

The Said 'e Meant

OLDE NEWS FROM THE INNE



*'..When it all comes down to it, when
your backs against the wall and your
enemies will not leave you be?
You just have to fight.
Come out of your early retirement,
kiss the wife, tousle the children's
perfect blonde hair and tell them
"Daddy's off to War!
Back in a Bit!"* Dastark

SYNTH!!
The^{DEEP}Throat!
The Gobshite Speaks!

DASTARK
DeSade's Back!!
Ilanthors Sexiest Bad Guy?

SETHALA
Big Boss Widowbite!
Just Another Loony?





Ilanthor

A raid by the Excise went horribly wrong a few days ago, when a supposedly peaceful search of Merchants Guild premises erupted into a massive and deadly brawl. Two men of the Excise were hacked to pieces by what are believed to be cultists loyal to Luhn Nox - the male form of the deity of the Moon. Five heretics were killed and twice that arrested by the excise, but it is believed that ring-leaders and common worshippers of the dark god escaped amongst the furore.

Despite warnings by the Watch, prominent members in the Keep and concerned householders, a number of foolish yahoos have been caught attempting to access the unstable ruins that were once the mansions of the Merchant Jonquil and the money-lender Harris - Rumours of hidden silver amongst the ruins and cellars have seen almost weekly break-ins to the cordoned off buildings. One fellow - a beggar called *Talin* - has not yet been found after falling down an old mineshaft attempting to flee from men set to watch the ruins. A man was lowered on a rope to try to afford aid to the fellow, but his body has been swept away by the underground subsidiary of the river that gives Ilanthor its name.

Occupants of Cobble Row - the village external to the Towns east walls - have reported sightings of a man adorned with Deer antlers and sporting bright blue eyes. A small troop of men from the Beggardly company were sent out to investigate sightings of this strangely attired fellow, and now all five of the men are reported as being either missing or deserted from their posts. A little-known servant to the Tyrant in the keep - named *Fencer* - has blamed the sightings on the consumption of a 'bad batch' of forest mushrooms consumed by those on the Row, but he is unable to explain the disappearance of the Mercenaries

A Census of areas of the Town being carried out by agents of the Tyrant has been heavily criticised by the Merchants Guild, with an employee named as Master *Marcus* being singled-out as being too willing to accept bribes and hand out beatings to those whon object to the intrusions. *Shadowalker* has already executed one Census Taker for accepting 'favours' to falsify entrys in his ledger.

Over the span of a month, eight separate bodies have been pulled from the Harbour. Although three have been explained as 'simple drownings' the further five have been quickly removed to the keep by inspection by Priests of Gelt loyal to the Towns authorities

The Assay House at the East Gate has been set afire by an arsonist for two nights running during the Oster Eve celebrations held by worshippers of the God of Wealth - Gelt. A fellow dressed in bright and gaudy rags is being sought after being seen pissing on those seeking to extinguish the fire from atop the roof of a neighbouring building. Seen to be escaping into the Coombs Quarter, the fool already made himself known as *Fogel* when he was seen seeking work at the same place that he then tried to burn down!!

Members of the Miller Company including the until-now unknown entrepreneur *Ushgarak* are believed to be planning to take good quarried stone from the ruins of the old Mannan Broch, to sell as either road or building rubble to Ilanthor and its surrounding villages. It is believed that the granite from the ruins is so good that it may make a hefty profit even if it is exported by sea to the West Islands. Some have commented that disturbing the ghosts of the old Cald mining town may not be a wise thing to do..

The woods east of the Old Town have seen less influence exerted by the Tyrant - patrols from Ilanthor have become more sporadic and concentrated on the main Miners Track trade route. Men dispossessed of livelihoods and land after the fall from grace visited on the Merchants Guild have in a number of places fallen into banditry. The adventurer *Wurz* has been actively recruiting men to his troop - the Fallen Men - and there are reports of multiple skirmishes and vicious fights against a number in the east woods that butt against the Holloway. Two patrols from Ilanthor following their most northern rangings report finding at least fifty brigands, left unburied at the site of where they died. The Fallen Men are said to be blaming as-yet unverified elements of the Widowbite for driving families east and south towards safer land around the Old Town.

