

Mini Scenario 10

A Handful of Clay

"Just think! A handful of clay will set us free..."

Summary

Hewer Wainscot has a pile of grey clay with sparkly bits that Slight will see as magical and Wishbone will recognise as the clay from which spirit bottles are made. Hewer claims that it is for a special job for which he is being paid extremely well. It is the only thing keeping him afloat at the moment. Due a mistake by one of Hewer's apprentices, one or two of the pots have ended up in the Bazaar where Wishbone or Slight may see them.

The clay is part of an elaborate plot fomented by **Nightwing Crookstaff** to bring down Ulrich. He knows of the magic of Spirit Workers and is creating a collection of bottled spirits. He intends to smash them in the vicinity of Ulrich's zombies and send him mad.

The money to pay for the scheme is coming from a family who has been disadvantaged in a contract with Ulrich (Weavers? Smiths? Golds? Diggers? Scratches?) *or* from a realm that wants to weaken Everway by taking out its most powerful wizard (Keep in the Woods, Civil Kingdom, Glorious Empire) *or* from a family that thinks that Ulrich has too much sway over the King (Moondancers, Wailers, Tenders).

The Tenders are involved – the bottles are being sent to the Houses of Dusk where the spirits of the dead are being forced into them (how? By destroying the bodies and replacing them with fakes – the fakes are very good and involve illusion magic – a powerful Seeming Image Crookstaff - but can be spotted by someone like Wishbone or Slight).

Ultimately the heroes should discover the plot but get to decide whether it should go ahead or not.

Characters

Hewer Wainscot
Ten Bell Tiler
Greymoss Crookstaff.

Glint Crookstaff
Nightwing Crookstaff
Freedom Crow
Various Tenders (Passing Tender, Morgue Tender)

The Plot

Opening: The heroes see the pile of sparkly clay in Hewer Wainscot's.

Interaction: They question Hewer who tells them that it is a profitable commission from a third party. If things go well for them, he tells them who it was. If it doesn't they have to set a watch using Wishbone's hawk or Slight.

Interaction/Action: Ten Bell Tiler is an artisan who lives near Crafters Square (in Bruiser's

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territory). If approached directly, he refuses to discuss the order. If threatened, he threatens to call the guards. If really threatened, he admits that the order came from Lemon Stemsnip, which means that it is probably from an Everwayan.

Once a week, a messenger comes to pick up the bottles, with payment for the ones that "worked" (Ten Bell is pretty disgruntled about this). The heroes can follow the messenger, who takes the bottles to the Houses of Dusk. He is **Passing Tender**, a lowly servitor.

Action: Access is permitted to Everwayans only. The heroes have to talk or sneak their way in through one of the high up windows. A disgruntled Wailer could tell them about a) the fact that something is wrong with some of the bodies and b) There are strange sounds at night.

Progress: The House of Dusk is a giant and eerie morgue. Rows of bodies lie on slabs and a cold mist hangs in the air. Wishbone can spot that a number of the bodies are shells. Slight or Fish Trader can spot that they are covered by an illusion and hide a completely different person.

Rising Tension: The heroes see a light... A group of people appear. Two are Tenders, one a Crookstaff and one is cowled. The cowled figure points at a body. "This one" she says. The Tenders take up the body and take it into a side chamber. The Crookstaff (revealed to be **Glint Crookstaff**) casts an illusion spell that copies the likeness of the chosen body onto a second one. The cowled figure sprinkles dust on the body and then goes to a door in the wall, which releases a horrible stench. A chained cockatrice is led into the room and allowed to sting the corpse, which immediately starts to decompose. If Wishbone is present, she sees the terrified spirit flee into the bottle placed at its head.

Conflict: The heroes will likely interfere at some point and a fight will develop. Fighting a cockatrice that corrupts everything it touches could be nasty. (An undead bat vs hawk..)

