

# THE LIGHTDAY INCIDENT

## *A COSMERE MURDER MYSTERY*

In my experience, the Weeping has always been a pleasant time on Roshar. With all the angry crashing of lightning above your head and the cold, slimy stones beneath your feet, it is nice to have a break where the rain simply falls. Four weeks of the land being cleansed for the new year. But the Weeping is not the same every year. Given that the weather pattern is based on a thousand-day cycle, the Weeping alternates in a binary. In even-numbered years, the rain falls for those four weeks without interruption. On odd-numbered years, like the year our story takes place, the Weeping is split right down the middle by a single, rebellious Highstorm. So it was that fateful Lightday, the first day of 1143 by Vorin reckoning, in the city of Kholinar.

In this city, protected from the storms by the great windblades, many reputable Rosharans resided. Of chief interest to this story is one Highlord Kalenav Reovar. Mind, he is not important in that he is greatly involved in the story's events - rather, he was responsible for setting it in motion. Perhaps the easiest role to play in a story.

Like many lighteyes, Reovar was a powerful figure. He was wealthy, politically savvy, and a personal friend of the Highprince. But, unlike many brightlords and lighteyes, his estate was always open. He publicly made a great deal of providing food and beds for weary travelers, something completely unlike one of his station. But then, such a station is usually only achieved by those who are willing to do the unusual.

In this estate we find the central characters of our story:

Tanolin Relar - *The Inspector*

Chalana Reovar - *The Brightlady*

Naladan Saroh - *The Highprince's Wit*

Voredin Jalaror - *The Shardbearer*

Eli-Nah - *The Worldsinger*

Toqqun - *The Ardent*

Spring - *The Horneater*

Kani-daughter-Shinna - *The Artifabrian*

These eight souls were all about their business that fateful evening, the thunder rumbling outside. Then came the news, brought by Jalaror the Shardbearer, as he burst from Highlord Reovar's chambers into the great room, where everyone had been.

"Highlord Reovar is dead!" He bellowed, shock and rage evident in his green eyes.

I told you he wasn't very involved in the story.

The shock of this revelation rippled through the room as the other seven people looked back and forth between one another. Dead? The Highlord?

Jalanor stomped down the stairs, his takama fluttering in his haste, as he approached the front door, a thin stick of metal in his hand. Duellists would recognize it as a guard placed on the end of a Shardblade to prevent it cutting. He took this piece of metal and bent it into and around the handles of the door, completely blocking off the one exit of the house.

“What are you doing?” Spring, the Horneater, asked.

“Highlord Reovar is dead,” Jalanor repeated, as he turned back around to face the others. “He was murdered. And one of you is the culprit.”

“I think you mean one of *you*,” said Naladan Saroh, the Highprince’s Wit, as he held his hands up warding and slowly edged away from the others.

“Where is he?” Toqqun asked. “His chamber?”

Jalanor nodded.

“Immediately leaving the scene of the crime doesn’t help your case,” Tanolin Relar, the Inspector, observed, crossing his arms across his chest. “You obviously knew the Highlord quite well, and for a long time. Plenty of time to foster a grudge.”

“Jalanor,” Kani, the Artifabrian, said, her eyes wide and her demeanor obviously shaken, “Are you serious? Reovar is . . .”

“Of course I didn’t kill him!” Jalanor snarled at the Inspector, ignoring Kani. “I am sworn to fight for Reovar! I would never do such a thing! *I* am more suspicious of a man who barged into the estate uninvited mere minutes before his death!”

The Inspector’s narrowed eyes locked with the Shardbearer’s fiery gaze.

“Everyone, calm down!” Chalana Reovar, the Brightlady, said authoritatively as she stood up between the two and held her hands, one bare and one hidden in her safesleeve, to calm them. “We aren’t going to resolve this by giving in to fear and paranoia.”

A snicker came from Eli-Nah, the Worldsinger. “I hate to be the bearer of bad news, Brightness,” he said with a Reshi accent, “But you’re a strong suspect yourself. We all tried to ignore the raised voices coming from you and your husband’s chamber last night, but to no avail.”

Chalana’s eyes lingered on the Worldsinger for a moment before she continued speaking.

“Nevertheless, the suspect will not be uncovered in a fit of fearful violence. I will gladly prove my innocence in the matter. We need to handle this rationally.”

Thunder crashed outside, rattling the glass windows in their frames.

“I have no interest in being held close to a murderer!” Naladan Saroh cried, taking a few more steps away.

“I should like to investigate the body,” Tanolin said. “We need to know how he was murdered.”

