

Long Live the Queen, or: Dancing in the Moonlight
By BurningHeron

Recommended for 2-4 Agents over one session of play.

—

Hecate, goddess of all witches, is gone forever, and all the queens of old...
Erichtho and Herodias...
Circe and Medea...
All are dust.

—Hellboy: Darkness Calls, by Mike Mignola and Duncan Fegredo

—

Briefing the Agents	2
The Truth	3
San Benedetto dei Marsi	4
The Queen of Witches	6
A Challenger to the Throne	7
Finding Eric	8
Walpurgis Night	9
Resolution	10
NPC Stats	11

This scenario takes inspiration from the following sources:

The Black Palace, by Jason Woods

[Caged Heat](#), by mellonbread

Cultist Simulator, by Weather Factory

Hellboy: Darkness Calls, by Mike Mignola and Duncan Fegredo

[Operation STARLIGHT BOYAR](#), by mellonbread

Briefing the Agents

This scenario assumes the Agents work for the Program. They are contacted by secure means on April 29 and given plane tickets to Washington, D.C. Upon arrival at Dulles International Airport, they are directed to a secure conference room. Inside is an envelope with international SIM cards for their phones, first-class tickets on an upcoming flight to Rome, and a phone number to dial on the conference phone. Their new case officer introduces himself as “Ops.”

In the early hours of April 29, a 21 year old American backpacker named Eric Mannen disappeared near the Italian town of San Benedetto dei Marsi. The Agents will be working with the Carabinieri, Italy’s national police force, to search for Eric. Their mission is to return him safely to the US and to make sure the Carabinieri don’t see anything they shouldn’t. They are also forbidden from bringing anything that might jeopardize their cover; if they need heavy weaponry, they can get it from the Carabinieri. If questioned about the nature of the unnatural threat, Ops responds vaguely and aggressively. A successful HUMINT roll realizes he is emotionally invested in this operation.

Once the briefing is over, the Agents have time to sleep or do some research before the plane lands.

Eric’s Social Media: On their last day in Rome, Eric posted a selfie on Instagram. Taken in a nightclub, the picture shows him with James and an unknown man. He commented, “Ciro knows where da best parties at. tmrw we’re goin to a festival he said is :fire:”

San Benedetto dei Marsi: The town was founded by the Marsi people, who were later conquered by Rome in the first century BC. The surrounding area was once underwater; engineers commissioned by Prince Alessandro Torlonia drained Lake Fucino in 1877.

The Truth

Eric Mannen and James Torres were finally going backpacking through Europe. For years they had talked about it, but exams and graduation and new jobs had always sucked away their time. Finally they were going to make the most of their time away. It would be just like their college heydays.

While visiting the town of San Benedetto dei Marsi, they heard about a camp in the mountains where drugs and women were easy to score. They set out for the real party, where both got high and Eric slept with a young woman named Renira. But during a bad trip, he saw something terrible in Renira's face and attacked her. She overpowered him and took him prisoner. Meanwhile, James ran away into the night.

The camp is in fact a gathering of all the world's witches, gathered on the mountain in preparation for Walpurgis Night. Tensions are high: Renira is challenging the reigning queen for her throne.

Meanwhile, Eric's presence in the camp has not only forced Sylvia to defend herself. Eric's father is Abraham Mannen, the Program's Director of Operations, or "Ops." He has no reason to believe an unnatural threat is behind Eric's disappearance: he is abusing his power to get the Program involved in the search, and will be shocked to learn a coven of witches was responsible after all.

San Benedetto dei Marsi

It takes an hour to get here from Rome, so the Agents enter town at its busiest. Tourism props up the local economy: nestled between three major cities, visitors are drawn to Roman-era ruins once submerged beneath Lake Fucino. Local amenities include a trattoria, a gas station, a police barracks, a small hotel, a Catholic church, and a doctor's office.

Marshal Orvilo Cavallari, the Carabinieri officer leading the search, is waiting for the Agents at the police barracks. He starts off friendly and cooperative, doing everything he can to be helpful. However, he has ambitions to enter politics, and rescuing Eric would give him the fame he needs to launch his career. He wants to be present for every turn in the case until Eric has been found, at which point he tries to sabotage the Agents and take credit for Eric's rescue.

