

Beauty is BUT SKIN DEEP

A DRAGONQUEST™ Mini-Adventure

by Michael Brunton



A. INTRODUCTION

This is a DRAGONQUEST™ adventure designed to be played in about two or three hours by a Games Master (GM) plus one player with one character. Although it is a single adventure, but it can be incorporated into an existing campaign, and some notes are provided to aid in doing so.

The DRAGONQUEST game is very different from the D&D® and AD&D™ games. Many of the assumptions which players of the latter type of game would take as read in a fantasy world are not

relevant in a DRAGONQUEST adventure. Players more used to the D&D and AD&D games would be well advised to read the article which appears on p.6 of this issue.

Before play begins the GM should read the module and become familiar with the general situation and specific details presented below. If you are a DRAGONQUEST player please stop reading here, as the remainder of the information in this pull-out is for the GM alone.

B. BRIEFING FOR THE GAMES MASTER

1. The City

Throughout this mini-module there are references to 'the city' and 'the Merchants' Quarter'. These are deliberately vague. Other references to groups such as the City Watch are more specific. The adventure has been designed to fit into most city backgrounds that the GM could have without too much extra work. Information such as the location of the buildings described below, and the social organisation of the city, are left to the GM's discretion. Other information, such as the locality of the adventure, is provided, but the GM should feel free to change any of these details.

The adventure can be inserted in whole or in part into a city setting of the GM's own design, or into a commercially available city — such as Sanctuary in the Chaosium's 'Thieves World'. If the GM does not have a whole city setting available, or does not wish to create one, the following information will sketch in a general background for the adventure.

The city lies on a river crossing where several major trade routes intersect. Although not large with 5,000 inhabitants, the city is prosperous enough to be independent of the nobility, a charter having been granted some 75 years ago. The City Guilds now administrate for the town, usually with justice, but always with an eye towards profit. At present the Guild of Wool Merchants is the most powerful, although it has only risen to pre-eminence in the last five years.

The other Guilds include the Navigators, Goldsmiths, Mercantile Adventurers (merchants, not adventurers as such), Slavers, Bards, Mercenaries, Vintners, Armourers, Coopers, Turners, Weavers, Dyers, Slubbers, Architects, etc. The trades such as butcher, baker and candlestick-maker also have small and non-influential Guilds. The Thieves' Guild and the Slayers' Brotherhood (Assassins' Guild) have small memberships, but these are naturally kept secret and have no official stake in the running of the city. The Adventurers' Guild has a similarly low status, but it is not illegal. Law and order, although patchy, are enforced by the City Watch, an organisation paid for by the Guilds. The Watch therefore concentrates on protecting property, but also performs the standard policing functions of protecting life and limb. Members of the Watch also act as customs officials, tax gatherers (when required), and militia cadre.

The Watch is also charged with ensuring that laws related to the use of magic — particularly the banned Colleges of Black Magics, Necromancy and Greater Summonings — are obeyed. The law states that Adepts licenced by the Guildmasters are entitled to practise within the city limits, but that they are totally liable for their spell results and must offer compensation to any who suffer as a result. This is a powerful incentive to excellence on the part of all Adepts. Black Magicians, Necromancers and Summoners cannot practise their arcane arts at all. The penalty for doing so is death and the confiscation of all property.

Hence, if the player character produces proof of Khaana's wrong-doings, he or she can avenge the ghost of Victoria, and rid the city of a malefactor.

2. Incorporation into an existing campaign

The GM may wish to insert this adventure into an existing DragonQuest campaign. Ideally, this should be done gradually, with the players possibly having dealings with the various Non-Player Characters for some time. The players could frequent the Five Elements Inn, using it as a place where they rest between adventures and wait to be approached by patrons. The players could use the moneychanger, Josep Vedla, as a moneyer and banker, or consult Khaana as a fortune teller and wise woman.

The GM should feel free to make any changes necessary to make the module fit into the existing background.

3. The Plot

About a year ago an old woman bought a house near the Merchants' Quarter of the city. She apparently moved away about a fortnight later, leaving the young woman who had arrived on the night of the old woman's disappearance.

The younger woman, Khaana, refused to say where the old woman had gone, and although foul play was suspected, the authorities could not investigate. Khaana had valid documents granting her trusteeship of the old woman's property.

Once the controversy had died down, Khaana set herself up in business as a fortune teller and maker of herbal potions. Whether or not it was Khaana's claimed gypsy blood, her predictions and readings seemed more accurate than most, and her business flourished. Her secondary and much more discreet occupation — that of Courtesan — also prospered.

However, not all is as it appears. At the same time as the old woman vanished there were a number of other disappearances. All of those who disappeared were young women, and no trace of them has ever been found.