Interaction: The heroes can take prisoners. The cowled figure (who does not take part in the fight) is revealed to be **Greymoss**, an apprentice necromancer. Having some talent, she was sent to Shifting Sands to learn about bottling spirits from Old Crow. She will tell Wishbone that Old Crow was very dictatorial, saying that they need to have a defensive army against the approaching White Scorpion Warriors. That has to be paid for and **Nightwing Crookstaff** came with a tempting offer. She doesn't know what Nightwing intends to do with the bottles or where he got the money.

Rising Tension: The heroes can visit Nightwing Crookstaff or wait for him to come to the Houses of Dusk. Nightwing has a single zombie servitor. If given the opportunity, he will explain the entire plot (he has heard of the heroes and guesses that they are no friends of Everway). If he has had a chance to hear about the events at the Houses of Dusk, he will stall them as much as he can, before explaining that it is already too late. They already have the twenty bottles needed and the plot is in motion.

Decision: Should the plot go ahead? If it does and it works, one of Everway's strongest defences will be removed. But Wishbone will probably not like the method. But her mother is one of the plotters...

Climax and Resolution: The heroes race to Ulrich who is attending a public event (Moonday service? Welcoming a foreign dignitary?) or (better) who has been invited to a meeting with Nightwing (zombie vs zombie if in Deadwalk Coven). Do they let the conspirators do their work or rescue him at the last moment?

Hooks

Hewer Wainscot's Workshop

- Hewer Wainscot's workshop is in Redearth Street in the Crafters Quarter, close to the heroes'

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old haunt of the Heroes Tavern.

- A small pile of clay is kept in a locked cupboard. It is a normal grey colour, but is full of rainbow-coloured shimmering flecks that catch the eye. *Slight will immediately spot that it is magical and Wishbone will recognize it as spirit bottle clay from her home realm of Shifting Sands.* Other heroes will require a lucky FC to remember that Wishbone's pots glitter in the same way.
- They question Hewer who tells them that it is a profitable commission from a third party.
 - If the heroes sort out the Trade Dispute, he tells them that the order came from **Ten Bell Tiler**, and was for 20 bottles made to a specific design. *Wishbone will notice that the design has annotations in her mother Old Crow's handwriting.* Tiler is very pedantic and has already rejected two of Hewer's prototypes.
 - If they don't, they could set a watch using Wishbone's hawk or Slight and follow the runner to Ten Bell Tiler's.

The Bazaar

- A random pot seller has some familiar looking pots... She readily reveals that she bought them from Hewer Wainscot.

Gentle Dew

- Fish Trader is summoned by Gentle Dew. She tells him that she has had no new orders, so she is continuing with the previous plan which is to eliminate Crookstuffs who could detect Peace Masters. Glint Crookstaff is enemy number one. G.D. has been following him and he seems to have some sort of arrangement with the Tenders...

Ten Bell Tiler

- Tiler's workshop is in Turnwood Street in the northern part of Crafters Quarter (the same street as Aspen). It is a large compound made of a terrace of smaller houses.
- Smoke from the kilns drifts out over the street.
- At the front there is a large arch leading to the courtyard at the back. Seated in a large chair at the entrance is a white haired old woman, dressed in grey and is wearing a chewed jaw bone as a necklace. She is knitting and muttering to herself.
- She glances up as you approach. "Ten Bell! Outsiders! Coming into the house!" [Walker can determine that she is senile and paranoid. He can do something, but mental illness is not his forte.]
- "It's all right, mother." Ten Bell Tiler is a bulky ebony-coloured man in his mid 40s. He is dressed in rich red robes that make him sweat slightly. He has a rib bone necklace. Depending on how respectable the heroes look, his manner will range from guarded but polite to surly.
- He takes the heroes round the back into the courtyard. On one side, next to a mountain of firewood, the kilns shimmer with heat - on the other, the terraced houses have been hollowed out and their back walls removed to make long thin barns where apprentices labour to make sets of red tiles. One house in the middle of the row is intact (if Tiler is asked, this is the one that Evening originally bought). Nearby is a small cluttered office where Tiler does business.

Occupation and History

As his names implies, he makes roof tiles. He has lived in Strangerside all his life, having inherited the family business from his mother [Evening Tiler](#), who still lives with him.