James Torres is Eric's best friend and the last known person to see him alive. He's checked in to a room at the hotel, but he's out when the Agents arrive, praying at the Church of St. Agnes. He says they came to town looking for a concert they'd heard about in Rome. They hiked up the mountain, but a big fight broke out that night and separated them. This is the story he has practiced; the truth is Eric went on a bad trip and hit a girl. A crowd ganged up on Eric, and James thought the crowd wanted to kill them, so he ran away.

Anthropology 30%: The scenes in the church's stained glass windows are... incongruous. St. Agnes is always depicted with a lamb (a bilingual pun), but here she is charming snakes.
Occult 60%: It's really a Christianized version of Angitia, sister of the mythical witches Circe and Medea. Supposedly she had the power to cure snake bites and other maladies.

The **trattoria** is boisterous with gossip and clattering plates. The Agents can get anyone to talk if they pay for the wine.

Eric: Everyone recognizes him. He and James came by two days ago, then went up to the gypsy camp looking for drugs and sex. What else do young men want from such places?

Gypsy Camp: They arrived thirteen months ago. They're all women but only a few, if any, are actually Roma. They sell drugs made from wildflowers, and Eric and James were not the first tourists to spend the night there.

Drugs: Belladonna, or deadly nightshade, a poisonous flower. Makes your throat dry up, makes you see things, and then it kills you. The gypsies/ hippies use it to get high.

Tourists: This is the off-season, so tourists only come through on their way to the camp. There should have been a German couple up there too, yet they haven't returned yet.

Deadly nightshade is a well-known poison. Google can supply the Agents with facts and hearsay.

History: The Romans used deadly nightshade as a poison. Legend has it Livia killed her husband Emperor Augustus with it, clearing the way for her son to rule. Modern scholars dismiss the tale as slander spread by Livia's enemies at courts.

Occult: In European folklore, witches used deadly nightshade and other toxic plants to make a “flying ointment.” Modern scholars believe this is an allusion to the plants’ psychoactive properties that eventually came to be taken literally.

Pharmacy: Recreational use of deadly nightshade is uncommon but not unheard of, for some reason. If the user doesn’t overdose on highly concentrated alkaloids and die, they suffer from strange hallucinations and memory loss, inducing a state of terrified confusion.

Poison	Entry Route	Speed	Lethality	Symptoms	Antidote
<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	Ingestion	1D6 turns	10%	Pain, confusion, dry mouth, hallucinations	Yes

The *gypsy camp* takes some effort to reach. The trail up the mountain is impassable to vehicles, so the Agents must hike it. The camp is centered around a second, ruined church, and the witches can be found on its grounds. Nothing immediately seems unnatural, and those asked recognize Eric as the one who hit Renira. They direct the Agents to Sylvia; she’s been expecting police.

The Queen of Witches

Sylvia has ruled the world's witches since 1964, when [the Soviets killed the Baba Yaga](#). She is also one of the ancient Marsi people, raised on the shores of Lake Fucino. Its surface was once a portal to a moonlit realm absent of humanity; her goal is to refill the lake and lead the witches to a new home within that realm.

Sylvia is followed by those who remember the Baba Yaga's murder. They want to cut off contact with humanity so none of them need ever die again; plus, Sylvia is a known quantity, trusted but not loved. They have adopted the language, dress, and culture of the Marsi to curry favor with her, so they are called "lake-witches."

Foreign Language (Latin) roll: Marsian overuses contractions and strange vocabulary, but the grammatical structure is unchanged. An Agent who passes this roll can speak it (add it to their character sheet under Special Training). But Marsian was never meant to be spoken in this world, and prolonged conversation fills the mouth with water (0/1 SAN Unnatural). The lake-witches chew parts of the deadly nightshade plant to counter it and will offer some to an Agent having trouble.

Outside the lake-witches, Sylvia is resented for a petty and imperious demeanor, ordering others to perform simple rituals for her. Sylvia encourages this reputation because in reality, her powers are all but exhausted. Intervening to save her sisters from the Baba Yaga's fate has drained her POW; there are few rituals she can perform without the help of her daughter (and familiar) Placida, who has also disappeared. She suspects that Renira, a newcomer to the camp, is responsible. If the popular Renira challenges her rule, she will be forced to respond using strength she does not have.

Fortunately, the Agents will strike her as being very good at violence. She presents herself as a gentle old woman who worries that Renira, a newcomer to their camp, has kidnapped Eric and Placida. She wants the Agents to kill Renira: her death will not only remove her as a threat to Sylvia's reign, but it will allow Sylvia to win her followers' support by rallying them against the Agents.

