Crows over Capital

Chapter 1: The Lilac Night

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Chapter 1: The Lilac Night

The Lilac Night is an adventure optimised for five 1st-level heroes that should take 4-6 hours to complete.

Adventure Formatting

Sometimes when the adventure text introduces a new scene or adventure area, the formatting looks like this:

Area Details

Paragraphs in italics like this one are meant to be read aloud or paraphrased to players when their heroes first enter the area, provided they have the means to sense their environment. These are important details that the heroes immediately notice.

Secret! Information presented like this is for you to reveal only when you want to or when certain conditions are met, such as a hero searching a room. The adventure puts this information up front so you have a handy list of everything in an area, but it should be initially kept secret from the players.

Hidden! Information presented as hidden isn't a secret for you to reveal, but is something that the heroes won't notice until they engage with the environment in a particular way (getting an elevated view, pulling back a curtain, looking under a bed, and so forth).

Special: Information presented this way provides special context or additional details to help you develop the area in the best possible way.

Details Left Out

Because this is an explicitly heroic game, the adventure doesn't note every scrap of food or butter knife the heroes might find in their travels and exploration. If a hero is looking for a particular object and it makes sense for an area to have such an object, such as a knife in a kitchen, then it exists. If it makes no sense for the object to be there, then it isn't. If there's a chance that an object might be in a particular area, roll 1d6. On a 5 or 6, the object is there.

Adventure Background

"*Ah Capital, refuge of the wretched and desperate. How I have missed you .*"

- Marco Porelli, Captain of the Carro de Profondo

Welcome to Capital, the greatest city in this or any age. The city of the great game, where guilds and great houses vie for power. The city that was once the heart of the Caelian Empire, that remains to this day a bastion of knowledge and innovation. Capital, the city where the mighty may fall and the meek rise. Capital, where the last great battle against Ajax will be won, or lost.

Almost a year ago, Duke Maximo Valetta was assassinated. Since that day, House Valetta has continued to collect taxes from the people of Capital, but Duchess Lenore refuses to disperse these funds until her husband returns to approve this action. Starved of funds, the Prince grows ever more desperate, trying to keep his city afloat while the great houses grow impatient and the upstart guilds smell opportunity in the air. The city is a tinderbox waiting for a single spark to set it alight. Tonight, flint strikes steel.

Adventure Synopsis

The heroes begin on the docks of the district that will come to be known as the Dead City. They are investigating a tip given to them by a goblin named Mantis. Mantis has information that a dangerous arcane object known as the Device is about to be activated, posing a serious threat to the citizens of Capital. The ritual is to be carried out by an unknown mage, in a warehouse guarded by a thieves guild known as the Skeleton Keys. The heroes' task is to disrupt the ritual by any means necessary, and preferably recover or destroy the Device.

The heroes must find their way into the warehouse, where they will come face-to-face with the Keys, who they must overcome through combat or negotiation.

While dealing with the Device, they will be attacked by the Arbitros Fiat, who themselves have come to destroy the Device that is affecting the Rite of Desecration conducted by Lady Valetta.

As the Lady's ritual reaches its climax, the lilac mists descend and the heroes are forced to evacuate the area, taking with them as many civilians as they can.

Act 1: The Warehouse Job

Air. Stuffy and thick, it is scented with fish and the sour smell of the tanneries across the bay. The sound of waves crashing against the docks is part of a chorus peppered with shouts from busy taverns and the occasional barking dog.

It is the ambience of a city slumbering, sleepwalking into catastrophe.

As the heroes stand outside, it is obvious the warehouse has three main points of entry.

The Front Door

With a single guard on watch at the front, this is the most straightforward way to access the warehouse. The guard can be killed, or knocked unconscious but convincing him to gain entry is a **medium Presence test.**

- *11 or lower:* The guard denies entry.
- *12-16:* The guard says he will ask his superior, Havoc(**human brawler**).
- *17+:* The guard allows entry.

The Roof

Scaling the roof involves a **medium Agility test.**

- *11 or lower:* You make too much noise and alert the Keys that someone is snooping around.
- *12-16:* You reach the roof but make more noise than you would like. You have a bane on further tests made to infiltrate the warehouse.
- *17+:* You successfully and silently reach the roof.

Getting into the warehouse from the roof is possible through the windows on the second storey. Unfortunately, Kairos(**human scoundrel)** is holding court with his cronies on the upper floor and entering undetected requires a **hard Agility test**.

- *11 or lower:* You alert Kairos and fall prone upon entering the room.
- *12-16:* You alert Kairos to your presence.
- *17+:* You silently enter the warehouse without attracting attention.

Plan C

Teleporting or blasting your way through the walls of the Warehouse is an option. It instantly

initiates combat, but all the creatures within are surprised until the end of the first round of combat.

The Skeleton Keys

When the heroes enter the warehouse they'll come face-to-face with the Keys. Read or paraphrase the following.

Emerging from side rooms and onto balconies, the Keys look a tough bunch, ready to fight hard and die if need be.

Three groups of the Keys guard the warehouse.