Physical Description

40s, deep ebony, dresses in rich red robes. An arrogant bearing.

Distinguishing Feature

He wears a small bone with holes drilled in either end as a necklace - close examination reveals that it is human and has teeth marks (it is taken from a huge bone yard by the Gate).

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Values and Motivations

He cares about his business passionately and is ambitious to expand. For this reason he is cultivating contacts with Old Town and Everway families via [Lemon Stemsnip](#) with whom he is having an affair.

Also cares deeply about his mother, despite her coldness to him.

Interactions with others

His natural manner is cold and unsympathetic, but he is trying to learn social graces. He is not easy to intimidate.

Useful Knowledge

He is acting as a go-between for the bottles arrangement between the Tenders and [Hewer Wainscot](#). Ten Bell lacks the skills to make the bottles himself but has undertaken to manage the relationship.

Exceptional Attributes / Skills

Expert roofer

A3 Bargain with suppliers

E3 Stand firm to pressure

F3 Swing hod

W2 Call my bluff

- If questioned about the bottles, his response is "So Wainscot's been blabbing, has he? Well, it's a confidential commercial arrangement so I can't tell you anything. Now if that's all you want..."
- He is unimpressed by threats. If physically threatened, he will yell "Mother! Call the guards!" A couple of Watcher guards will arrive from Crafters Square a couple of rounds later. They will recognise Flame and throw bricks at her.
- Flame could burn down his stock of wood for the fire, which will cause a panic as he tries to put it out. It makes him even less likely to tell the heroes anything, however. He will demand that they leave and will call the guards.
- Rathgard can charm him but will need a convincing story. Slight can detect that what he wants more than anything is status with Everwayans.
- Tiler actually knows relatively little about the contract. A "friend" (whom he will only reluctantly admit is Lemon Stemsnip) made the arrangement. A cloaked messenger who refused to identify himself arrived with a sack of sparkly clay and the plans. Tiler doesn't have the skills to do the job himself, but he has subcontracted Hewer, taking 10% (he says) of the fee (Rathgard can tell that he is lying - he is taking 33% - 10 hefts of the 30 hefts per bottle). The messenger returns once per week, picks up the five bottles that Hewer has managed to make and hands over the payment for last week's batch. To Tiler's considerable annoyance, it is proving less profitable than he hoped, as the messenger claims that only 2-3 of the bottles "worked" and refuses to pay for the ones that didn't. He blames Hewer. The messenger is due again [whenever I want to delay the scenario to].
- An alternative way of finding out about the messenger is to talk to Evening. She mutters about "HIM always coming here. Getting an old woman up in the middle of the night... He smells funny."

Lemon Stemsnip

- The heroes will probably try to force Lemon Stemsnip to reveal who arranged the deal. She is pretty resistant to this, pointing out that she has a profitable arrangement with the heroes which it would be a shame to jeopardise.
- If the heroes apply enough pressure, she will eventually advise them to "ask at the Houses of Dusk".

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- The messenger who came to her showed her a spiral medallion that is the Tender family sign.
- He asked for details of a Strangerside artisan who was skilled with clay and could be trusted to be discreet.
- She thought of Tiler because he is an (occasional) lover and worked in the right area.
- She was paid an arranger's fee, but has had nothing more to do with the transaction, which is purely between Tiler and the messenger.

The Messenger

- The messenger is **Passing Tender**. He is a middle-aged servitor in the Houses of Dusk.
- The heroes can stake him out when he comes to Ten Bell Tiler's house. Ten Bell will tell him that the deal is off.
- If the heroes ambush him, he will add little to what Ten Bell already said. He will admit to being a Tender (the spiral medallion he is carrying is a dead giveaway), but will not say anything about his mistress, saying that his business with Ten Bell was a "family transaction".
- If pressed, he will admit that the bottles are being used for "certain... rituals" in the Houses of Dusk. He will claim that "Outsiders are not permitted to know of such things".
- The heroes can use his medallion to gain entry to the Houses of Dusk.

