least one street altercation.

Things could even get worse for a group of Player Characters who is made up of nobles, or has openly sided with Nahab's nobility before. Even if they valiantly fought off the Terror, the peasants are not in the right state of mind to remember the small details. They are far too worried about surviving their next days to keep such *minor* events of the past ones in their memories. Player Characters who might be seen as supporters of the

nobility will no doubt have at *least* one street brawl or more violent mugging on their hands.

Whatever brings the situation, should the Player Characters get into a situation the following should be read aloud to the players:

'Hey you!' a group of voices shout from behind you, **'once this town belongs to us again we won't ever need your kind to feed our families,'** laughter joins the speaker as he continues, **'when Mitra is proud of us for our bravery and sends the Terror away.'**

You turn to see a group of young men, labourers mostly, beginning to circle around. They do not look like they have seen much in the way of battle or violent dealings before, but several of them have fresh blood wiped on their breeches and blouses. It is obvious from the cuts and bruises on their hands that they have recently been very active with their fists.

'What do you guests of Nahab feel if we go ahead and start making some of that coin right now? You can empty your purses and walk away,' the speaker draws a long, bloodstained stiletto, **'or you can make us pry it from your cold, dead fingers.'**

The peasant muggers are probably drunk and would much rather go to fisticuffs than actually kill anyone, but will do so at the first sign of lethal force being used against them. If one of their number is killed by the Player Characters they will cry out for help from passing peasants. If that happens, read the following aloud:

'Help! Help!' one of your attackers cries out, 'hired swords from the noble quarter! They killed Relithos and they will kill you too!'

You look around and see that several peasants are actually buying this story and are headed your way!

Another five peasants will join the fight immediately, ready to come to the rescue of their fellow downtrodden peasant citizens. These fresh combatants believe the Player Characters are bloody-handed assassins sent by the nobility and will fight wholeheartedly unless they can be somehow convinced otherwise. The fight will probably end with a number of unconscious or dead peasants heaped in the alley around the Player Characters, doing little for their reputations with the locals.

Peasant Muggers (5)

Medium Human Corinthian commoner 3; HD: 3d8+3 (15 hp); **Init:** +1; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 13; **Parry DV:** 12; **DR:** —; **BAB/Grp:** +1/+4; **Atk:** Unarmed +4 melee *or* stiletto +3 melee; **Full Atk:** Unarmed +4 melee *or* stiletto +3 melee; **Dmg:** Unarmed 1d6+3 nonlethal/lethal, AP 0 *or* stiletto 1d4+2, x4, AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Craft, Hide), Background Skills (Craft (various), Hide, Sense Motive,

Spot); **SV:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills & Feats: Bluff +3, Craft (varies) +4, Diplomacy +6, Hide +5, Knowledge (local) +6; Brawl, Dodge

Possessions: Stiletto, two silver pieces each

Peasants (5)

Medium Human Corinthian commoner 3; HD: 3d8 (12 hp); **Init:** +0; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 12; **Parry DV:** 10; **DR:** —; **BAB/Grp:** +1/+2; **Atk:** Unarmed +2 melee or knife +2 melee; **Full Atk:** Unarmed +2 melee or knife +2 melee; **Dmg:** Unarmed 1d6+1 nonlethal/lethal, AP 0 or knife 1d4+1, x2, AP 0; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Craft, Hide), Background Skills (Craft (various), Hide, Sense Motive, Spot); **SV:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 10

Skills & Feats: Bluff +2, Craft (varies) +3, Diplomacy +3, Hide +2, Knowledge (local) +4; Brawl, Dodge

Possessions: Knife, 1 silver piece

Whether or not the Player Characters kill any peasants or not, they will assuredly feel the proverbial pot begin to boil around them. This little mishap is just one of several small, underhanded attacks taking place all over the city. By the end of the day Sabiat will be ready to unleash The Starved One in its most spectacular attack yet and give a rallying point to all of the wanton muggings and back-alley violence. By morning he hopes to have focused all of the city's aggression at the nobility, even if he has to make a few sacrifices for the greater good of Nahab.

BROTHEL BUTCHERY

Nahab's noble houses ruled several years ago that the prostitutes and working wenches of the city would need to stay out of the streets and alleys in order to keep the profession regulated and heavily taxed. They built a large brothel in the centre of town, near to the edge of the noble quarter to house the hundred or so ladies of the night and their patrons.