- Havoc(H), **human brawler** and 8 **human rogues**(S) guard the warehouse floor.
- Alessandra Chausse(M), **human storm mage** works to activate the Device.
- Kairos(K), **human trickshot** and 8 **human archers**(A) guard the upper floor.

Tactics

If a fight breaks out, Kairos will try to keep 5 squares between himself and his enemies, drawing them towards his allies, while his human archers stay far away and shoot at them.

Havoc will try to close in on enemies and attempt to grab them, using them as a defense against ranged enemies and attacking them while his rogues seek out soft targets.

Alessandra Chausse will focus on the Device, using her maneuver each turn to attempt a **hard Reason** test to recite the incantation in the Ramsian treatise. She will not leave the room to assist her allies.

- *11 or lower:* She fails to correctly recite the incantation and a wave of energy lashes out. Each creature within 5 squares of the Device takes 5 corruption damage.
- *12-16:* Nothing happens.
- *17+:* The Device is activated.

The Device

The Device is a relic that absorbs magic when activated.

The Device Level 1 Relic, Controller
The cube
Stamina: 50
Size: 1T

Disable: Only a creature trained in Magic can attempt to disable the Device. Make a hard Reason test when within 10 of the Device. On a success, the Device falls to the ground and loses its Immovable trait at the start of the next round. On a failure with a consequence, you take 1d6 corruption damage.

Aura of Absorption
Creatures that use magical abilities within 10 squares of the Device have a bane on the ability's power roll.

Immovable
While activated, the device floats 1 square off the ground and cannot be moved.

Negotiation with the Keys

Negotiation is possible with a conciliatory approach before combat breaks out, or afterwards with a **Hard Presence Test**.

While attempting to persuade the Keys to back off, use the following negotiation stats.

Keys Negotiation stats

Languages: Riojan
Interest: 2 **Patience:** 2 **Impression:** 1

Motivations

- **Peace:** The Keys don't want to draw the attention of law enforcement
- **Protection:** Open conflict means risking lives.
- **Greed:** The Keys want to profit from this situation, they've already been hired to do this job, how can they do even better?

Pitfalls
- **Benevolence:** The Keys are not good people.
- **Discovery:** The Keys have no interest in pursuing knowledge for its own sake.

Negotiation with the Keys can have the following outcomes:
Interest 5: The Keys walk away, leaving the Device to the heroes, but they warn them that their guild leader, Backalley Sal, took this job from powerful people.
Interest 4: The Keys walk away, leaving behind the Device.
Interest 3: The Keys walk away but they take the Device with them.
Interest 2: The Keys tell the heroes to go, and they will forget they were ever here.
Interest 1: The Keys tell the heroes to go.
Interest 0: The Keys attack the heroes.

If the heroes successfully negotiate with the Keys, Alessandra Chausse has used this time to activate the Device before fleeing.

The device whirrs and hums with power a

s it levitates above the desk. It seems to be growing in power, those of you with magical ability feel drained, but it is unclear what other effects it may be having.

Victories

Each of the heroes gains 1 victory if they defeat the Keys in combat or successfully talk them into leaving the warehouse. The heroes gain 1 victory for destroying or deactivating the Device.

Act 2: The Knights of the Treasury

The Arbitros Fiat

The Arbitros Fiat serve Lady Valetta and she has commanded them to put an end to the ritual and everyone involved. This should align them with the players, but the knights are implacable and unyielding. They seek to kill anyone they find in the warehouse.

Minutes after the Keys have been defeated or have left, the Arbitros Fiat arrive at the warehouse.

The door to the warehouse is kicked open and a tall Riojan with a black sword enters followed by three other men in the same gilded black armour. They are Knights of the Treasury, the Arbitros Fiat, employed by House Valetta. They are brutal and uncompromising. Striding towards the Device their leader calls out his command.
"Kill them. Kill them all."

A group of knights enter the warehouse to destroy the Device and kill anyone involved,

- Ser Rigazzo, **human blackguard**
- A **human knave** and a **human scoundrel**
- A **human knave** and a **human scoundrel**
- A **human knave** and a **human scoundrel**

Tactics

Rigazzo makes directly for the Device and immediately begins attacking it until it is destroyed. The other knights fan out and attack the nearest enemies they can see.

Victories

Each hero gains 2 victories for defeating the Abitros Fiat.

Act 3: Lilac Mist Montage

As the heroes leave the warehouse, read or paraphrase the following:

"*A thick fog has fallen over the area. The district wears its icy shroud well, even as it muffles distant sounds. A muted flash turns the mists lilac for a moment and the sound of distant shouting grows more clear.*

'It kills! The mist kills! Flee!'

The sound of running footsteps is distorted but you sense in your soul that something deadly is afoot. It is time to run for your lives, but even as this thought crosses your mind you hear the houses around you begin to rouse. They will not be swift enough unless you act.

Tell the players it is time for a montage test to determine how many civilians they can save during their escape.

This montage test has a success limit of 6 and a failure limit of 4. As usual, the montage test should run for only 2 montage rounds.

Montage Test Challenges

Use the following narration to set the scheme for the montage test. The list after the narration summarizes some possible challenges to use for the test, though you are free to come up with your own.