The Houses of Dusk

- If the heroes follow Passing Tender, they will see him enter the Sunrise House (east). Otherwise they will have to work out which House is relevant.
- Spying in Wailers Square is quite difficult. It is open and relatively unpopulated. If they do manage to find a way to observe the square (Slight can do it if on his own, but his magic is at -2 due to the effects of the Pyramid), they observe an unhappy-looking ancient Tender leaving the eastern House, arguing with a younger colleague. This is **Headstone Tender**, an elderly and possibly barmy servitor. He complains that "I tell you something's not right – someone's been moving the bodies at night, I'm sure of it. They're not supposed to move the bodies..." "Don't be daft, Headstone", says his younger companion. "And then there's the terrible smell..." "Well, you're not wrong there. Doubtless Mistress Morgue has talked to the Mudbanks."
- If questioned, Headstone appears rather confused. He can't give a single example of a moved body. "Tallweed Gardener, may the Walker bless 'im, I left with his hands folded, like this. And when I came back the next morning... No, no, he was still there and looked exactly the same. But I'm sure he had been moved."
- There are two alert Watchers at the entrance to each of the Houses who will bar any non-Everwayans from entering, and the half-dozen blue-robed Tenders waiting in the entrance will challenge anyone who doesn't look like a mourner.
 - Each of the families has its own mourning dress (the Stonebreakers, for example, wear white chitons and cover themselves in stonedust, while the Mudbanks smear their faces with mud).
- Local colour:
 - Wailing practice can be heard from the Wailers family house ("no, no you go *down* at the end").
 - A Digger funeral. The coffin is a large urn into which the dead person is placed in a fetal position. It is carried on poles on the shoulders of four men dressed in brown. The Diggers are the only family that bury their dead, which they do on one of their estates.
 - A Mask funeral cortege. They are wearing ceremonial grieving masks and are accompanied by servants who shake rattles.

Ways In

The windows are large enough to be entered and the roads round the back of the Houses are

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relatively unused. However, they are 40' up and the walls are difficult to climb (F4 required). Fish Trader and Flame could manage it. During the day they are likely to be spotted.

Bluffing the guards and the Tenders could work if they pretend to be out of town mourners.

Slight's help will be required. Rathgard's oratory would also do the trick if correctly applied ("How dare you prevent the entry of this poor grieving widow, who just wishes to see her husband for the last time...?")

The guard bluff will work better if the heroes have a spiral medallion (note: if they take it off Passing Tender and let him go, he will report it missing which will make the guards extra suspicious). A hero could dress as a Tender and claim to be escorting the others in. This will work best out of hours as the Tenders waiting in the antechamber will spot an imposter.

The two doors round the back are unguarded but locked. The heroes could kidnap a Tender and steal their key. **On a lucky FC** there is no-one in the embalming room and the heroes can sneak into the main area. If they are unlucky, half a dozen Tender technicians are working on a corpse. One is telling a risqué story about a mourner she chatted up.

Inside

The House of Dusk is a giant and eerie morgue.

- The air is hazy due to cold vapours that pour out of holes in the wall and from small copper censers suspended by chains from the ceiling (the vapours are produced by incense that is enchanted so that it burns when cold).
- There is strong chemical reek from the embalming fluids.
- What light there is comes from the small windows (or the burning censers at night). The roofs of the side chapels block much of it and the mists diffuse the rest, leaving the main area shadowy. Lanterns are needed to see properly.
- Rows of stone slabs fill the central area, about 100 in all. Thirty or so are occupied by bodies covered in winding sheets.
- Wishbone will note that there are some active and shouting spirits, but rather fewer than there ought to be for the number and (presumed) age of the bodies. There are a few more shells than there ought to be, too.
- Slight will note that about a dozen of the bodies have a glamour on them, cast by someone who is even better than he is. He can, with some effort, dispel one on a dark-skinned old woman covered with a beautiful woven cerement – a completely different body, of a light-skinned middle-aged man, is revealed.