Water flowing into the Doxy Pool flowed blood red for three days a few weeks ago - *Meskal*, newly arrived at the village sporting wounds and burns from a recent incident led his two companions north along the Cooper Stream to investigate the strange occurrence and since then has not been seen.

Gate Village

Established as the centre of the Miners Guilds attempt to break away from *Shadowalker* and Ilanthor Towns control, the usually peaceable village has been beset by trouble. The cluster of Mines, Quarrys and concerns that surround Gate have been beset by acts of robbery and violence that many believe to be directly perpetrated in the name of the Tyrant, *Shadowalker*. A small band of bandits were caught setting fires and attacking workers at the Deeping Mine. They are currently detained in the Old Lockup and will be hung shortly.

In the village itself, a young local guard recruited to stand watch at the northwest gate has been found brutally murdered. His dismembered body was found at his post close to daybreak by his young wife. His open hand, slick with blood held a perfect white amethyst pebble, placed there by the murderer. It is widely known that these small stone offerings are left at the Temples to Dun by worshippers.

Master Evris and his right-hand man *Aelthric* have established themselves at the Miners Inn. When last they were heard-of, both fellows were being hunted by Ilanthor Town Watch following 'irregularities' at the Market Inn. It is believed that both were responsible for robbery and underhandedness that elicited a bounty of 50 silver being placed in their head by those in the Keep. A man seeking to collect upon the bounty, and known to the militia in Gate, has been arrested and beaten and banished from the village, but not before he attacked Master *Aelthric* and rendered him senseless.

A man by the name of *Mohawk* is being sought after stealing three ancient gravestones from the burial ground.

An Encounter regarding the Northwoods

On Osters Eve, the night before the first day of Spring, a troubadour of minor, but rising fame sat in a chair in an Inn, in a Town where he had been declared Outlaw, under the noses of those who named him as such. Guards less than fifty paces away were unaware of his presence, yet he sat on his chair with his hood pulled fully back and a Lute softly playing in his hands as he decried the inactivity of the Tyrant against a great danger in the Northwoods.

The doors of the Ship Inn? Guarded by six bravos and six followers loyal to their 'troupe principal' - His audience? Merchants of high wealth, leftenants and sergeants of Shadowalkers Beggardly Company. The good and the high and wealthy sat at their tables and listened, resentful but obligated not to act by the crossbows levelled but a few feet from their heads.

"You serve the Outcast?. You free men and mercenaries and magnates, you all serve the Shadowalker? Will you serve him when the undead sent by the Widowbite howl at the gates? Will you serve him when they come writhing up through the Coombs and and along the Ilan river? Will you serve him when they feed on the faces of your screaming wives and your terrified babes?"

"They will rot to nothing before they get halfway here!" brave Capel, an aspiring leftenant in the company declares. His eyes dart to where a crossbow bolt is levelled a little closer to his ear.

The singer and lover, turns and asks. "How do you know? Has HE told you this?"

Silence.

"The dead are coming south. They are coming home to where they were born. When they find that you living folk now sleep in their beds and eat from their tables, what do you think they will do?" the troubador asked of them, "Will they cry and ask you to let them in? Will they ask you to set them a place at the table?"

One of the seated men stopped to reaching for his hidden knife suddenly as one of Synths bravos leant quietly over and placed his own dagger at the fellows throat.

"He will do nothing. He will hide in the keep!" their unwelcomed speaker exclaimed, his calm beginning to fall away as he saw that everyone was too fearful of going against the Master of Ilanthor. "You need to get rid of your beloved Tyrant and mobilise. You need to face your weapons north and be ready when the undead step out of the woodlands and follow the road here."

His piercing gaze into the faces of the most important of them was met with scorn, dislike and arrogance. One face looked back with doubt. Another peered at the window overlooking the harbour and wondered at the cost of passage out of Town on the barque named Elloise docked recently in the harbour.

