

The Assassin

In which the heroes track down a shape-changing killer

"No! Not my little kittens...."

Summary

Visions

An official of the Great Council is walking by. A dark-cloaked figure draws a knife and sneaks up behind her...

Who is the official? Lucent Stonebreaker

Who is the dark-cloaked figure? Peacemaster Rrau

Why is he trying to kill her?

Think of Rambo, played by a rabid tiger ...

He has gone mad and is trying to "bring peace" by taking out Everway officials. He has learnt that the Peaceful Isles have been overrun by the black mist and white scorpion warriors and all his family have been killed ("No! Not my little kittens....").

Note The mist caused divisions in the Peaceful Kingdom over whether to invade Everway or not. This is unheard of in Peacemaster society. Rrau's additional info source is a Peacemaster Elder called **Riyaow**, with whom he has been working.

He is not going to stop at just Lucent. He plans a bloody killing spree in the Great Council, thinking that by taking out all of Everway's senior members at once, the Peacemasters will be able to take over immediately and re-invade their homeland.

Why might the heroes try to stop him? Lucent is a possible or actual ally. The heroes have been paid by someone to protect her. Fish Trader wouldn't want his secret to be discovered.

Interesting possibility: GD tells FT to deal with Rrau before he does something that could put the project at risk. FT tracks him down and gets in a fight, which he loses. His obvious recourse – call for backup from the heroes. GD knows what R was doing and this gives clues that FT can investigate, which lead ultimately to Lucent.

- **Other Peacemasters in Everway.** One (Peacemaster Rrau, who calls himself Yew Threadlip, a doctor) turns rogue and starts assassinating high-up Everwayans (such as Glint Crookstaff...!).
 - First Target: Lucent Stonebreaker
- Rrau is planning to assassinate senior members of the Great Council.

Possible outcomes:

1. One or more senior members of the Great Council are killed.
2. The heroes discover Fish Trader's secret.

Characters

Peacemaster Rrau / Yew Threadlip

Gentle Dew

Lucent Stonebreaker

Other members of the Great Council:

The Plot

Opening:

(FT solo) After the death of Wall Emerald is announced, Gentle Dew summons Fish Trader. She tells him about Rrauw's history and his involvement. Suggests he investigate the Masks or find him somewhere in Strangerside.

Interaction:

(FT solo). FT can try to infiltrate the Thespian troupe, though this will not be easy. Everyone is on edge after Wall's murder. "Lithe" is still present.

OR FT can figure out that he may have gone back to his Yew Threadlip persona and try to track down the friendly old doctor. Yew has something a reputation as a doctor for ailments that are too embarrassing to bring to the Mothers. He lives in the Crafters Quarter, in **Sawbones Street**. Brother Valentine does not know of him personally, but knows that the street is where several doctors and apothecaries live.

Action:

Rrauw will be in the theatre or in his home. If possible, he will get FT on his own and try to take him out. An acrobatic fight in the theatre or an ambush in the home ensues.

If FT is on his own, he loses and gets badly beaten up. Rrauw is faster than he is. Rrauw may tell him about the Black Mist and its effects.

If FT brought friends, Rrauw gets away but the heroes get to see his true nature, and possibly FT's.

Progress:

In the house on Sawbones Street is a list of senior Everwayans - *Lucent Stonebreaker, Almond Weaver, Goldring Digger, Serpent Moondance, Ardent Scratch, Grey Snaking, Victor Crow* - with notes on how to kill each one ("Victor Crow. Could be tough. Poison."). Glint Crookstaff's name appears, circled. There is also an alarming number of weapons.

Rising Tension:

Where will Rrauw strike next? When will he strike?

The heroes should quickly be able to work out that all of the people on the list except Glint are members of the Great Council. And a crisis meeting of the Great Council to discuss the killing of Wall Emerald is imminent...

Gentle Dew forwards a message she has received from Rrauw. It says "Be ready".

Decision:

Do the heroes want to stop Rrauw? And if so, how? Should they warn the Everwayan authorities, and if so, whom do they contact?

Climax and Resolution:

If the heroes do nothing, Rrauw's bloody rampage takes place. Half a dozen senior members of the Great Council are killed and Rrauw escapes. The existence of were-cat shape-changers is revealed.

If the heroes alert the authorities and are believed, there is an increased security presence at the meeting. Rrauw's plan is partially thwarted - he still gets to murder one or two members of the Great Council and several guards but is forced away and maybe even killed.