1D4 Lake-witches about the Camp

1. Alma. Marsi. Sylvia restored her to life from her essential saltes. Knows Withering.
2. Gudrun. German. Once tried to seduce Saint Walpurga. Knows The Three Veils.
3. Leimomi. Polynesian. Contemplates the miracle of loaves and fishes. Knows Swarm.
4. Themba. Xhosa. Has foreseen Sylvia's death at Renira's hands. Knows Clairvoyance.

A Challenger to the Throne

Renira is an American. Specifically, she is a descendant of Benjamin Stockton, who was himself a child of Shub-Niggurath and the target of a previous Delta Green operation. Renira knows Stockton's name, and that it is significant to witches, but not why that is so. There is much she doesn't know about herself. She knows that she has great powers, and that she has spent her life running and hiding to avoid death. She doesn't want to hide any more. She wants to fight back.

Renira is beloved by young, modern witches who barely remember the Baba Yaga. Like her, they have known only terror and persecution for their powers, and now they want to live without fear. But Sylvia's decision to retreat from the world isn't enough; they don't fear conflict with humanity. They want to bring humanity to its knees. And Renira is the one brave enough to try. When Renira enters one of her wild dances, they join her, leading to the name "thunderskins."

But Renira doesn't know why she wants these things. She doesn't even know if she wants them, or if she's supposed to want them, and that thought scares her. She has no idea Shub-Niggurath is directing her actions with an increasingly unsubtle hand. Instead, she blames Sylvia for resisting her good ideas and making her doubt herself. Once she kills Sylvia, she will be free from doubts.

1D4 Thunderskins about the Camp

1. Azade. Kurdish. YPJ member who fought ISIS in Raqqa. Knows Exaltation of the Flesh. Carries an AK rifle (50% to hit, Lethality 10%).
2. Bridget. English. Sends abused kids letters from Hogwarts. Knows Infallible Suggestion. Carries a hunting shotgun (40% to hit, 2D6, must reload after every shot).
3. Lupita. Mexican. Closely follows the music scene in Mexico City. Knows Fascination. Carries a baseball bat studded with human teeth like a macuahuitl (60% to hit, 1D8+1).
4. Vadoma. Roma. Claims descent from Queen Nitocris' court. Knows Obscure Memory. Carries a hunting shotgun (40% to hit, 2D6, must reload after every shot).

Finding Eric

Eric is being kept in an underground tunnel that breaches the mountainside, a ruin of Claudius and Hadrian's attempts to drain Lake Fucino. Here are some ways the Agents might find him:

Placida, once rescued, can lead the Agents to the tunnel. She is hidden in a thunderskin's tent; searching tents requires three successful Search rolls to find her, with failures indicating the Agents are caught. Once found, Placida is very weak; she whimpers in Marsian for her mother to feed her. If she is not rescued, Renira will interrogate her and learn about Sylvia's weakness.

Renira can be found deep in the dark woods, where the ritual will be performed. She is honest with the Agents about everything; she does not fear them. However, one with with Psychotherapy can identify and address her fears of herself. This leaves her so shaken that she allows the Agents to leave with Eric. But later, when confronted by the thunderskins, she curses herself for her moment of weakness and proceeds with her plan.

Interrogating thunderskins about Eric can get them to slip and eye the direction of the tunnel. Then a Search roll can lead them to the breach. If the roll fails, they still find the breach, but it takes long enough that the thunderskins realize what the Agents are doing. The Agents reemerge to find they are being held at gunpoint (on a fumble, Renira is here too). They will not let the Agents leave with Eric.

When the Agents finally reach Eric, he is unconscious, near death from poison. The German couple are down here as well, alive but miserable. They will cry, loudly, when the Agents arrive. Leaving them may draw the witches' attention as they beg for rescue; more likely, the Agents will openly bring the couple with them, demanding answers. This only inflames the conflict in the camp, as Sylvia blames Renira for their kidnapping and begs the Agents to let her heal Eric. Renira, vindicated that Sylvia would betray her, resolves to kill Sylvia.

First Aid or Medicine: Eric needs treatment right away. There is a doctor in town who can take care of him until an ambulance arrives from Avezzano.

Walpurgis Night

At sundown, Walpurgis Night begins. The Agents have two problems to deal with.

Unless Renira has been killed, she kills Sylvia and declares herself queen. The lake-witches either kill themselves or submit to her rule. She then leads the remaining witches in the Dance to the Heart Relentless, a ritual that summons great monsters called percussigants. They join in the dance and then proceed down the mountain, looking to smash San Benedetto dei Marsi.