Synth the Throat, flanked and followed by his companions left the Inn in disgust and dispersed quickly into the alleyways and ginnels of the Harbour Quarter, pursued by the audience.

..and *in* the Northwoods?

No-one ventures much further north of the Bluestone Mine for the past few months. A garrison numbering nearly a quarter the size of the Beggardly Company and almost all of the Silver Chain Company guard the village and the woodland surrounding the mines, whilst barricades have been set on the Holloway to catch any that travel south towards Ilanthor. A camp of hundreds of travellers, wagoners and itinerants has been established on the edge of Bluestone - It contains folk who have been prevented to go about their business to the south and east and are too terrified to turn back north for fear of the Corvid plague let loose by what they believe to be sorcery.

Few if any people have laid eyes on Northgate for many days - rumours came south of a liberating force clearing the border Town with fire to cleanse the area and kilns used to destroy the remains of those killed by the terrible plague. But still no supplies or trade caravans have headed north to replenish, and no-one from that far north has arrived back at the Bluestone with any good news.

The closest settlement at the Bridge Inn lies a few days east of the Northgate and though nominally still in the hands of the Ilanthor regime it is under the watchful gaze of the Smithing Brothers and more closely tied surely to the Miners Guild. Here is where the few that have survived or evaded the Plague hail from when they return to safer lands - They tell of a thousand common folk simply swallowed by the woods in every direction, all of them hiding or dead or succumbed to the fevers and the pustules and the raving death. A few of those from the Inn swear that they have seen not a small number of the dead, struggling to rise again a few days after their hearts stopped beating. At least twenty badly ravaged victims of the Corvid fever have up-to-yet been mercifully despatched and then burnt as they sought to enter the small Village recently

Another thunderous explosion in the woods north of The Bridge Inn has been attributed to malign magic. An area of woodland almost two miles wide has been felled by the conflagration which appears to have occurred close to the Nine Men, a high cairn of stones overlooking Redhill. Mineworkers in the area are missing, a small party of adventurers have returned carrying three dead on their carts, and the small hamlet of Low Mill has been all but wiped out.

Lighthouse

The past few months of peace have been shattered following the discovery of a duster Wagoners bodies strewn around their small camp on the edge of the Village. Elders have sent two bands of brave men north into the nearby woods to hunt a Werewolf believed to have been sheltering in human form at the Grey Man. Named as *Corgal*, the creature is believed wounded after a brief but deadly skirmish with two men of the local Watch

In a separate, earlier incident, the Grey Stones were again seen to glow a strange and eerie colour of bright green one night after a sudden thunderstorm at sea. Three cows were found dead in their fields the following morning, and three strange-looking men were seen leaving the Village for places east - perhaps Deep Harbour. Two men of the town Watch were sent after the three folk but returned with nothing to report and none in custody.

Deep Harbour

This last bastion of the Merchants Guild on the Ilanthor Coast is being expanded quickly to take in shipping and trade that is still docking in Ilanthor Town - the only other harbour sufficient to accept deep-drafted, ocean-going ships. Wagons serving the Merchants Guild have begun bringing stone from the East Woods to expand and reinforce the quays, and members of the Guild are actively seeking to open old quarries to the Old Towns west where the Merchants Guild still has control. A Merchant Company of soldiers has only recently landed at the expanding village - It is believed that their first task will be to clear the road of small groups of elusive bandits loyal to the malign *Raven*

As well as looking to nullify the threat of *Ravens* lackeys, there is a concern within the Guild that *ſae Victis*, the self-proclaimed heretic of the supposedly peaceable God Dun, has established himself in the area and is seeking to cause trouble along the Coast Road.

Thelamas Ford

The first of what may be many skirmishes to come has occurred between troops loyal to Ilanthor Old Town and a small but strong force of armed men serving the Miners Guild. Led by *Gil De Foyle*, members of the Adventurers Company attacked the Ford on the Miners track and sought to hijack and steal a Caravan of goods bound for Ilanthor town. Although repelled by men of the Beggardly Company, many were killed and at least two of the twelve wagons were taken.