If the heroes intervene directly, they can save lives and possibly take out Rrauw without his nature being revealed to the whole world. Senior members of the Great Council will be grateful.

Hook

Player-specific Hooks

After the murder of Wall Emerald is announced, Fish Trader is summoned by Gentle Dew. She has a problem - she thinks she knows who did it...

- Rrauw is a Peacemaster with whom Gentle Dew has been working for a year. He is known as something of a troublemaker - her master in the Peaceful Isles told her that he was sent to Everway because he was causing unrest.

FT may or may not have heard of Rrauw.
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- Gentle Dew found him competent but unfriendly. His shape-shifting skills are excellent and he has successfully infiltrated the Stonebreakers (in the guise of a Strangerside doctor called **Yew Threadlip** who treated an embarrassing case of Libertine's Itch for Whitedust Stonebreaker) and the Plumes (replacing a palace guard called **Yellowsash**) without detection. In the latter role he managed to obtain information about the layout of the Palace.
- After FT's report on the Huckster Motley affair, GD decided that the Theatre of All Worlds merited more investigation. Huckster's abilities suggested that the "Empty Mask" might be a cover for a group with similar abilities to the Peacemasters themselves. This could make them a threat. So she sent Rrauw to infiltrate the Thespians, the troupe headed by Loudvoice Mask that runs the Theatre of the Thousand Spheres. He murdered and replaced a Mask called Lithe about three weeks ago.
- GD has had no contact until the night of the Soiree in the Palace, where he was one of the other performers. She expected him to report on his discoveries in the Theatre, but instead he told her to get out as soon as her act was finished. He did not explain why.
- It is now clear that Rrauw intended to murder Wall Emerald and didn't want her to get caught up in the consequences. Except that she is - Absinthe has already sent a note warning her that the Snakerings are asking questions about the performers and guests at her soiree and that it would be wise for them not to have further contact until it calms down.
- The murder of Wall Emerald is a very public crime that is bound to result in an increase in security that will hamper Peacemaster operations. GD has not received any orders from the Peaceful Isles in some weeks, but it seems very unlikely that this has been sanctioned by the Elders. She is worried that Rrauw has gone rogue and she needs FT to track him down and stop him before he exposes the whole Peacemaster operation to the Everwayans.
- GD isn't certain where he is now. He could still be with the Masks in the Theatre of All Worlds, or could he could have gone into hiding, most probably somewhere in Strangerside.
- GD warns FT that if he has gone rogue, Rrauw could be extremely dangerous and should not be tackled alone. "It may be necessary to get your companions involved."

The Theatre of the Thousand Spheres

- Situated at the conjunction of Old Wall Street and the Street of a Thousand Kisses to the north of Festival Square.
- Built of grey stone with inset panels of lapis lazuli and pink marble, it is 60 foot high and 300 foot across. Crookstaff glow spheres hang on curvy metal supports about 20 foot up around the outside. There is a conical wooden roof and a large square backstage building containing rehearsal rooms, changing rooms, props, scenery and costumes stores, workshops and offices.
- The auditorium is circular in design with a central stage about 20 yards across (productions are done "in the round"). The back third is walled off and leads into the

backstage building. The area around the stage is open for the groundlings and there are three rows of balconies. The theatre can hold around 1000.

- The roof is wooden and has sliding sections which allow natural light to be let in and focused as needed. At night, the stage is lit by huge chandeliers.
- The main entrance is guarded by beefy Masks (including Slight's old friends Slice and Dice) who aggressively turn away gawpers. Only Everwayans are allowed to see performances here.
- There are two entrances to the backstage building, each guarded by a single burly bouncer (E4 F4). One is for the army of support staff (painters, prop makers, makeup artists, cleaners, scribes and accountants) who work in the Theatre. The other is for the performers and leads directly to the changing and rehearsal rooms.
- Loudvoice's office is near the artists' entrance. He will not take kindly to intruders and will call for help. A dozen Masks (including one Body Double) will appear within two rounds.