At Night

- Assuming the heroes stick around, they will see a light coming from the entrance. There is an opportunity to hide.
- A group of six people appear:
 - Two are Tenders, one an elderly man (Passing) and the other a stately-looking woman (Morgue)
 - A Crookstaff, whom Slight in particular will recognise as his old nemesis **Glint Crookstaff**
 - A person dressed in a cowl. Their face is in shadow.
 - Two hulking guard types, dressed in leather and carrying face-covering helmets. Rather bizarrely, they have large baskets on their backs containing a bundle of spears.
 - Fish Trader, if present, may recall that he had orders to kill Glint Crookstaff.
- The cowed figure points at a body of a stout middle-aged woman (not one of the ones with an illusion). "This one" she says.
- Wishbone may note that it is the one with the loudest spirit.
- The Tenders take up the body and take it into a side chamber. The heroes can follow and watch from the door.
- The chamber is about 20 foot across and has a slab in the centre. It already has a body of an emaciated old man on it. From the sores on his body, he is likely a beggar. The Tenders lay

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their corpse next to it.

- Wishbone can tell that he has been dead for some time. His spirit has dissipated.
- The cowed figure sprinkles dust on the remaining body and places a spirit bottle at its head. She then bows her head and focuses.
- Wishbone will realise that she is trying to perform a spirit transfer, but lacks the skill (the deadening effect of the Pyramid doesn't help). The spirit is afraid of her and dances around the feet of the corpse.
- Eventually the figure gives up. "It's no good," she says. The stately Tender sighs. "Very well. We'll do it the other way."
- Glint mutters and holds his hands over the emaciated corpse, which glows brightly for a moment. When the glow fades, an exact copy of the woman lies in its place. Glint wipes sweat from his brow. "Can I go now? I hate the next bit."
- "No – we may have to do this again if this doesn't work. Get that out of here" says the stately Tender. One of the guards takes up the glamour'd body and puts it back where the other one came from.
- "Ogee, Fishtail, prepare!" Everybody pulls out cloths and ties them round their mouths and noses.
- The guards put on their helmets and open a door on the far side of the room, which releases a horrible stench. **E + FC >= 3 or be incapacitated due to nausea for 3 rounds.**
- A sound of rattling chains is heard and then something bursts into the room. It's a cockatrice.
 - It's about 4 foot tall, grey and mauve in colour with patches of greasy yellowy brown feathers.
 - Its legs and head are those of a rooster, its body, wings and tail that of a dragon.
 - There is a glowing chain around its leg that leads back through the door.
 - The beak is jagged and pointy – a snake's tongue flickers in and out. The creature's breath is a faint green mist.
- The guards whip out spears from their backs and brandish them nervously. The cockatrice stares at one of them with its beady purple eyes, then suddenly launches itself in a fluttering attack. "Watch out!" yells the other guard as guard one fails to react. He snaps out of it just in time and pushes the creature away with his spear. Immediately the spear tip corrodes and turns to dust, and fungi bloom on the wooden haft and eat it away. The guard drops it and pulls another spear out of his backpack.
- More carefully, the guards guide the cockatrice towards the corpse. The cockatrice eyes it and then leaps upon it, tearing at the flesh with its serrated beak and clawed talons. The flesh boils with maggots and rapidly decays to a putrescent goo, which the monster slurps up. The corruption rapidly spreads to the rest of the corpse.
 - If Wishbone is present, she sees the terrified spirit flee into the spirit bottle placed at its head.
- The stately Tender reaches forward and snatches up the spirit bottle. "Right, put it away."
- The guards drive the cockatrice back towards the door with their disposable spears.

The Fight

- If, as seems likely, the heroes intervene, the fight could get interesting. The cockatrice is a fearsome opponent, though limited by its chain to the side chapel. The heroes can break the chain if they want, but if so they will need to figure out what to do with the enraged cockatrice.

Cockatrice:

A 1

E 6

F 3 Bite

W 5

Powers:

Corrupting Touch (E6) Any non-magically-reinforced item that touches the cockatrice decays away within 1-3 rounds. This includes living flesh (E+FC >= 6 to resist) – this is most likely to

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happen if the cockatrice bites or claws someone. Walker can resist the corruption and heal anyone touched.