Bastard News and Arsehole Views

It's been **busy** busy busy here - As well as producing this Newsletter, I've been processing turns like mad to get the turnaround time DOWN and to get out turns for all players that may be still wanting to progress in the game. Now I know a few people will have dropped the game and are no longer playing, but for every turn that's been sent in the past few months I have generated a turn and sent them out to the email addresses I have on file.

New Turnsheets!

I've amended the Turnsheet to look a bit better - It now has funky graphics, looks a little less ugly on the 2nd page around Standing Orders and the default font size has been increased to cater for a lot of people who are writing their turns on Tablets and small-screen devices

Routine Actions Templates

The Routine Actions templates that I've used on a lot of turns to acknowledge basic actions seem to work well and have been included on a lot of turns with no negative feedback - so they're here to stay!

Reputation Scores / Charts

As some of you will know a few actions that PCs carry out are dependant on a Characters Reputation Score (Fame / Infamy) - These have not usually been declared, but in the next few weeks they will be added to Turnsheets so you can keep a track on how Famous / Notorious the little darlings are in the game. As a base line, a score of 10 in either Fame or Infamy means your name will be recognised and attributed to being a good / bad person in most Towns. A Score of 15 means you have a reputation and are 'heard-of' in the region and its villages, towns and cities. A score of 18 or more means you are a Hero / Villain know to the masses. Every now and then I'll be publishing the Top Five players with the 'best' Reputation Scores, as well as a list of the Top Five Up and Comers who have increased their Reps significantly and are the ones to 'Watch'

New Players

Welcome to the new players and a few who have returned after a hiatus! The Waiting List is down to zero again! Note that The Isles does not allow players to have second characters. If you're caught sneakily playing a second character you will be removed completely from the game.

Social Media

The Isles main presence on Social Media is Discord on the PlayByMail DS, and on Facebook (look for The Isles PBM) - Those are the only two things I'm regularly on. I will be posting a few vids on YouTube about PBM and the game in general - Search for 'roy pollard the isles play by mail' and you should see the video in the Search Results.

No.. No...Notorious!!

'There's no real surprise who leads the overall leaderboard although note the ambiguity in Fame / Infamy - Shads has done or is doing good deeds which has earnt respect.. whereas Wurz is one goody-two shoes these days and Sethala. . he's just an evil git!'

Player Character	Fame	Infamy
Shadowalker	12 (+1)	22 (+4)
The Raven	8 (+1)	15 (-1)
Dreamer	16 (-2)	4 (+1)
Sethala Widowbite	1	15 (+4)
Wurz	14 (+2)	3 (-2)

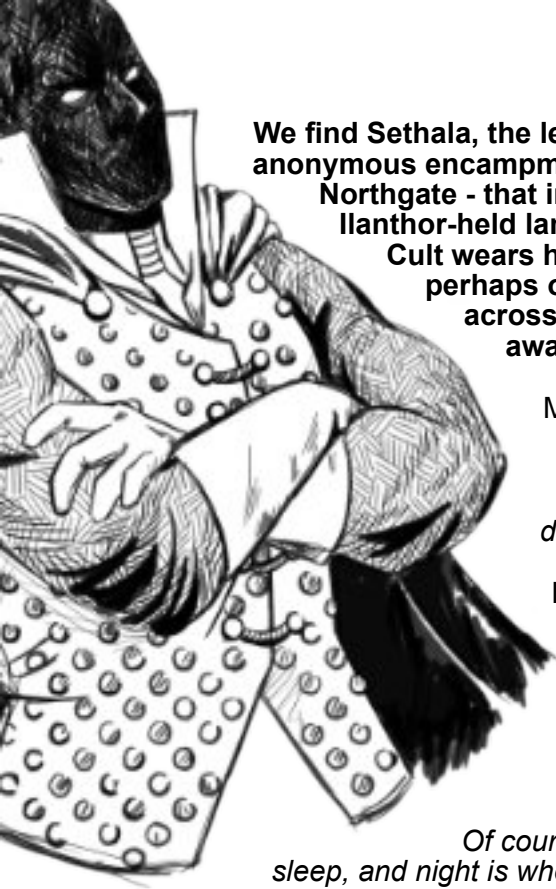
Player Character	Fame Gain	Infamy Gain
Silkernstil	+4	+2
Synth the Throat	+3	+1
Marcus Gray	+2	+1
Gil De Foyle	+1	+2
Aelthric	+2	+0