The old woman and Khaana are one person. By murder and use of forbidden magic — a Skin Change Spell — Khaana was able to transform herself into her present youthful and beautiful form. Khaana poisoned the young women, and used their skins in her attempts to cast the Skin Change Spell and make herself youthful again. Only the last attempt worked, and Khaana was transformed. She now protects this dark secret from everybody, including her lover, Huskylour. He knows that Khaana practises magic, but not of the murder. They both realise that investigation would result in Khaana's execution.

Unfortunately for her, Khaana's murderous spell-casting had an unexpected side effect. Victoria, the young woman whose skin was used, perished in traumatic circumstances, and so did not find rest. She became a ghost, tied to her bodily remains. These are now buried, along with the remains of the other missing girls, in the cellar of Khaana's house. Victoria's ghost can only wander within 50 yards or so of her resting place, seeking help from anyone who will avenge her death on Khaana and re-bury her mortal remains in hallowed ground.

The adventure begins as the player character arrives at the Five Elements Inn, just round the corner from Khaana's house. Despite the Inn's good reputation and well stocked cellar, trade is at a low ebb. Many guests have left after only one night, claiming that they have been persistently disturbed by something or somebody. Midzer, the owner of the Inn, is growing increasingly concerned over the loss of trade, and is looking for someone to find out why this is happening.

The answer is, of course, Victoria's ghost, who has been haunting the Inn in an attempt to get help. The GM may use either or both of the Player's Briefings to provide clues about the above information.

Disposing of Khaana, and thus helping Victoria, could prove a risky task for a single individual. There are sources of help available: the city watch could be contacted once evidence of Khaana's murders or spell casting is discovered, or Huskylour might be persuaded to act against Khaana if presented with information about her true nature. (See the section on Non-Player Characters for details of Huskylour and a Watch Patrol).

C. BRIEFING FOR THE PLAYER

There are two briefings provided in this section. The GM may use either or both of them. It should be noted that the two do not give the same amount of information. The sources of this information are Midzer and Victoria, and these individuals do not know all of what has occurred.

1. Midzer's Tale

Midzer, a 37 year old human, is the owner and barman of the Five Elements Inn. His physical characteristics are:

PS: 21 MD: 18 AG: 15 MA: 7
PB: 12 EN: 16 FT: 20 WP: 23
PC: 12

He is a Rank 2 Merchant, a Rank 1 Troubador, and speaks Common and Elvish at Rank 9. He uses a Sabre at Rank 3 and a Dagger at Rank 1.

The Inn is well known in the city for its good beer, wines and hospitality, but despite this trade has declined recently, and Midzer is becoming increasingly concerned.

The drop in trade started a year ago — more people were staying in at night when some young girls disappeared and were never found. Trade picked up once girls stopped vanishing, but the Five Elements never seemed to attract as many people as it had before. Something about the Inn, or the neighbourhood, made the customers uneasy. Then, to add insult to injury, some six months ago, guests who were staying in the Inn complained that they were being harrassed while they slept — clothes were being scattered, the beds were being moved, and curious noises could be heard. The word 'poltergeist' was mentioned, and business took a further downturn.

Midzer decided to sleep elsewhere after several nights of this activity, and all the residential customers left as well. The Inn is still used during the day, but once the last customer departs Midzer locks up and heads for a quieter part of the city.

Midzer now wants someone to find out what is happening. He is not happy at the thought of having to pay to do so, but is willing to offer a compromise solution — whoever finds out what has been going on can stay at the Inn for one month without paying, and have a drink on the house as well!

If given the opportunity Midzer will suggest that the player character should spend the night at the Five Elements and find out what is going on in the place. Midzer doesn't really expect an immediate solution, just an explanation.

Midzer has his own thoughts on what has been going on, but they are vague and nowhere near the truth. He is firmly of the opinion that he is the victim of somebody's malice, and that this person must have had some imagined wrong done to them in the past. Midzer doesn't really know who this person could be, because although he is always hard in his business dealings he is always fair. Midzer is also of the opinion that some of his initial troubles can be traced back to the arrival, about one year ago, of Khaana who 'lowered the tone of the area'.