No one else said anything for a time, each of them in turn looking at one another in trepidation if not outright terror. Finally, the Worldsinger spoke.

“I guess we’ll just have to do what we can to survive.”

Welcome to the Cosmere Murder Mystery. This is a one-shot event that hybridizes role-playing games, murder mysteries, and the works of Brandon Sanderson's Cosmere to create a unique and memorable experience. Each player is assigned a character to play and receives that character's sheet, which includes their characteristics, opinions of the others, the character's secrets, and the character's special abilities.

The characters each have their own set of goals. At the end of the game (which will likely be when the Highstorm finishes its passage over the estate unless a more obvious ending occurs first, like everyone dying), a character scores victories in accordance with their success in completing their goals as follows:

**Completion of Primary Goal: Four Points**

**Completion of Secondary Goal: Three Points**

**Completion of Tertiary Goal: Two Points**

Though more of a narrative experience than a game, this system confers a vague sensation of determining winners and losers, but shouldn't be compared too harshly to other characters, as some goals will be much easier to achieve than others. But they are all possible. In addition, there is a bonus point that may be achieved: the Hoid Point.

**Bonus Point - Hoid:** One character in the estate has had an encounter with Hoid at some point in the past. The first person to discover this easter egg earns an extra point and wins a Hoid sticker.

#### **THE GOLDEN RULE - SANDERSON'S LAW**

Please keep in mind that all these rules are guidelines, general guardrails to push the narrative forward. While these should be adhered to, players will find that there is not a lot of wiggle room in the choices a character can make. This is because the players are encouraged to be clever and tell what makes a good story (e.g. "I stab this person in the neck when they're not looking" as opposed to "I take the Fight action." Because of this, players are encouraged to talk to the other players in character and may learn information that way. More competitive players must also be aware that, based on stats and rules, some characters are unequivocally 'better' than others. But these rules are intended to enhance the narrative experience, not limit it. Thus, the golden rule of the murder mystery is the same as Brandon Sanderson's zeroth law of magic: "Always err on the side of what is awesome."

**THE SILVER RULE - NO METAGAMING:** This rule is a difficult one: Due to the nature of Sanderson books and the setting of this game, players will know a great many things that their characters do not. For example, anyone who has read *The Stormlight Archive* will know that people who have eyes like the Shin are typically offworlders, not native to Roshar. But, generally, Rosharans are unaware of this fact. Thus, pains have been taken to make clear to the players what information their character knows. Players are respectfully asked to do their best not to act on information their character would not know, to play the character organically.

#### **TESTS**

The game's mechanics are made up of tests, also known as checks or rolls. To take any test (Always specified as Combat, Will, Investigation, or Stealth), roll a D6 and add (or subtract) the relevant value to (or from) the roll. Certain tests may require a certain Target Number (TN) as a minimum threshold for the test to be successful, which the player may or may not know (e.g. if the TN for a Combat roll is 5, and the character totals a 5 or higher, then the test was a success. If the total was 4 or lower, then the test is a failure) Higher results will always be more successful than lower ones. Note that, even if a modifier would suggest otherwise, a test's result cannot exceed 10.

Each character has a number of Fortune points during the game. How many is reflected in each character's sheet. After rolling a D6, a character may spend Fortune points to improve the result. Each point spent increases the result by 1. As with regular modifiers, Fortune cannot be used to make a test exceed 10.

Note that in any of these cases, if the player does a good enough job of roleplaying, they may not need to take the relevant test, or at least not need to roll as well. This depends on the GM's discretion.

## **TURNS**

The game consists of turns featuring characters in the Reovar Estate. Each turn represents approximately five minutes in-world, though this is not a consistent figure.

At the start of each turn, each character accrues a number of Fortune points in accordance with their character sheet. Then, each player declares a Venture that they are attempting for the round, and texts it to the Game Master (including any specific details, e.g. "I take the Investigate action in this room, specifically to look for a fabrial", or "I Investigate this character and see if he's concealing a weapon." It may also just be a generic "I investigate this room").

## **VENTURES**

Ventures are essentially actions, representing the main thing the character is doing for the duration of the turn, such as investigating a room or relocating to a different room. Note that these represent not split-second decisions, but more grand maneuvers a person makes, each taking a few minutes. After Fortune points are accrued, each player alerts the Game Master via text which Venture they are taking. It can be one of five: Investigate, Relocate, Hide, Fight, or Other. After these actions are done, each character may make an Investigation.

Once all players declare their Venture to the Game Master, the Game Master then goes room to room, helping the players resolve the Ventures and their effects.

**Investigate:** This is the core action of the game. Characters may either investigate the room they are in or a person nearby.