'Silkernstils subtle machinations and increased entourages actions have made them well-loved to some and feared by those in the Keep. Marcus has become known as a 'name' in his location, whereas Aelthric? Well he has gained some minor rep just for being Aelthric!'

Play by ..Mail?

Yes, we can still mail out turns by the good old postal system, but because of the cost of sending A4 envelopes and just the cost of Royal Mail postage these days I charge a flat rate of £5 per turn - This might seem excessive but if you think that when I was running the game as a business 30 years ago I was charging on average £3 so..

I use a colour lazer printer, and an inkjet to produce the turns - Payment for Turn Credit is done by Etsy (you buy a credit on Rachael's Posh Polly Prints Ltd) - all unused credit held by us is fully refundable.



Interview with the Widowbite

Perhaps the most evil man that no-one has heard about?

We find Sethala, the leader of the infamous Widowbite cult sat on a stone overlooking an anonymous encampment in the woods somewhere east of the Holloway and south of the Northgate - that infamous site of the Widowbites most horrifying encroachments onto Ilanthor-held land. As is customary around non-Cultists the great leader of the Death Cult wears his velvet hood, yet we can see that he is a man built like a soldier and perhaps of noble birth? His own small inner circle sits at a nearby fire, while across at a larger fire his latest haul of prisoners are bound and gaged, quietly awaiting their fate..

Master Sethala, you have been called ‘the most evil and vilest of men’ - what do you say to those who revile you as a murderer and heretic?

Murderer and heretic becomes redeemer and prophet when you take a different point-of-view

How so?

I serve the God of the Moon, Lun be praised! I carry out His commands. When He tells me that he will be Lord of the Night and destroyer of the cursed Sun, I will work to bring that ascension a little closer in time.

You work to bring about perpetual night?

Of course. Why would I not? We all live by the grace of night. Night is when we sleep, and night is when we dream! Only during day is it that we toil and we war and we struggle. We do none of this when we sleep.

You unleash terror on innocents. How can your evil actions be anything other than what they are? Are they not a necessary means to no end other than to carry out evil acts upon the innocent?

The Lord of the Night tells me to bring about the final setting of the Sun by any means! My ancestors each have striven to do this, and with every death of an unbeliever we take a step closer to it!

You cannot set the sun, surely. It is eternal?

Nothing but night will be eternal.

.. But worshippers of your God have denounced your interpretation of the very texts that Luhn Nox is said to have commended to his followers. He says that night is perpetual at least somewhere on this world and upon every other one...

Dreamer is a fool and does not know what he is talking about! I did not mention The Dreamer.

.. And he says that you are a mad-man and a lunatic - Driven crazy by that mask that hides your features..

Sethalas features are hidden by the mask that I just mention, yet as he rises and takes a step towards me I can sense his rising anger at my questioning.

The Dreamer does not serve the God of the Moon and the Night. He serves his sister, and it is she who is evil! For who is it that brought Magic to the world?

He is going to kill me. The story of my meeting with the Night Gods follower will never be told!

You say you are a traveller who sought me out to hear my tale? I am the Sethala and the Widowbite! What is your name?

I am just a sleeping man that serves our Lady Moonlight.

I make ready. I knew it was foolish to come and goad him when I should have stayed clear. Any moment he will attack and he will perhaps kill me. His followers already sense their Masters agitation. I can feel at least three of them sneaking upon me to my right.