The Nahab brothel has been the most profitable industry in the city, but it has always been a great point of contention for the citizens. The peasants feel as though they are being forced to pay higher prices in order for the ladies to be able to pay their taxes to the noble houses, but cannot find their pleasures on the streets any longer, so they do so again and again.

The brothel, its ladies and how they are little more than indentured servants to the nobles was one of Father Heretio's constant battles. He would preach to anyone that would listen about how the women there, while he did not necessarily condone their profession, were being mistreated and abused by the crushing tyranny of the noble houses. Although nothing ever came of it, there had been more than a few marches led on the building with Heretio at the forefront.

Hence it is perfect for Sabiat's coup de grace.

The maddened crier has been watching and waiting for the best time to strike and has determined that it is upon him. Summoning The Starved One to utterly savage the brothel, Sabiat knows it should be the breaking point in an already straining city. By uttering the right words to the crowds that will come running, Sabiat knows he can usher in the revolt here and now, at the edge of the noble quarter.

The screams of the inhabitants of the brothel will awake and summon all manners of Nahab city life. Peasants, several nobles, guards, infantrymen and hopefully the Player Characters will all be grouping around the large two-story building as the screams echo out from inside. The Starved One will be ripping the brothel patrons and employees apart, sparing almost no time to feast.

When the Player Characters arrive on the scene, read the following aloud to the players:

The street is already crowding with dozens of people from all walks of life, drawn together by the horrible cries. The large brickwork building before you, the city brothel, has several broken windows and fresh blood is splattered across its walls. Even with such risk as this, the street corner where you are standing is becoming more popular by the moment. Peasants are grouping together with each other. Nobles huddle behind their soldiers, who stand with weapons drawn against any threats that might arise. The night is silent and still, but the stench of death is on the air. You cannot help but wonder if the creature is still nearby.

You are answered as an upper balcony explodes in a shower of broken glass, a pair of mauled bodies plummet to the yard below with a sickening thud. The Terror, stained from deformed head to grotesque toe in sticky smears of ichor, looks to the noble quarter and roars.

'Noooo moooore!'

'Our own Father Heretio,' Sabiat's familiar voice cries out to the crowds fearlessly, 'has come to finish the work he began in life, freeing Nahab from the torments of the noble filth this place bred and supported! Do you not see the message in his works? Do you not realise what he wills us to do?' He stabs a finger at the group of nobles nearby, 'Mitra is purifying our fine city of their taint! Like the shepherd that has to cull the sick in his herd, lest they infect the rest, he uses the Terror to cull those that are not strong enough to sever the ties with our unwanted masters!'

Moved by his passionate words and the actions of the creature, the peasant crowd begins to move amongst themselves, some moving closer to the front of the crowd while others vanishing into obscurity behind them. Several have produced



makeshift clubs or small knives, raising them while Sabiat exclaims his views.

'Noooo moooore!' the Terror roars once again.

'Heretio wanted to grant us our freedom from the Noble's War,' Sabiat spat hatefully at the guards, 'and Mitra has seen it fit to give him the ability to aid us! We must do something,' he says as he turns and looks upon the silent brothel, 'we must, if we want to survive this holy reckoning! So stand, stand and fight for your lives!'

The nobles, seeing a very ugly scene forming before them in the growing anger and simmering rage in the peasants combined with the undeniable leaning of the Terror against them, retreat back toward the noble quarter with their infantry. Even without the beast slaving at them things are not looking fortunate for them here, especially with Sabiat's continued preaching inflaming much of the crowd.

'Go now, sons and daughters of Nahab,' Sabiat shouts, 'go to your homes and arm yourselves. Tell your neighbours and loved ones; tell them of what you have seen here and unite! Unite under the will of Mitra to cut out this infection we have lived with for too long! Father Heretio,' Sabiat lowers his head to his chest in loudly

proclaimed prayer, 'show us the way by continuing your work.'

Those final words are an actual command spoken to the spirit-liver worn under Sabiat's shirt, which will trigger The Starved One to leap into the group of nobles and their infantry and give the peasants one last show of gruesomeness to reinforce their beliefs in some kind of holy crusade against the nobility.