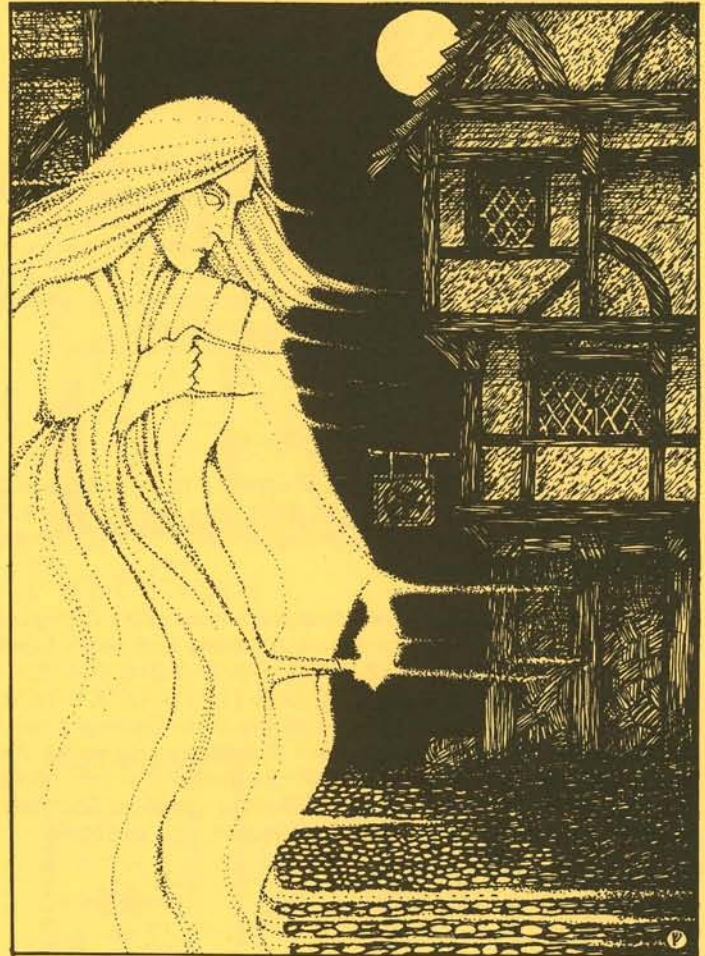
2. Victoria's Tale

Midzer's troubles can indeed be traced back to Khaana, although not as directly or as simply as Midzer would like to believe. The Inn has been regularly visited by the ghost of Victoria, Khaana's last victim. Her characteristics are:

PS: None MD: None AG: None MA: 10
PB: 23 EN: None FT: None WP: 24
PC: 6

As a ghost Victoria has no skills, abilities or Magical powers.

Victoria was one of the unfortunate girls who disappeared about a year ago. In fact, she is the most unfortunate, because the others all died cleanly and did not become ghosts. Victoria's skin was used by Khaana in the casting of a Skin Change Spell, so Khaana looks a great deal like Victoria — anyone who has seen the ghost of Victoria might well mistake Khaana for Victoria at first glance.



Victoria did not start her haunting immediately. The shock of dying — and having her mortal remains used for foul witcheries — tied her closely to her body, but she has gradually moved out into the immediate neighbourhood, seeking someone to avenge her. She is a basically gentle soul, but she is filled with a deep loathing for Khaana and Huskylour. Her sole aim in unlife is the total destruction of the 'wicked old woman'.

If anyone manages to contain their fear long enough to listen to the ghost they will be told what has happened — the killings, the illegal use of Black Magic, the wanderings of the ghost, and the truth about Khaana. Victoria is desperate to tell someone what has been done to her. She remembers how Khaana (as an old woman) hypnotised her, and then killed her with a brew of poisonous herbs. Unfortunately, she does not know why Khaana killed her, or what occurred immediately after she was dead. She is aware that some Black Magical act has taken place, and that her body played a major part in it, but she does not know what happened.

Victoria does not realise that Khaana's appearance has totally changed, because she still sees Khaana in her original form. Victoria therefore refers to Khaana as 'the old woman' and 'the old witch'. This might confuse the player unless he or she realises why Khaana killed Victoria.

The ghost is now rather disheartened at the lack of response that she has had. Victoria does not realise that because she is a ghost she frightens those she tries to contact.

She now wants only to die fully. Before she can do so she must have revenge upon Khaana the Black Magician — Victoria would prefer to use the process of law against Khaana, so that justice is seen to be done. Victoria will mention that evidence might exist in Khaana's house, especially the cellar, which would condemn the woman as a poisoner and user of forbidden magic.

Victoria also wishes to be reburied in hallowed ground.

D. DESCRIPTION OF NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Khaana

Khaana, the wise woman and fortune teller, appears to be an attractive woman in her late twenties. Outwardly she is always charming and courteous, though not without a solid core of commercial good sense. Her most striking features, her eyes, seem, at times, to have someone far older looking out of them, which can lead some to feel uneasy in her presence. Khaana is Moon aspected, and her physical characteristics are:

PS: 11 MD: 11 AG: 11 MA: 21
PB: 20-22 EN: 20 FT: 23 WP: 18
PC: 10

Khaana is a Rank 5 Courtesan and a Rank 2 Thief, with Rank 2 Stealth and Rank 1 Horsemanship. She uses a Dagger at Rank 4, and habitually carries a truesilver dagger (value 1800sp) hidden in her bodice.