Meanwhile, Cavallari gathers a force of Carabinieri to ascend the mountain and clear out the camp (and rescue Eric, if that is still an issue). He is no longer taking orders from the Agents; attempts to dissuade him won't work, as he turns their words back on them, accusing them of cowardice or expecting others to do the hard work for them. If the raid is not stopped, the Carabinieri will run into percussigants descending the mountain and be massacred. The Agents have a few options for dealing with this new problem.

Run like hell. The Agents have Eric, and despite his fragile state, he will certainly die if he stays in San Benedetto dei Marsi. They are within rights to jump into a car and leave.

Stop the ritual. Carefully scaling the mountain can evade the percussigants, allowing the Agents to reach the camp again undetected. They will find every witch dancing wildly in the dark woods, and the percussigants stop their attack when everyone stops dancing. Renira is the only one who will fight the Agents to the death; others will flee after reaching half HP.

Rescue the townspeople. While the percussigants cannot be killed with anything the Agents carry, it may be possible to hold them back while San Benedetto dei Marsi is evacuated.

Archeology roll: Lake Fucino was long regarded as a source of malaria, and Torlonia's was the fifth attempt to drain it. His engineers damaged earlier tunnels dug on the orders of Claudius and Hadrian. It was in one of these tunnels that Eric was kept. An Agent who passes this roll can find a way into those tunnels. On a failure, they can still find the tunnels, but the percussigants are directly in the way.

Demolitions roll: The gas station can be sabotaged to explode, killing nearby percussigants and temporarily scaring off others. That can buy more time to get people out, but it means letting the percussigants approach town where people can see them.

In the unlikely event that Renira is dead but Sylvia survives, she leads the witches in the ritual Storm and Stillness. This summons a great hurricane that floods the dry lakebed. With Lake Fucino restored, the witches travel through its surface and never interact with humanity again.

Resolution

The Agents gain Abraham Mannen's goodwill for rescuing Eric. Exactly how that affects them is up to the Handler; as a suggestion, Mannen may intervene to save them from themselves when they next make a serious mistake.

The Agents gain 1D4 SAN and a formal thanks from the Italian government for saving townspeople from the percussigants. Cavallari's complaints about the Agents are buried in light of their bravery during the "earthquake" that leveled the town.

The Agents gain 1D6 SAN for killing both Sylvia and Renira. With its leadership wiped out, the international witch-cult withers away until it can no longer threaten society.

Allowing Eric to die and Cavallari to survive has consequences. The Agents are blamed for failing to rescue Eric, and their superiors confront them with Cavallari's accusations of wrongdoing.

NPC Stats

Marshal Orvilo Cavallari, Carabinieri

STR 11 CON 12 DEX 11 INT 10 POW 10 CHA 10

HP 12 WP 10

Armor: 3 points of concealed kevlar

Skills: Alertness 60%, Bureaucracy 40%, Criminology 40%, Drive 70%, First Aid 30%, Forensics 50%, HUMINT 50%, Law 30%, Navigate 40%, Persuade 40%, Search 40%

Languages: English, Italian

Attacks: Beretta SC70/90 assault rifle w/ holosight 60% (1D12 or Lethality 10% w/ AP 3), Beretta 92 handgun 40% (1D10), Pistol whip 50% (1D4), Punch 60% (1D4+1)

Sylvia, Queen of Witches

STR 9 CON 10 DEX 14 INT 21 POW 4 CHA 8

HP 10 WP 4

Skills: Alertness 50%, Flight 40%, Foreign Language (English/ Italian/ Latin) 99%, HUMINT 50%, Melee Weapons 50%, Occult 99%, Persuade 70%, Stealth 50%, Survival 50%, Unnatural 80%

Attacks: Stiletto 50% (1D4 w/ AP 3, attacks that deal damage inject deadly nightshade poison)

Rituals: Prayer to the Dark Man, Raise from Essential Saltes, Storm and Stillness

Flight: With a successful Flight test, Sylvia can float, hover, and travel through the air at speeds of up to 40 kph.

Immunity: Sylvia never takes damage from diseases or poisons.

Up My Sleeve: Sylvia keeps her stiletto hidden on her person at all times. Finding it is a Search test with a -40% penalty. Her first attack with it gets a +20% bonus.