Fascination (W5) Anyone staring into a cockatrice's eyes requires FC+W >= 5 or lose an action.

Guards (2):

A 2 Bellow orders
E 4 Resist fascination
F 4 Cockatrice wrangling
W 2

Tenders

Passing Tender:

A 4 Comfort the bereaved
E 3 Resist emotion
F 3 Slip through crowds
W 4 Sense ambushers
He will protect Morgue Tender to the best of his ability

Morgue Tender:

A 4 Anatomical knowledge
E 3 Resist nausea
F 3 Flensing knife
W 2 Comfort the bereaved
She will use her flensing knife and knowledge of anatomy to attempt to disable any opponents.

Glint Crookstaff:

A 4 Illusion knowledge
E 2 Dodge
F 3 Cast
W 7 Sense glamours

Magic: Illusion (A4) Can cast room-sized illusions.
His first act will be to make a duplicate of himself.

The Aftermath

- Only the cockatrice and the guards are serious opponents. The others will surrender after they are dealt with.
- The cowled figure (who does not take part in the fight) is revealed to be **Greymoss Crookstaff**.
 - Greymoss is an apprentice necromancer. Her job is to identify suitable spirits and fill 20 spirit bottles. When she turned out to be inadequate to the latter, Nightwing came up with the cockatrice strategy.
 - She has a natural aptitude for seeing spirits around dead bodies, which caused her to be placed in Deadwalk Coven at a very early age.
 - She was sent to Shifting Sands by Nightwing Crookstaff to learn how to bottle spirits with a fierce old hawk-nosed woman whom Wishbone will recognise as Old Crow. It did not go well. Old Crow was dictatorial and soon tired of teaching a girl whom she accused of having no talent. After a couple of days she sent her away.
 - **Callus Wenderway** brought her to and from Everway. She saw him give Old Crow a large amount of money. He brought back several bags of clay (and often complained about the weight).
 - She will mention that everyone in Shifting Sands was worried about an invading sphere-walking army called the White Scorpion Warriors. People were making weapons

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and training to fight them.

- She doesn't know what Nightwing intends to do with the bottles or where he got the money to pay for them.
- She has filled about 20 bottles over the past few weeks.
- The stately woman is **Morgue Tender**. She will start by demanding that the heroes free her ("I am the daughter of his Deepness Buryer Tender himself and this is my House!") but will soon realise that she is out of her depth. Passing will advise her to admit everything to Buryer ("it's over, lass") and do whatever he and the heroes say.
- If the heroes humiliate her, they will hear later that she has taken the Water of Death in the Temple of Endings.

Nightwing Crookstaff

- Nightwing can be found in his offices at Deadwalk Coven. He is well-protected – mummies and zombies through the mazy interior and he has numerous acolytes.
- Alternatively, the heroes could use Greymoss to lure him out. He will not go anywhere obviously unsafe, however.
- His office is a high room under the eaves of Deadwalk Coven, overlooking the graveyard below.
 - The narrow gothic windows are covered with thick drapes and the room is lit by a coldly glowing globe in the centre of the room, similar to the ones in the Houses of Dusk.
 - Like the rest of the Coven, the room smells of dust and preservation chemicals.
 - The furniture is old and heavy dark wood with reddish-brown upholstery. There is little attempt at decoration, but the chair posts have carved skulls at the top.
 - The roof is in shadow. From time to time, something moves up there.
 - Two wardrobes stand against the walls – one holds dark robes, the other a preserved body that will fall out if opened incautiously.
 - A large cage contains two small bat winged homunculi that chitter and swoop from one perch to another. They are clearly dead. If asked, Nightwing explains that they come from the realm of **Emerald Jungle**. The preservation is his own – a student project. After a while, it becomes clear that their behaviour is programmed.
 - Nightwing himself sits at a desk strewn with papers. There is a single spirit bottle, standing on some notes from Old Crow. His attendant zombie, a lumbering hulk of a corpse armed with two axes, stands at attention behind.