Despite her benign facade, Khaana is an Adept of the College of Black Magics who has the following spells and ranks (spell code/ rank achieved): T-1/2, T-2/1, T-3/6, G-3/6, G-4/1, G-8/1, G-11/6, G-12/3, Q-1/4, S-7/3, S-11/6, S-12/7, S-16/3, S-18/1, S-21/2. Khaana knows all the other General Knowledge spells of the College at Rank 0, and has also sworn the Lesser and Greater Pacts of the College, though at present does not have a familiar (as defined on p60 of the rulebook). She does, however, have a large siamese cat, Jasper, as a surrogate:

PS: 4 MD: 21 AG: 22 MA: None
PB: 14 EN: 5 FT: 10 WP: 10
PC: 20 NA: Fur absorbs 1 DP

Khaana is 58, much older than she appears to be. Her remarkably youthful and attractive appearance is the result of her casting a Skin Change Spell (S-21) on herself using the skin of a beautiful young woman instead of an animal pelt. Unfortunately for Khaana, there were side effects. The transformation is not entirely stable — her Physical Beauty varies over the course of a lunar month being at its highest (22) when the Moon is full, and at its lowest (20) when the Moon is new. This new physical appearance is similar to that of the young woman, Victoria, whose skin was used. Khaana is not identical to Victoria, but could have been taken for an older sister. Thirdly, if Khaana is killed the Skin Change Spell will fail, and, in death, she will revert to her former appearance.

There was another side effect in casting the spell. Khaana poisoned the young woman whose skin she used, and kept the unfortunate girl's body for experimental purposes. The young girl, Victoria, having died in traumatic circumstances, became a ghost, tied to her bodily remains. She now wanders the immediate area hoping for revenge.

Khaana has adopted the pose of a gypsy fortune teller and wise woman to make her living in the city, telling fortunes, reading the Tarot, brewing minor love and virility potions, blessing children, and giving advice to the gullible and simple. She also practises her trade as a Courtesan, and does not shirk from a little pickpocketing of clients to supplement her income. Although she continues to use the magic of her College, and occasionally offers shelter to fellow Adepts, no-one in the town suspects that she is guilty of witchcraft, or murder.

Only Huskylour, Khaana's current lover and protector, knows that not all is as it appears.

2. Huskylour

Everybody who deals with Khaana has first to deal with Huskylour. This silent (and not very bright) ex-mercenary handles all of the money aspects of Khaana's various activities,



although he is never knowingly allowed to retain the money after any customer has left. Huskylour knows of Khaana's magical affiliations, but Khaana does not worry about this because she is regularly administering doses of a love potion to him.

Huskylour is Sun aspected, and his physical characteristics are:

PS: 20 MD: 20 AG: 20/18 MA: 5
PB: 14 EN: 21 FT: 23 WP: 12
PC: 9

Huskylour uses a Broadsword and Main Gauche at Rank 5, and a Cestus at Rank 6. He is a Rank 1 Military Scientist, Rank 2 Ranger (specialising in Woods), has Rank 4 Horsemanship and can speak Hobgoblin at Rank 4.

Huskylour normally wears leather armour (hence the reduced Agility) and carries a Main Gauche at his belt. He habitually wears a Cestus on his right hand, and rarely restrains himself



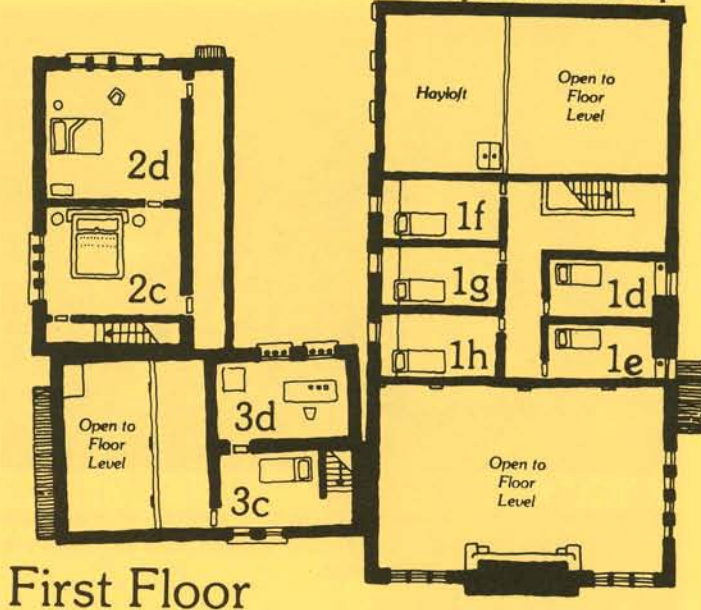
from using it. Unless forewarned of trouble, Huskylour does not bother to carry his broadsword, preferring to leave it safely tucked in the back room of Khaana's shop.

Huskylour does not know that Khaana is not as young as she appears, or that she killed a young girl to achieve her current physical state. He believes that she is basically well intentioned but misguided. If her true nature is revealed to him, and the nature of her crimes, he will attempt to kill her in a fit of revulsion which he will later regret — until the effects of the love philtres wear off. Huskylour, despite his association and enforced infatuation with Khaana, is basically an honourable man.