You visit me in my dreams then? Am I asleep now? How is it that my followers see you and make-ready..?
He has a knife he has his knife I can see it there. He has a knife.

Because they also are in my Dream.I pinch myself awake. I roll my eyes backwards to their whites even as the dagger strikes down at me at an impossible speed. I wake in my bed, wet with urine and sweat. I am unsure if Sethala still dreams with my blood on his blade



The GOBLINS Pencil

To Shadowwalker
From Dastark De Sade

You sent Assassins to kill me? Why?! Until I was forced to defend myself and my family from the troop of ten men that you sent to my Tower I was no threat. I had withdrawn from the competition and had no intention of returning. Now that you have directly threatened me and those I love, the game is afoot. See you soon.

DSD

To All
From Raven, the Bird of Ill Omen

People, if you are looking for an alternative to the drudge, the fear and the lack of opportunity in Ilanthor leads, go west! The Caldoen Borderlands offer large tracts of unclaimed land, resources, a huge potential to increase your wealth AND a market in the Cald people, who for many decades have been bypassed by most traders, ships and investment. We the Corvus Corporation are happy to finance your first steps on the road to wealth, independence and standing - Visit our Factors at the Lighthouse and unlock an exciting opportunity!

Corvus Corx on behalf of the Carvus Corporation
The Value of your Investments May Go Down, as well as Up

To All
From Jon Donsen

Seek fame and fortune in the Eastwoods, working for the Miners Guild. The Adventurers Guild is looking to stout and sturdy men (and women) willing to serve as Guards, Soldiers and Foresters willing to defend Guild land from all invaders, brigands and tyrants, whoever they may be. Come seek us at the Gate Mines!

To All
From Mohawk Morrisson

Tombstones for sale, one careful owner, slightly soiled. May contain nuts.

To All
From The Dreamer

Reward of 100 Silver Coins offered to anyone willing to Kill the vile Tyrant of Ilanthor. Proof of the task will be required in the form of Shads head. Delivery to Rignor - Temple of Lun



the DREDGE

MUSINGS of a GRUMPY OLD MAN

Of course, you know what's **really** going on don't you?

All these little petty battles and intrigues are just a feint - a method of tricking all us little people into thinking that it's business as usual! Give us a good plague to contend with - the smellier the better! Aye, give us a nice toxic Pox and we'll be happy as Larry trying not to catch it, hating our neighbours and praying that when the end comes for us it will be quick!

Give us a nice few wars and some evil-doer holding sway over every aspect of our lives and we will be content with our lot and not have to worry about rising up, or making an effort and accepting our wretched little place in this life.

But have you had a really closer look at what's going on? I mean, an OUTCAST who openly declares himself as such has The Merchants, and the wealthy, and the powerful eating from his hand as if he were a Prince of the West Islands, newly arrived with jewels and a pretty smile and an army of heroes at his back?

Nah, summat smells fishy. And not that warm fishiness that Meg at the Bath house has for you, I mean the fishiness of something rotten!

How did He just appear on a ship with his men, walk into the middle of the Town, gain access to a Guarded and well Protected Fort and drive out any resistance with about a quarter of the soldiers that the occupying force possessed? How is that possible in this day an age?

THEY let him in. They invited him to take over. The old regime didn't flee. They carefully counted up their silver and packed it into boxes, they quietly snuck away, and when this new fella arrived they tossed him the keys to the Town and bid him a farewell and not a few goodlucks! The old regime? They had made their money, decided that it was enough to retire on and then off they toddled with a nod at the new franchise that was coming in with their new ideas of making money from the rest of us.

He takes us all for fools. But not me! I've got his measure! They reckon war and worst is on it's way but that's just to make us happy cowering behind the walls and happy that the Companys here to protect us! But I see right through their trickery! There's no war, there's no impending doom and there definitely isn't any good reason for us to add more coin to his coffers, not add more stone to the walls, nor push our young lads out the door to take the silver and soldier for him! You can fool everyone else, but NOT ME!