If the Player Characters want to get involved with The Starved One battling the noble forces, there are three common house guards (see pg. 23), one elite noble infantry (see pg. 20) and five nobles. The nobles will not fight The Starved One, they are planning to use their hired soldiers as a distraction while they retreat back to their homes. If the Player Characters wish to aid them by actually fighting the creature, a regular battle will occur. If the Player Characters instead wish to try and get the nobles to safety The Starved One will follow, creating a mobile battle that could span several city streets before eventually becoming cornered and having to fight the creature until help arrives. If the nobles manage to survive they will explain that they are from the House Justinian and they would gladly hire each of the adventurers immediately for 100 silver a week just to guard their house and persons until this madness passes.

City of Nahab Nobles (5)

Medium Human Corinthian noble 3; HD: 3d8 (12 hp); **Init:** +1; **Spd:** 30 ft.; **Dodge DV:** 13; **Parry DV:** 10; **DR:** —; **BAB/Grp:** +2/+1; **Atk:** Unarmed +1 melee *or* poniard +1 melee; **Full Atk:** Unarmed +1 melee *or* poniard +1 melee; **Dmg:** Unarmed 1d3–1 nonlethal, AP 0 *or* poniard 1d6–1, 19–20/x2, AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **SA:** —; **SQ:** Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (Craft, Hide), Background Skills (Craft (various), Hide, Sense Motive, Spot), Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth; **SV:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills & Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Hide +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +5; Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (appraise)

Possessions: Poniard, 4d6 silver pieces each

The Player Characters can go inside the brothel if they want to, discovering much the same scene as what was found in the Voorment House (see pg. 21) except the bodies will be nude or partially nude women and several patron men. Roughly 300 silver pieces worth of gaudy jewellery can be scavenged with a successful Search check (DC 15) from the cabinets and dressers in the main room.

LYNCH MOBS

By morning the streets are filled with throngs of very angry peasants wielding mining tools, farming implements and the occasional sword or spear. Groups of ten or 20 at a time are marching through the streets looking for even the smallest appearance of noble influence in Nahab.

The earlier attacks on straggling nobles have increased in number and ferocity as these mobs patrol the streets. Killings may have occurred in dark places and back alleys in the tense days prior to this one by muggers and thugs, but now farmers and their children are just as guilty of such things. Nahab is being turned upside down by lynch mob activity and those who are being caught in their wake can only hope to survive the insanity.

Sabiat has been preaching all morning, gathering the smaller groups of peasants together into larger mobs while moving them closer and closer to the noble quarter. Once there he hopes to focus them through the streets of the quarter in the fullest form of revolt. The Player Characters should be present at the final staging area before the mobs move into the noble quarter. They should have one last chance to try and stop, join or stifle the chaos that will otherwise ensue.

Once the Player Characters get to the border between the noble quarter and the rest of the city read the following to the players aloud:

The street is packed with an angry mob armed with an assortment of weaponry, surging and pushing against itself like a flood trying to break a river's banks. There are all ages of peasants from every walk of life this city has to offer ready to storm through the assembled soldiers currently lined up to keep them out.

'They cannot quell the inevitable!' Sabiat cries out from the back of the mob, 'Look how they grind in their heels against Mitra's will! This is their last day in Nahab and they feel it as providence upon their very souls!'

The crowd bellows out in a mixture of rage and anxiousness, raising their weapons over their head with the crier's excited shouting.

'Now is the time for justice!' Sabiat screams, half-maddened and ready to wage utter war, 'We must be rid of them all!'

At this point the 50 or so peasants armed with an assortment of simple weaponry, will begin their attack on the 20 elite noble infantry (see pg. 20) lined up against them. This will easily become utter chaos in less than a few rounds, so Games Masters should only run combats in small numbers rather than the entire riot at once.

If the Player Characters choose to try and stop the revolt, they will need to do some pretty fancy talking in order to diffuse what Sabiat has instilled within the peasants. Diplomacy, Bluff or even Intimidate rolls versus Sabiat rolling the same kind of checks might be a good representation of the two sides shouting at each other. It will be difficult to overcome the already surging pressure of the crowd, but it may be possible.

BLOOD OF AN INNOCENT

Whether this scene takes place in the wanton chaos of the peasant revolt or during the ensuing arguments leading up to or away from the violent explosion it really does not matter. All that has to be taking place is a surge of unrest between a peasant crowd led by Sabiat and a group of noble supporters. During a brief moment of rest between angry shouts and anti-noble attacks, there will be a very interesting and fated exchange that will change the state of affairs dramatically.