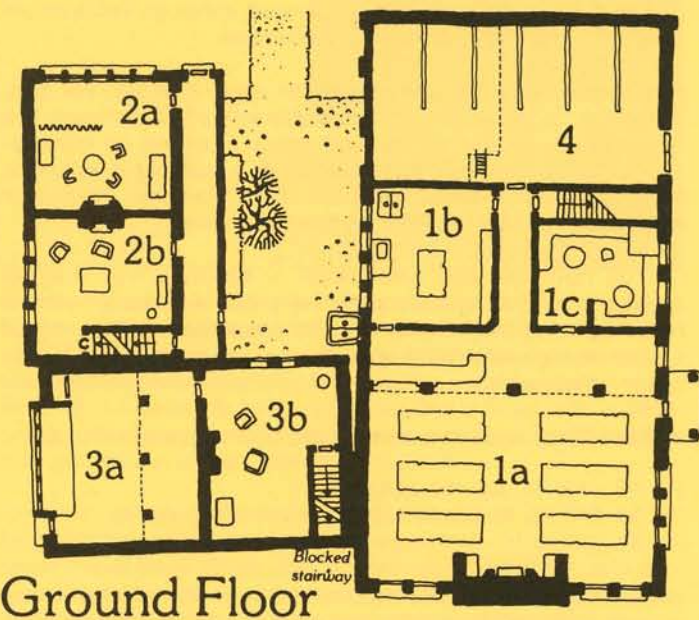
3. Josep Vedla

Despite Josep Vedla's profession of moneychanger and shylock, he is a kind and considerate person — for a Dwarf. In any business dealings Vedla is an extremely shrewd and talented bargainer, and usually gets the best of any transaction. By virtue

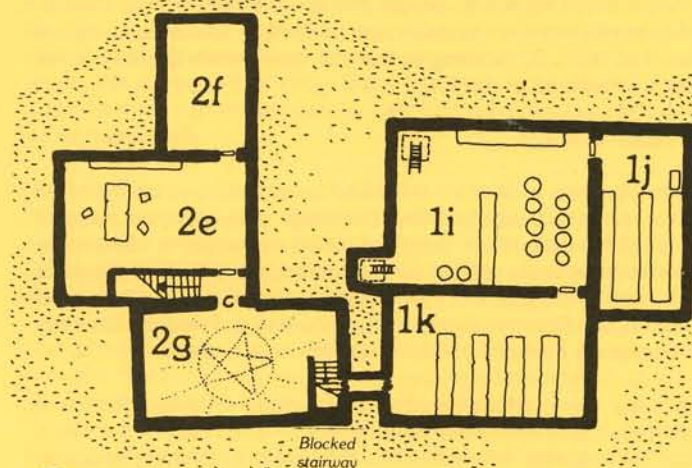
Beauty Is But Skin Deep



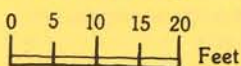
First Floor



Ground Floor



Cellars



- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Door | Concealed door |
| Window | Secret door |
| Stairs | Barred window |
| Floor trapdoor | Overhang edge |
| Ladder | |



of this skill he has managed to rise to a position of moderate seniority in the Merchant Adventurers Guild, and as a result is well respected in the city at large.

On a personal level, Vedla is a good friend to Midzer, and regularly dines (and drinks) at the Five Elements Inn. He is as concerned as Midzer at the loss of trade at the Inn, because Midzer owes him four truesilver guineas, although Vedla would never demand that the money be returned.

Vedla has not had many dealings with Khaana. He has, occasionally, visited Khaana in her capacity as a Courtesan, but regards her fortune telling and potion brewing as mumbo-jumbo. Vedla also regards Huskylour as a fool, but is willing to bank quietly the small amounts of money that Huskylour manages to scrape together from time to time.

He has no knowledge whatsoever of Khaana's true magical activities, but has actually seen the ghost of Victoria, without realising what he was seeing. He remembers seeing a sad young woman near his house on several occasions, but has never talked with her.

Vedla is Moon aspected, and his physical characteristics are:

PS: 18 MD: 14 AG: 14 MA: 3
PB: 12 EN: 15 FT: 20 WP: 10
PC: 8

He is a Rank 6 Merchant (specialising in jewelry and precious metals), a Rank 1 Navigator, and a Rank 3 Ranger (specialising in mountains). He reads, writes and speaks Common at Rank 8, and speaks Dwarfish and Gnome at Rank 9. He can also speak Kobold at Rank 5, Halfling at Rank 3, and Elvish at Rank 2. He uses a Crossbow at Rank 2.

4. Frieda Vedlana

Frieda Vedlana is Josep's wife and chief financial backer. Her money originally started the business and, despite Josep's success, he has never been allowed to forget it. Goodwife Vedlana is the main reason why Josep eats, drinks and spends a great deal of time at the Five Elements Inn. Josep is her third husband, the first two dying of food poisoning. Frieda never tires of comparing Josep with her first two husbands.

She does not confine her criticism solely to Josep, but has strong opinions about her neighbours — and most of the city's other inhabitants. She does not like, trust or respect Khaana, regarding the 'fortune teller' as little better than a strumpet. Likewise Huskylour is treated with contempt because he associates with Khaana. Midzer is treated with a degree of civility, but only because he owes Josep money.