Nightwing is a classic Bond villain-style baddie, but civilised, intelligent and focused. If approached civilly, he treats the heroes with respect, and offers to discuss the matter. He offers them wine and nibbles from a cabinet (the wine is perfectly fine – a good Vintner vintage – but the nibbles are dry as dust).

- He admits that he knows all about the spirit bottles. "Such interesting artifacts. So much... potential. I greatly admire your people, Mistress Wishbone."
- He explains that spirits have been known about in necromantic circles for years, where they are considered to be nuisances as they resist the process of zombification and can leave a necromancer in incomplete control of his creation. He was trying to find a solution when he read about the practices of the Temple of the Council of the Dead in books written by spherewalkers.
- "And the story of Leaping Salmon – so inspiring. A noble tale of self-sacrifice."
- If told to stop, he asks "Or what?"
- [We will stop you / You're not in a position to bargain] "Yes, you could thwart me. But I was hoping that your ambitions were – somewhat greater."
- "You are the self-styled Lords of Beggartown, are you not? I have been watching your actions with great interest. It seems to me that you, like me, favour change in the traditional order of things. I think we could be allies."
- "My ambition? Why, to rule Deadwalk Coven."

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- Nightwing has plans to encourage new research in the necromantic arts, unlike Ulrich who has stifled it. "Those creatures there are the first new necromantic spell in 100 years!"
- [So you plan to kill Ulrich?] "No, no, no. Nothing so crass. In fact I doubt that it is even possible. Ulrich is over 100 years old and I am sure that he has prepared for every eventuality. His zombies protect him physically and I am sure that no poison or spell would touch him."
- "But he does have one crucial weakness – his zombies. If you can attack him through them, he will fall. And the legend of Leaping Salmon gave me an idea."
- [Wishbone, if present, should be able to put two and two together. If not, and given the opportunity, Nightwing will tell it to them.]
- "Ingenious, is it not? The spirits take residence in his zombies, and by extension in Ulrich himself. The man will end his days in the House of Calm, I shall become leader of Deadwalk Coven, and both King and Council will be thrown into disarray. A situation which you can surely exploit." [Rathgard's truth sense could ping at this point - Nightwing does not believe that this will happen.]
- Nightwing will hint that the heroes are not the only ones who want to see change in Everway. "There are some who, shall we say, think that our systems of governance are in need of reform. Ulrich can and has thwarted their efforts in the past. If you were to be involved in his removal, I feel certain that they would contact you."

Choices: Help Ulrich

It is likely that by this time the heroes will have heard enough. Regardless of what they do, Nightwing starts laughing. "Too late, too late... I was just buying time. Tiler wasn't my only supplier... Why do you think there is only one spirit bottle here? I already have the twenty I need. Even now my acolytes press the attack! Perhaps you can save Ulrich... but is it really in your interests to do so?"

The heroes can overpower Nightwing and force him to say where Ulrich is. Or they can ask someone in the Coven.

Nightwing

A 4 Teaching

E 2 Resist pain

F 3 Throw gravedust

W 5 Sense ambitions

Magic: Raise the Dead (W5). If the fight is going against him, Nightwing will perform an emergency animation on the body in the wardrobe which will lurch out in the middle of the fight.

Control undead bats (F,V). Nightwing can control up to 3 of these to fly in peoples' face or to get help. One will attack Wishbone's hawk.

Gravedust: Nightwing has a couple of packets that if thrown on the floor will produce a cloud of gravedust that obscures (magically as well as physically) and chokes (E+FC >= 4 to resist). He will use these to cover an escape, if possible.

Zombie

Nightwing can control a zombie fine precision, using its physical attributes. The zombie is armed with a sword and is immune to magics affecting the living. Nightwing feels something of what it feels, but not enough to incapacitate him. The zombie is flammable but will take several rounds to burn up (1 point of Earth per round).

A 1

E 7

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F 4 (sword)

W 1

Acolytes: x of these will arrive after 2 rounds.

A 3

E 2

F 3

W 3

Powers/Spells

Attack with various mummified animals - undead dogs, cats, rats.