During a skirmish, argument or similar affair in which the Games Master wishes to unveil the true nature of events, read the following scene aloud to the players:

The peasants' shouting and angered movements surround the area, keeping a wall of violence swirling around Sabiat as he directs the chaos as best he can with his cursing spittle and fiery litanies. It is a wonder to see anything clearly in the blur of activity.

Then, in a pause between the conflict, you can see a child, a small Corinthian girl, approach Sabiat. She seems pure and untouched by the violence, sliding between fistfights like an arrow through the air, until she stands before the crazed crier, tears streaming down her filthy cheeks.

'Please sir!' she cries up at Sabiat, 'Stop it! My daddy is in there!' she points into the seething mob, 'My daddy!'

'Get away girl,' Sabiat hisses, 'all noble scum must be culled!'

'No!' the little girl shouts, pawing up at the crier in near hysteria, 'No!' She clutches at his blouse, curling her fingers in the cloth and trying to pull him down to her level.

'Wait! Stop!' Sabiat's voice loses its tenor and sounds frantic, something is not right. 'Get off of me you ill-gotten spawn!' He tries to bat her away, but she hangs on to his shirt with pure tenacity. 'No! No!' His shirt tears open as he struggles with the clinging child, revealing a strange-looking package wrapped in leather that quickly becomes dislodged and drops from its makeshift pocket, 'You little cur, get off of me!'

'My daddy!' she screams.

'No!' Sabiat's voice is a screech of panic, 'Not now!' The lunatic's eyes grow terribly wide as the package unfurls, and a half-rotten lump of meat bounces away into the feet of the surging crowd.

A roar splits the night like an axe blade and the Terror leaps into mob, swatting noble and peasant alike away like flies. It gives out another throaty cry, 'Sssaaaabbbii iiaaaatttt!' It moves toward the crier like a runaway horse cart and the mob parts before it or is crushed beneath.

'Look at what you have done!' Sabiat shouts at the child, reaching into his belt and plucks a long knife from the folds of his clothing. In one swift movement, the town's fiery spokesperson becomes just another murderous lout as he plunges the blade into the girl to pry her off of him.

Before the first drop of her life's blood hits the street, the world crashes back into the maelstrom of conflict.

This could be the penultimate battle for the Player Characters. There are a lot of sides to this conflict and it could go several

different ways depending on the wishes of the players. The following should be noted so the Games Master can run the scene effectively:

- ❖ The Starved One is currently only interested in retrieving and devouring its spirit-liver, which is being kicked around under the panicked feet of the peasant crowd. It will protect itself if necessary, but its primary objective is retrieving the spirit of Father Heretio.
- ❖ Sabiat knows what The Starved One will do to him for his role in its reanimation, so his primary aim is to simply get away. He will attack anyone that gets in his way or who tries to apprehend him.
- ❖ The peasants are still pretty riled up about the nobles and will take advantage of the chaos to make their stand unless it becomes evident the Terror was not the instrument of holy vengeance that Sabiat painted it to be.
- ❖ The nobles will only help the Player Characters if they have good standing with the nobility. They will strike out at The Starved One if it draws too near to them, but they will by no means try to go after it if they can avoid it.