Frieda, at 79, (middle-aged for a Dwarf) is much older than Josep, and her age is beginning to show. Her physical characteristics are:

PS: 12 MD: 17 AG: 14 MA: 14
PB: 10 EN: 9 FT: 17 WP: 25
PC: 5

She speaks Dwarf and Common at Rank 8, and reads and writes Common at Rank 3. She is still a member of the College of Earth Magics, but has not practised the arcane art for several years, and can now only cast Spell G-9 (Spell of Lesser Enchantment) at Rank 4. If pressed, she can use a Dagger at Rank 1.

Frieda is not sensitive enough to have seen Victoria's ghost, let alone realise anything is going on. The GM should make no attempt to dissuade the player from thinking that Frieda is 'the old woman' of whom Victoria speaks.

5. The Watch Patrol

The City Watch enforces the Guilds' laws within the city limits. As such they have wide ranging and poorly defined powers, many actions that they take being made legal by retrospective legislation by the Guilds' Council. However, they usually treat most city inhabitants with justice, the wealth of minor offenders always being taken into account. In serious cases, such as murder, the City Watch is largely incorruptible.

A group is usually given a beat to patrol on a semi-regular basis. The Watch Patrol below is a typical group of street patrollers, whose job is to ensure good order at all times, act as a fire watch, and assist those in distress.

The beat in the area of the Five Elements Inn is patrolled by a Sergeant-at-Arms and three Armsmen. They wander aimlessly through their beat area, and so have a 5% + 2% chance per minute (cumulative) of passing. Once they have appeared the chance of their appearance again drops to a base of 5%. At any time the Watch Patrol may be hailed, and they will appear 10d10 seconds later. If Khaana hails the Watch (she is regarded as a semi-respectable citizen), or the Patrol spots the player character doing something obviously illegal, they will arrest him or her on the spot. Claiming to have been sent on a quest by a ghost will cut little ice with the Watch unless concrete evidence of Khaana's wrong doing can be produced.

The player character is quite entitled to go to the Watch once he or she has evidence of Khaana's murderous activities. The Watch will arrest Khaana and Huskylour, and justice will follow.

The Watch Patrol is led by Sergeant Rumboyle:

PS: 20 MD: 18 AG: 15/14 MA: 6
PB: 12 EN: 16 FT: 23 WP: 15
PC: 11

He is a Rank 3 Thief, Rank 1 Assassin, and uses a Broadsword at Rank 3 and a Sap at Rank 1. He carries these weapons on duty and wears leather armour.

His three Armsmen are Thomas, Henry and Felix:

PS: 19 MD: 17 AG: 14/13 MA: 5
PB: 11 EN: 15 FT: 22 WP: 13
PC: 9

They also wear leather armour, and use Broadswords at Rank 2 and Saps at Rank 1.

E. THE BUILDINGS

The three buildings detailed here are timber framed. Some stone has been used for corners, lintels and the like, but because it is an expensive material it has been used as sparingly as possible. All the floors are wood, and the roofs are wooden shingles. As a result, fire is a grave risk, and any intentional act of arson will easily start a major fire.

1. THE FIVE ELEMENTS INN

1a. The Bar-room

This is the largest room in the Inn. There is no ceiling; the roof-trees and rafters are easily visible. The furniture (there are nine tables and three dozen chairs) is utilitarian, but comfortable. Behind the bar are seven bottles of wine (worth 3cf — 2sp each), a three gallon barrel of ale, sixty pewter tankards, and fifteen pewter goblets. While the Inn is open, the cash float (7d10 copper farthings, 3d10 silver pennies and 1d5 gold shillings) is kept in a strong box under the bar next to Midzer's sabre.

Normally this room is the busiest in the Inn, with 2d5 customers present at any one time while the Inn is open for business. Midzer employs a pot-boy, Scullion, and a serving wench, Maggie. Neither the customers nor the staff know what has occurred, although many will be willing to offer an opinion. The GM should feel free to invent any rumours. Lighting, when required, is provided by lanterns hung from wall brackets and the rafters.

Midzer normally calls last orders before midnight, and the bar-room empties soon after.

1b. The Kitchen

This contains only a cooking range and a bench-like table. From the ceiling hang bunches of herbs, and along the walls hang cooking pots and utensils. In one corner stands a stone trough full of water, and in the opposite corner is a trapdoor (with a ladder) leading into the main cellar (1i) below.

During opening hours a cook, Goodwife Fletcher, is employed in here, producing meals for the customers.

1c. The Snuggery

This is a small parlour for customers who do not wish to conduct their business in the public bar-room. The chairs and table are of much higher quality. Midzer charges no direct fee for its use, but doubles the cost of all drinks and food taken in here.

1d-1h. The Bedrooms

All these rooms are largely the same. All contain a bed, a chair, and a large chest. All the chests are locked, with the keys to each chest in the relevant lock, and all, except the one in 1g, are empty. The chest in that room contains 3cf.