Placida, Sylvia's daughter turned familiar

STR 2 CON 7 DEX 20 INT 10 POW 2

HP 5 WP 2

Skills: Alertness 80%, Dodge 95%, Stealth 80%, Swim 70%, Unnatural 50%

Attacks: Bite 40% (1D4)

Familiar: Placida can act as an assistant in Sylvia's rituals.

Gift of the Master: Placida has sacrificed much of her POW assisting Sylvia in her rituals. She can regain POW by killing a human and drinking the victim's life-blood; she prefers helpless victims.

That lets her attempt a POW test. If it fails, she regains 1 POW, up to her max score of 8 POW.

Small and Nimble: Placida is cat-sized, so any attack against her is at a -40% penalty.

SAN Loss: 1/1D6

Renira, challenger to the throne

STR 20 CON 17 DEX 10 INT 20 POW 18 CHA 3

HP 19 WP 18

Disorders: Borderline personality disorder, claustrophobia

Armor: See **Unnatural Biology**

Skills: Alertness 40%, Athletics 40%, Foreign Language (Italian) 20%, Unnatural 50%

Attacks: Unarmed 40% (1D8 or grapple) (see **Suckling**)

Rituals: Dance to the Heart Relentless, Healing Balm

Dance to the Heart Relentless

Elaborate ritual. Study: months; 1D12 SAN; +1% Unnatural. Activation: hours; 12 WP, 1D6 SAN.

The operator must find a place in an old-growth forest where sunlight has never touched the ground, then perform a wild, gesticulating dance until their heart rate harmonizes with the dance's rhythm. If the activation roll succeeds, the operator summons a percussigant that will obey their commands as long as they keep dancing.

Effluent Life: Renira can focus, mutate, enhance, or otherwise change life-systems. She can permanently change another character's biology by anointing them with her blood; if the Handler finds it necessary to track such changes, she can spend 1 HP worth of blood to increase or decrease one stat on another character by 1D6 points.

Half-Terrene: Renira is most comfortable where humans can thrive. However, she doesn't suffer from old age, disease, poison, radiation, pressure, cold, or submersion.

Loping: Renira can leap, climb, and run in a manner wholly unlike a human. With a successful Athletics roll, she can cross distances and obstacles that would stop a normal human.

Suckling: In any turn after Renira has a victim grappled, the red sucking mouths of her tentacles greedily suck blood from the victim. This reduces the victim's STR by 1D4 points per turn without using an action. Each point of STR drained heals her 1 point of lost HP. The victim dies at 0 STR; if they survive, they regain 1 STR for each day of bed rest.

Unnatural Biology: Renira's physiology would baffle any biologist. Called shots for her "vitals" inflict normal damage, with no special game effect. Successful Lethality attacks do damage equal to the weapon's Lethality rating.

SAN Loss: 1/1D6 (if seen unclothed)

Thunderskin, dancing to Renira's beat

STR 12 CON 12 DEX 12 INT 10 POW 13 CHA 10

HP 12 WP 13

Skills: First Aid 50%, History 40%, Occult 60%, Stealth 30%, Survival 30%, Unnatural 20%

Attacks & Rituals: See sidebar **1D4 Thunderskins** on pg. 8.

Percussigant, never never never stops dancing

STR 46 CON 22 DEX 16 INT 12 POW 16

HP 34 WP 16

Armor: See **Unnatural Flesh**.

Skills: Alertness 40%, Unnatural 70%

Languages: all

Attacks: Trample 40% (6D6) (see **Trampling**), Grapple 80% (see **Feeding**)

Feeding: The turn after grappling, the percussigant may suck blood from a pinned target with one of its horrible mouths. That reduces the victim's STR by 2D6 and adds the same amount to the monster's HP or WP, whichever it prefers.

Non-Terrene: The percussigant is at home in nearly any environment. Radiation, pressure, cold, vacuum, and other inimical environments have no negative effects on it.

Stench: All unprotected breathers around a percussigant must pass a CON*5 roll or suffer –20% to all tests until they escape the stench.

Trampling: With a successful attack roll, the percussigant may divide its damage dice among up to six victims within reach. Each victim may attempt to Dodge the monster's attack roll.

Unnatural Biology: The physiology of the percussigant would baffle any biologist. Called shots for "vitals" or another apparently vulnerable area inflicts normal damage, with no special game effect.

Unnatural Flesh: A percussigant takes only 1 damage from any unarmed attack, melee weapon, firearm, or explosive with a Lethality rating lower than 40%. It takes no damage from fire, corrosives, electricity, and toxins. It takes full damage from hypergeometry.

SAN Loss: 1D4/1D10