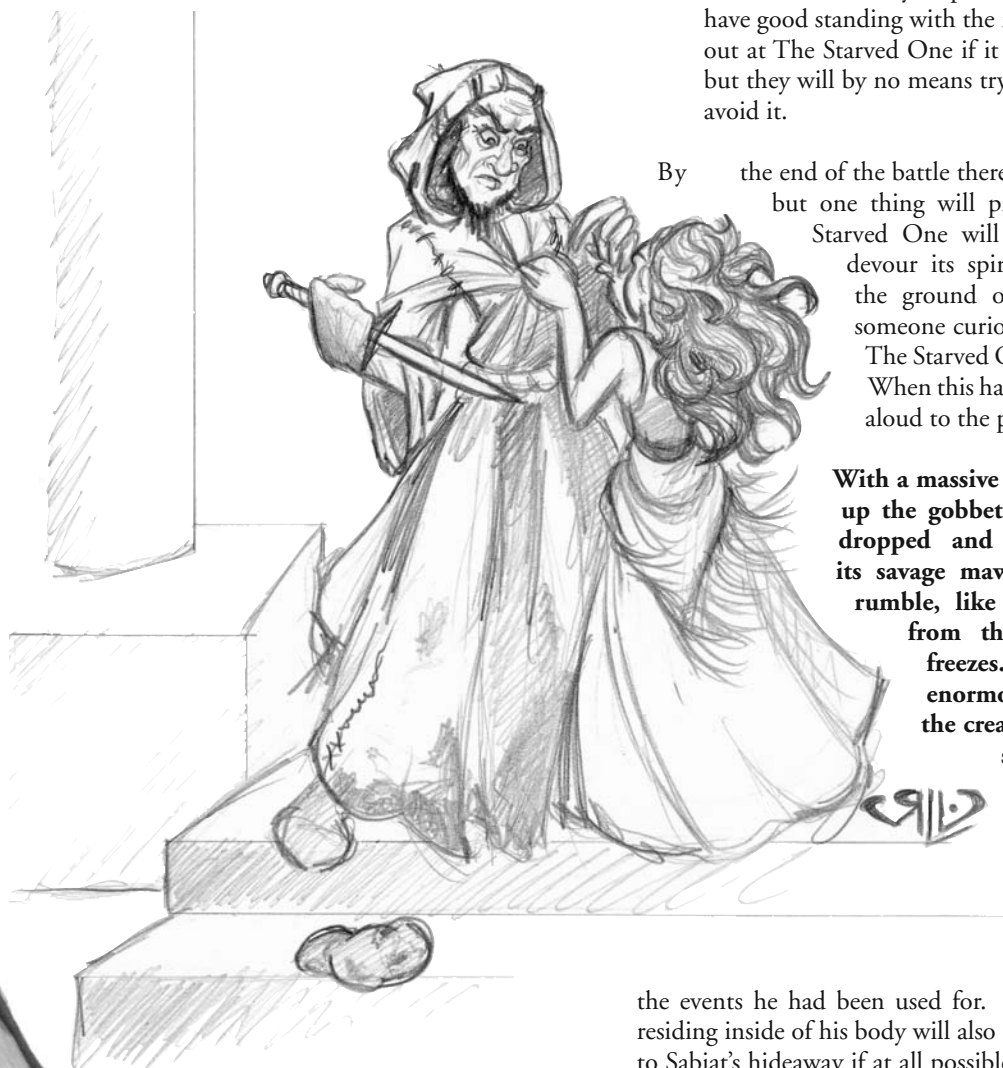
By the end of the battle there can be many outcomes, but one thing will probably be certain: The Starved One will eventually reclaim and devour its spirit-liver. Whether from the ground or out of the hands of someone curious enough to pick it up, The Starved One will retrieve its spirit. When this happens, read the following aloud to the players:

With a massive talon the Terror scoops up the goblet of putrid flesh Sabiat dropped and shoves it deep into its savage maw. There is a strange rumble, like the creature growling from the inside out, and it freezes. Looking down at its enormous clawed fists in awe, the creature hisses in a slightly slurred tone.

'What have I done?'

In a moment's realisation, Father Heretio's mind will remember

the events he had been used for. The demonic spirit still residing inside of his body will also remember and he will go to Sabiat's hideaway if at all possible. If it cannot, it will do its best not to fight, merely defend itself.



THE TRUE TERROR OF NAHAB

Either by following The Starved One or by following Sabiat himself, the Player Characters should eventually discover Sabiat hiding away in his hovel. The Starved One will track Sabiat down and he knows the demon is coming for him.

When the Player Characters arrive at the dishevelled old shack, read the following to the players aloud:

'I knew you would come,' Sabiat slurs in a half-mad stammer, bloody stiletto in hand, 'you can kill me but you cannot kill the freedom we have brought to them. I have fulfilled their dreams, Nahab will be free.'

'At what price...' the Terror sighs, taking a heavy step toward him. 'Look what you have done!'

The next few moments should be fast and basically up to the Games Master to decide what happens. The Starved One will give in to its baser nature and try to rip him apart. The Player Characters could try and side with The Starved One, but it might seem very strange for them to side with a demonic undead thing that was trying to devour them just days earlier. They could try to help Sabiat, or alternatively they may just walk away. Much of this depends on the morality and beliefs of the Player Characters.