While all the rooms are neat and tidy, they have not been used for several weeks, so dust has settled onto all the flat surfaces.

Midzer normally charges 3 silver pennies per night for a room.

1i. The Main Cellar

This cellar is used for storage of the Inn's stock of beers and ales, in eight hogsheads. Two have been tapped, but the others are full. In the ceiling are two trapdoors. The smaller of the two has a ladder below it and leads to the kitchen. The larger has a wooden ramp and cover, and leads to the small yard between the Inn and Khaana's house. All deliveries are made through this hatch.

Several lanterns hang from the ceiling.

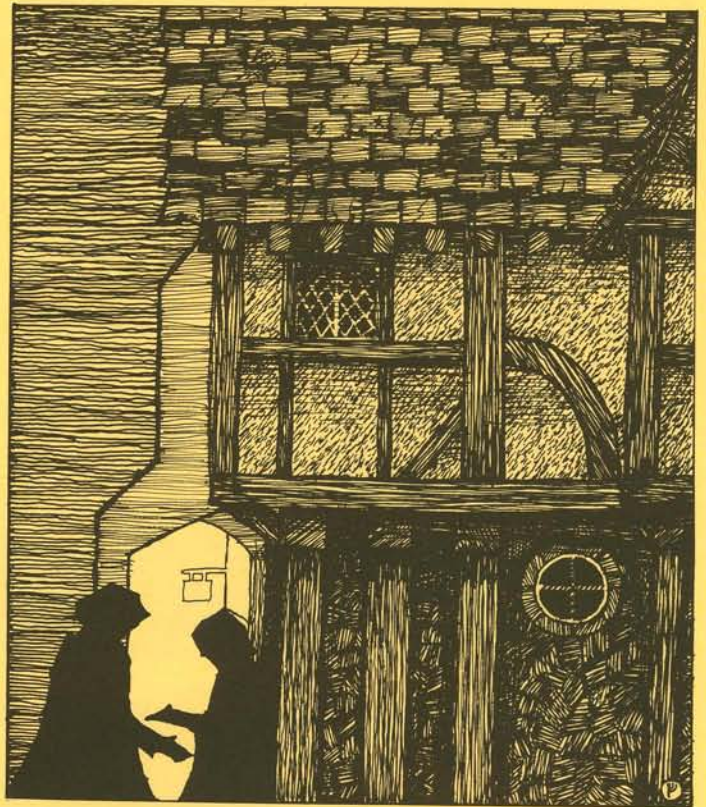
1j. Foodstuffs Store

Hanging from the ceiling are hams, joints of salt beef and pork, rabbits, hares, game birds, and haunches of venison. On shelves are sacks of meal, grain and the like. A single candlestick stands on the floor by the door.

1k. The Wine Cellar

Against all the walls are racks containing stoneware bottles. The bottles contain wine, fortified wine, and spirits. A lantern hangs from the ceiling.

The chance of noticing the secret door is (Perception x 2.5)%, if the character is specifically searching for something out of the ordinary. The secret door is easily visible from the other side, as is the secret door at the other end of the short tunnel.



2. KHAANA'S HOUSE

2a. The Front Parlour

This is where Khaana and Huskylour wait for customers during the day. The room is decorated with hangings and rugs covered in seemingly arcane (and totally meaningless) symbols. The only furniture, two high-backed wooden chairs and a circular table, is likewise inscribed and inlaid with false magical symbols. Heavy curtains can be drawn across the windows when a 'magical process' requires it. The furnishings are intended to add verisimilitude to Khaana's pose as a gypsy fortune teller.

Khaana carries out all her fortune-telling activities in here, either reading of palms (at which she has no skill whatsoever), or her reading of the Tarot (Ritual Q-1 of her College).

2b. The Back Parlour

This room is furnished in a much more comfortable and homely style, and is the main living area of the building. The fireplace also includes a small cooking range, and a store cupboard for food stands beneath the window. Jasper, Khaana's cat, spends most of his days sleeping on top of this cupboard.

Hanging on the wall, in a scabbard, is Huskylour's broadsword.

Next to one of the chairs is a half-completed piece of embroidery.

2c. The Salon

This bedroom is furnished in apparently luxurious style, but is actually rather cheap and gaudy. The room is only used when Khaana is practising her trade as a Courtesan.

2d. The Bedroom

The room is furnished in homely and comfortable style. In the two chests that the room contains are clothes belonging to Khaana and Huskylour. Against one wall stands a full-length mirror of polished bronze.

In the chest containing Khaana's clothes is a strongbox, with a Rank 4 lock. The key is hidden under one of the pillows on the bed. In the box are 157 copper farthings, 204 silver pennies, 43 silver threepences, 27 silver sixpences, 40 gold shillings and 1 true silver guinea.