Choices: Help Nightwing

If the heroes seem sympathetic, he will ask them to help in the final attack. The heroes will be armed with a spirit bottle each. If they demur, saying that they should do the whole thing, Nightwing will point out that a) he doesn't know them well enough to trust that they won't betray him, and b) Ulrich's zombies range widely so it would difficult for the bottles to be thrown by a small group of people.

The Attack on Ulrich

The location depends on the time that the heroes find out about it. Ulrich must be in a public and crowded place so that the conspirators can get close to him.

Possible locations:

1. Pyramid Square: Moonday service (unlikely)
2. In the forecourt of the Great Council (day)
3. In the Crookstaff Plaza (any time)

Ulrich appears among a number of acolytes and other hangers on. His 20 zombies are very much evidence, ranging in a 50' circle around him.

- *One of the zombies is Wormwood Crookstaff.*

A dozen of Nightwing's acolytes are also present, some standing in groups and some amongst Ulrich's entourage, but are not easy to identify amongst the other cowled figures.

- Wishbone can spot the spirits
- Slight can sense intentions
- Flame and Fish Trader can identify people preparing for attack. If they let Greymoss go, she is there.

Saving Ulrich

If the heroes want to save Ulrich, they can call a warning. The zombies instantly collapse, save for 3 or 4 which protect Ulrich. He will no longer be susceptible to insanity, although any spirits that get through will cause annoyance to Ulrich. WB can remove them if she wants.

If the heroes (well, Wishbone) want to gather up the spirit bottles, they can knock out the acolytes one by one. This will not be entirely successful, but WB can rescue about half of them.

Joining in the Attack

The signal is an undead bat flitting over Ulrich's head. The acolytes simultaneously reveal their spirit bottles and throw them at the feet of the nearest zombie.

Ulrich's defensive measures kick in:

- A number of the zombies explode, covering the area in choking black fumes. A number of conspirators sink to the floor, clutching their throats. E+FC \geq 3 to avoid bad effects.
- Purple streaks of magic flash between other zombies, frying anyone in their path. F+FC \geq to

MS10 A Handful of Clay

dodge.

- Strong zombies pick up nearby attackers and tear them apart. W+FC >= 3 to avoid. Use FCs to determine what type of attack each hero has to defend against.

Aftermath

When the smoke clears, Ulrich is seen twitching on the floor. His remaining zombies lurch around randomly (and dangerously). Wishbone can see the spirits buzzing around him, ripping at his own spirit like vultures tearing at a corpse. If she wishes, she can save him by taking the spirits into her own body but at a permanent cost of 1 W per two spirits.

Ulrich is mouthing random words that the heroes can overhear before the Watchers arrive. "The Edge... The Pearl... The Twelve... Hee hee hee! The Transcendence didn't work - no words... Find the Book!... The Dragon Lord, he's one of them... He's coming..."

[If he sees Flame] "You! You have the Book! Give it to me! I must have it!" As the Watchers drag him away. "Tell the Twelve! The Flame Girl has the Book!"

Consequences

If the attack succeeds

The heroes, if they were present, are likely to get the blame, particularly if Flame did anything noticeable.

The consequences of Ulrich's removal will not be as great as Nightwing promised. Blizzard Crookstaff becomes the new magical advisor to the King and Redoak Crookstaff joins the Great Council. Nightwing becomes the leader of Deadwalk Coven. To the considerable annoyance of some of the families, Ulrich is still alive so his contracts are still valid.

The authorities may respond by cracking down on "sedition" which will likely impact the heroes. Watchers will be much more in evidence in Everway and Plumes in parts of Strangerside. The Cellars will be raided by a large force of Watchers and Crows.

Wishbone may feel that she has to go back to Shifting Sands. Remind her that Old Crow said that she was not to return until she had found her brother.

Ulrich's removal will precipitate a crisis meeting of the Twelve. Cunning will use this as an excuse to grab the Pearl and will enlist the help of the heroes.

If the Heroes help Ulrich

He will be grateful and send them more money by undead bat. The Everway authorities will be less hard on the heroes in future. If asked, he will arrange for the charges against Flame to be quietly dropped.

14/02/16