Sabiat also carries the summoning scroll for The Starved One, which is also inscribed with the words to banish it again. The scroll is the only thing that can truly put Father Heretio to rest once again, however, the crier never managed to decipher the arcane script properly. A scholar or dabbler amongst the Player Characters may be able to decipher the scroll and help, doing so requires a Decipher Script check (DC 25).

The hovel is too far away from populated areas, especially if the riots have started in full. No one will come to their aid if they choose to attack The Starved One, or if Sabiat survives long enough to cry out for help. It is secluded enough to mean that any combat the Player Characters choose to become involved in, they will be on their own as well. Knowing how powerful The Starved One is, this could be very difficult for the players if they make it their duty to put it down without the scroll's help.

If the Player Characters help Sabiat instead, he will accept their aid long enough for The Starved One to be destroyed, then immediately turn on them with a well-placed Sneak Attack. He has no intention of letting the people know who put down the Terror, merely that 'Mitra withdrew its Hand when he saw the valiant fight the Corinthians waged' so they will again look to him for guidance in Nahab's new era.

Aside from the Player Characters' choices on how to deal with the true villain behind this scenario and its misbegotten creation, there is very little else to do in the hovel.

CONCLUSION

The city of Nahab will be thrown into revolt by the time the Player Characters find their way back to where the peasants are rioting. Word has spread quickly that the Terror was no holy avenger at all, which has caused much unrest in those loyal followers still trying to fulfil Sabiat's holy war against the nobility. It has turned much of Nahab's streets into just as much peasant-on-peasant infighting bouts than those spawned while trying to eliminate the nobles. Unless someone takes charge, the revolt will be the end of several hundred lives in this tumultuous city and possibly every noble left within its boundaries.

Father Heretio knows he can only hold on to his humanity between the bouts of demonic hunger, which will eventually consume him or force him to perform unspeakable acts. He never asked for this existence, but is torn as to whether or not he could make some good out of the evil shell he has been placed in. Unless informed about the banishment spell on Sabiat's scroll or persuaded to do something more, he will spend day and night avoiding monster hunters and would-be heroes in the hills around Nahab until something breaks inside of him and the demon takes over permanently.

The final outcome is truly up to the choices made by the Player Characters during the adventure, but Games Masters should still have a decent idea what will occur for their players. Whether to create the next breed of Nahab's heroes or to loot alongside peasant mobs until they make their leave, Nahab will never be the same ever again. Should the Player Characters ever come back this way again in their travels, they may find a completely different Nahab than when they left it. There could be new nobility in place, or Nemedian masters come down from the mountains. There is even a possibility of a horrible maddened Terror stalking down from the outskirts.

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CONAN[®]

AND THE LURKING TERROR OF NAHAB

The Corinthian city of Nahab has suffered greatly under the continued feuding of its noble families in the last decade. Waging small estate wars between themselves to establish control over trade routes and resource-laden foothills of the Karpash Mountains, the peasant-titled 'Nobles' War' has left many homes, fields and villages in ruin, and the city's ruling classes on the dangerous path to self-destruction. Nahab has swelled into the home of pampered nobles, growing fat off the trade and mining that takes place along the Karpash Mountain Way. Despite this, the city never grew in the way like Shadizar and Tarantia, remaining relatively small and manageable by the families that now controlled it.

But Nahab has just suffered a major loss and someone plans to use the sorrow and grief to punish the nobles for the years of unnecessary torment. The unexpected and gruesome death of Father Tericos Heretio has plunged the entire city's peasant population into a state of grieving and distrust, with even some of the noble houses lowering their pennants in his honour. This show of respect is not enough for some, who wish to punish the noble families for all for their combined crimes...

A dark and sinister terror has been unleashed upon the folk of Nahab, striking innocent and guilty alike. It hunts, stalks and kills, creating a bloodbath in which fear and loathing will grip the hearts of Nahab's citizens. The city cries out for salvation.

Conan and the Lurking Terror of Nahab is a scenario designed for four to six Player Characters of between 4th and 6th character level. Moral decisions and hard choices block the path in this adventure as often as bands of brigands or secret doors, as Player Characters become embroiled in the legend of the Terror of Nahab.

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