2e. Workroom

This is Khaana's working area for brewing the potions that she sells to gullible customers. Many are little more than coloured water with a few foul herbs floating about in them. However, Khaana does brew potions and philtres in accordance with Special Alchemy Talent (T-3) of her College.

The room contains a workbench, distilling equipment, glassware, small stoneware bottles containing the 'potions' that Khaana has brewed, bunches of herbs, and other spell components.

The concealed door to 2g can only be spotted if the player character is looking for a concealed entrance. The chance of doing so is (Perception x 3.5)%.

2f. Storage Cellar

This earth floored cellar is almost completely empty. In one corner stand a shovel and a mattock.

Buried under the floor, in shallow graves, are the mortal remains of four young girls, one of whom was Victoria. If threatened, and given the opportunity, Khaana will attempt to animate the skeletons (Spell S-18), and cause them to emerge from their graves and assault the player character. The four skeletons are:

PS: 10 MD: 14 AG: 12 MA: None
PB: 1 EN: 8 FT: 10 WP: 20
PC: 14

They all attack using unarmed combat.

Finding these bodies would provide sufficient evidence to convict Khaana of murder. Forcing Khaana to activate the skeletons would be sufficient evidence to convict her of using Black Magic.

2g. The Cellar

This vaulted chamber is decorated by black hangings covered in arcane symbols. Behind the hangings are two concealed doors, which can only be detected by specifically looking for them. The chance of spotting them is (Perception x 2.5)%.

The room contents are equally arcane. In the centre of the room is inscribed a circle, and at each point of the compass stands a single black candle in an ornately carved candlestick. In the centre of the circle is a silver bowl (worth 100sp) and a small wooden box.

In the box are two carefully wrapped parcels. One is a Hand of Glory (Ritual R-5, p64), the other is a Dead Man's Candle (Ritual R-6, p64). Either of these would be sufficient evidence to convict Khaana of practising Black Magic.

3. THE MONEYCHANGER'S HOUSE

3a. The Front Office

This room goes all the way to the top of the house, and is used for all Josep Vedla's business transactions. The room contents are spartan, being a table, a large chest, and several chairs. Strapped to the underside of the table is a loaded crossbow and a dagger. On the gallery which runs along one wall are stored three crossbows, and 60 crossbow bolts.

In the chest, which has a Rank 6 lock are coins of the following denominations: copper farthings (50), copper ha'pennies (50), silver pennies (50), silver threepences (50), silver sixpences (30), gold shillings (30), platinum shillings (15) and truesilver guineas (15). They are stored in leather bags.

Vedla normally charges 5% of the value of the coins to change from any denomination to any other, and 10% per month compound interest on loans.

3b. The Living Room

Furnished in very comfortable, but diminutive, style — including one chair designed for human proportions — this is Josep and Frieda Vedla's living room. Few people are ever invited in here.

Beneath the stairs is a closed off panel which once led down to the cellar. It has not been opened for five years.

3c. The Solar

This room is little used. On one wall hang a pair of battle axes, one of which is enchanted to Rank 2. The rest of the room is plain, and contains only a Dwarf-sized bed, and a small sea-chest containing the Vedlas' clothes.

3d. The Strong Room

Vedla's strong room is where the money is kept at night. The door has a Rank 6 lock. The room contains three chests, all with Rank 7 locks (Vedla carries the all the keys at all times). In the chests is the cash and other valuables that Vedla is banking for his clients. In one of the chests is a ledger which contains the records of Vedla's dealings. The cash in the chests is: 203 copper farthings, 116 silver pennies, 35 gold shillings, 10 platinum shillings and 12 truesilver guineas.

4. THE STABLES

In here are only such items as would be expected about a stable: ropes, halters, tack, hay, oats, old horseshoes, etc.

F. AND FINALLY....

Regardless of the final outcome, the GM should award experience points at the end of the module as though for a full five-hour session of play. A bonus for Khaana's arrest would be appropriate.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

One of the advantages of writing designer's notes a month *after* finishing the module is 20/20 hindsight. Having had the playtesters report back, and a letter full of helpful comments from Terry Devereux, I had the opportunity to make one or two alterations, change the emphasis in one or two places, and hopefully tighten things up.

This module is experimental in two ways. Firstly, the one player plus GM format. To a large extent, whether or not this works is going to depend on the people who play this module — you! As GM in this adventure you must be prepared to drop broad hints to the player — but only if s/he needs them. Subtle misdirection is also an important part of the adventure — Frieda Vedlana was added solely for that reason, as an alternative candidate for Victoria's 'old woman'.

Secondly, this is intended to be the first in a number of city modules, each introducing a few buildings, a character or two, and being a stand-alone adventure. All will use the same background, roughly link together, and gradually give GMs an entire city (well, the interesting bits anyway) to play with. The next one should appear in a few months' time.

Finally, this is potentially an extremely gruesome situation. The module has been written in a rather neutral style, but the elements of horror are there. Enjoy it!

 Mike Brunton

CREDITS

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Cartography
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