Evacuating the surrounding home will be no easy task. Many, if not most of the civilians are still asleep and when roused they may suddenly panic. The thick mist will confuse and disorient people and the nature of its threat is unclear.

- **Sleeping Civilians:** Sleeping or oblivious civilians can be roused. (This challenge can be tackled more than once.)
- **Panic:** Civilians can be directed to lessen the chaos.
- **Thick Fog:** A safe, swift route can be found.
- **Unseen Threat:** Determine the nature of the threat.

Introduce these challenges after round 1 is complete, or if players are having trouble thinking of tests to make.

- **Killing Mist:** The magic mist can be delayed by the strong, or by covering your face and nose. (This challenge can be tackled more than once.)
- **Imminent Death:** The heroes themselves can escape. (This challenge can be tackled more than once.)

Montage Test Outcomes

If the heroes achieve 6 successes before 4 failures, they achieve total success. If the time runs out and the heroes have achieved at least two more successes than failures, they achieve a partial success. If the heroes hit the failure limit or if the time runs out and they don't have at least two more successes than failures, they suffer a total failure.

Total Success

If the heroes earn a total success they get the majority of civilians out of the district and the survivors shower them with thanks.

"*The lilac mists roil and roll, but halt at the edges of the district. Whatever dark forces conjured it, their enmity seems to lie only with House Valetta. The survivors, many more than were left behind,*

know who to thank for their salvation. They reach out to touch your shoulders and many deep bows and life debts are cast your way."

The heroes each gain the Local Hero title.

Partial Success

If the heroes earn a partial success they succeed in saving several large groups of civilians.

"The survivors lie sprawled across docks, but all eyes are drawn to the bodies that lie still across the canal. The lilac mist has halted, but who knows if it shall return?"

Total Failure

If the heroes earn a total failure, they flee with a handful of survivors while most of the citizens remain behind.

"*The handful of survivors stand on the edge of the docks, staring in horror at the crowds that have fallen just across the water. Friends and family, a world gone in minutes. The lilac mist has halted, but who knows when it will begin to advance once more.*"

Victories

The heroes earn 1 Victory if they achieve a total or partial success on the montage test.

Denouement

With their escape from the Lilac Mist, the heroes can find time for rest and recuperation.

In the coming days, Capital will learn that the Lilac Night was the result of a failed arcane ritual known as the Rite of Desecration, carried out by Duchess Lenore Valetta. Some three thousand citizens were killed, only to rise again as deathless revenants. Lady Valetta herself has risen again as the Dead Lady and announced that she will continue to withhold Capital's taxes until her husband is restored to life. This will force the Prince to allow Lady Shirome of the Fulcrum to buy Great House status for her guild, as well as the Font and the Rasp.

The Great Game unfolds, but questions remain. Are the revenants of the Dead City citizens, or monsters? Capital waits with bated breath to find out. Meanwhile, the heroes must grapple with their role in events. What did the Device have to do with the Rite of Desecration? Are they responsible for what has happened, or are they merely pawns in someone else's game? While the Great Houses play games with the lives of their subjects, who will stand up for them? These questions must be answered, but for now, rest. There is more work to be done.

Rewards

The heroes can earn the following rewards during the adventure.

Title: Local Hero

"*You saved our lives. Your money ain't no good here.*"

Choose one of the following benefits:

- **A New Dawn:** When you finish a respite while in a community you have saved, the party gains a hero token. This hero token disappears at the end of your next respite if it hasn't been used.
- **Easy Marks:** You have an edge on tests made with skills from the interpersonal and intrigue skill groups when influencing members of a community that you have saved.
- **Local Fame:** Your Renown score increases by 1.

Ramsian Treatise

This treatise is an arcane Khemharan tome that may be used as a project source to discover the nature of the Device. A sage with expertise in Khemharan lore might be able to discover more. See the adventure The Skies are Sapphire, in Chapter 2.

The Device

The Device or its remains can be studied. The Discover Lore(Obscure) research project provides the following information:
The Device is of Khemharan origin, designed to absorb latent necromantic energy left in the wake of Khorsekef's defeat.

Maps

See below.



Warehouse Floor 1 - Director Version



Warehouse Floor 1 - Player Version



Warehouse Floor 2 - Director Version



Warehouse Floor 2 - Player Version

Chapter 2: The Great Game

As they recover from the events of the Lilac Night, the heroes may seek answers to the question of what really happened. This chapter presents an array of adventures that may reveal clues as to the motives and culprits behind those devastating events. The world says that Lady Valetta is responsible, but in Capital, things are rarely that simple.

The Seas Pitch to and Fro: This adventure is for heroes who wish to head to The Stays to find out why they were hired to steal the Device.

The Handsome Devil: This adventure is for heroes who wish to head to Villa Caramia and find out why the Skeleton Keys were hired to protect the Device.

The Skies are Sapphire: This adventure is for heroes who wish to head to the Imperial University to find out more about the Ramsian treatise.

Risk and Reward: This adventure is for heroes who have discovered that the Fulcrum hired the Keys and wish to investigate further.

Strategic Maneuvers: This adventure is for heroes who discover that House Vorona were ultimately responsible for sending them to steal the Device.

Coming Soon