In order to investigate, the character makes an Investigation roll. When making an Investigation check, after the application of any Fortune points, the Game Master reveals to the player a clue that the character discovers. Lower totals for Investigation tests reveal more obvious and/or less important clues, while higher ones reveal important clues that others may have missed. The TN for relevant clues is known only to the Game Master until successfully learned, and may be modified to fit the situation.

Instead of investigating a room or character, a player may be more specific and say they are investigating something in particular (such as the hearth, or trying to deduce what a woman is carrying in her safepouch). In these cases, clues relevant to the matter will have a lower TN.

If a character or characters are Hiding in a room that is being Investigated by another character, then the Hiding character is noticed if the Investigating character's Investigation roll matches or exceeds their Concealment value. If the Investigation roll is lower, then the Hiding character remains hidden.

A character may use their free, end-of-turn Investigation after doing this action, meaning that a character can have up to two Investigations in a turn.

**Relocate:** Characters may move from one room to another. They may move to any room they see on the map that is within two "hops" from their current location. Unless done with incredible stealth, the exit

from and entry into a room is apparent to all people in that room. If two characters relocate, it is possible for them to walk past one another, and they may converse or ignore each other if they wish.

**Hide:** Characters may attempt to hide themselves from view. Ideally this is done by explaining what article of furniture in the room they are hiding under or behind. To hide, a character must take a Stealth test, with no particular TN. Once this is done and any desired Fortune points are applied, the player must write down their total. This is their Concealment value. While hiding, a character in the same room only discovers the hiding character if the total of their Investigation check equals or exceeds the Concealment value of the hiding character. The investigating character is not told what this Concealment value is. If the hiding character takes any action except a general investigation of the things around them, they immediately stop hiding.

**Fight:** When attacking a character, the attacker must take a Combat test, with the TN being the target character's Defense. If the total equals or exceeds the target's Defense, the attack was successful and the character is wounded. The Attacker may spend Fortune points to increase his result, and the Defender may spend Fortune points to increase his Defense value. When this is done, the Attacker and Defender alternate spending one Fortune point each, starting with the Defender, until both pass in succession.

When a character is Wounded, subtract the Defense from the Attack total, and consult the following chart:

0-1: Moderate wound, such as to the arm or leg.

2-3: Serious wound. At the start of each Venture, the wounded character must take a Will test (TN 7). If failed, the character dies.

4+: Immediate death.

If a character already has a Moderate wound and would receive another one, it is treated as a Serious wound. If a character already has a Serious wound and would receive another one, they instead immediately die.

If two characters both declare the Fight action, whoever has the superior Will value fights first.

**Other:** Players may attempt to do other things not listed here if there is not a good representative. Alternatively, characters may have access to unique ventures.

## **ORDER OF VENTURE RESOLUTION**

After the declaration of Ventures, the Game Master resolves them in the following order:

**1: Fight**

**2: Investigate Character**

**3: Hide**

**4: Relocate**

**5: Investigate Room**

Other Ventures are fit in this order to the best judgment of the Game Master.

After all this is done, the Game Master concludes the Venture by declaring any relevant updates, such as a loud noise being heard throughout the estate. Once this has all been done, the turn ends, and the next one begins.

## **AREAS**

The Reovar Estate is fairly large, but, with the Highstorm, much of the estate has been sanctioned off as quarters for the servants as well as other things. But the area the murder took place in, and therefore the area the murderer is in, is limited to the eight areas listed below:

**Great Room** - The large common room where balls are held and guests are hosted. This is connected to all of the other rooms.

**Kitchen** - Houses large barrels, cupboards, and counters, and has a large pantry. This is connected to the Great Room and the Parshman Room.

**Guest Chamber** - A large room with dozens of beds, allowing areas for weary travelers to rest. This is connected to the Great Room and the Courtyard.

**Highlord's Chambers** - The private chamber of Highlord and Brightness Reovar. It contains a large bed, the corpse of Highlord Reovar, and a private washroom with a functioning toilet, sink, and bathtub. This is connected to the Great Room.

**Library** - A large, tall room with many high shelves, stuffed to the brim with books. And a couple of booths for reading or being read to. This is connected to the Great Room.

**Laboratory** - A medium-sized room with several tables covered in fabrial paraphernalia and books. This is connected to the Great Room.

**Courtyard** - The only accessible exterior location for outdoor balls, currently unused and only lit by the occasional cracks of thunder in the sky. This is connected to the Great Room and the Guest Chamber.

**Parshman Room** - A small room for the parshmen. This room is connected to the Great Room and the Kitchen.