Encountering Lithe

- Assuming Fish Trader turns up during the day and takes out the bouncer at the artists' side door, the Thespian troupe are rehearsing a complicated acrobatic manoeuvre in one of the large rehearsal rooms.
- Unless F.T. does something clever, the troupe will take offence at being disturbed and get in F.T.'s way. This gives Lithe a chance to escape.
- Lithe dodges out of a side door that leads into the backstage area. Lots of flats, walkways, ropes and pulleys.
- Lithe will use his ambush abilities (W3, ambush specialisation) to attack F.T. and any assistants that he brings. *At least one attack will succeed.*
 - Rope with sandbag attached dropped on head. F6 to avoid.
 - Creaking chain is a decoy. Attack from behind with claws.
 - Flat depicting a formal garden comes crashing down as F.T. is walking by it. F6 to avoid.
 - If F.T. goes climbing in the rigging, leap or use ropes to swing from gantry to gantry. R will cut rope if possible, sending F.T. crashing to the floor (note: F.T. can handle drops up to 30 feet due to cat capabilities. Longer falls will stun him, however.)
 - On main stage, drop chandelier.
 - Props: Sold but blunted cutlasses, large plaster heads, dinner service that could be thrown. Furniture - chairs, tables, bookcases.
 - Acrobatic equipment - see saws, trampolines, juggling balls, rings, martial arts sticks
- F.T. (and others) may get to see Lithe in his true cheetah form.
- Assuming F.T. is stunned, Rrauw looms over him, about to strike the killing blow - then stops and turns away contemptuously. "You're like the others - weak. Do not try to stop me, little kitten."

Sawbones Street

- F.T. will need to get the name of the street from somewhere (Gentle Dew does not know it). The obvious source is Brother Valentine at the Mercy Hospital. He knows the following:
 - Yew has something a reputation as a doctor for ailments that are too embarrassing to bring to the Mothers.
 - He lives in the Crafters Quarter, in **Sawbones Street**. Brother Valentine does not know him personally, but knows that the street is where several doctors and

apothecaries live.

- Sawbones Street is a few roads down from Redearth Street, close to Crafters Square. The houses here are wooden and detached, with heavy black shutters. About half a dozen medics live here, along with a number of apothecaries, nurses and other medical workers.
- Neighbours:
 - **Variola Swiftknife** - competent surgeon. Admires Brother Valentine.
 - **Mopbrow Tendwell** - motherly but drunk nurse
 - **Read-the-runes Owlseye** - mystical quack
 - **Tendon Pisstaster** and his wife **Violet**. Work as a team.
 - Yew Threadlip is well known to his neighbours, having lived here for a year. He seems friendly enough but keeps himself to himself. He has connections to several Everway families, especially the Stonebreakers (a source of jealousy for some).
 - He hasn't been seen in the last few days.
 - Appearance: Lithe, strong, long yellow-brown hair streaked with grey, deep set eyes, mature face with deep wrinkles from eyes to mouth. White goatee beard.
- Yew's house is seemingly unoccupied. It is two storeys with arched doorways. The ground floor has a waiting room, consulting room, operating theatre and laboratory. The latter has herbs and ointments that a qualified medic will recognise as being treatments for libertine's itch, cocksucker's gumrot, blotchbreast, pube roaches and other sexually transmitted diseases and infestations. There are also the ingredients for several poisons.
- Upstairs are bedrooms and a small office. The latter contains an 8' tall heavy wardrobe with a secret entrance to a hidden room behind that can be only be accessed by climbing up its side in cat mode (there are tell-tale claw marks).
- The room contains an alarming number of concealable weapons, vials of clear and green liquids (poison - E4-5), and a chest (bolted to the floor) with a lock with five slits arranged in an arc, easily opened by someone with retractable claws (anyone else gets a face full of cobra venom - E4+FC). Can be opened forcibly (E6) and will burn (but contents will be largely destroyed).
- Inside are papers related to Peacemaster spying activities. They include:
 - Names of senior Everwayans and their embarrassing ailments, headed up by Whitedust Stonebreaker.
 - The names of the Thespian troupe and an account of overheard conversations. The words "refused use of body doubles" are underlined after a visit by "a Snaking".
 - A list headed "Threats"
 - Glint Crookstaff (name is circled)
 - Pince-nez Crookstaff
 - Mirage Crookstaff
 - A piece of paper, headed "Targets":
 - *Grey Snaking* Likely poison daggers. Bow.
 - *Goldring Digger* Guarded. Leap from above.
 - *Serpent Moondance* Magic? Claws.
 - *Ardent Scratch* Unguarded. Claws.
 - *Lucent Stonebreaker* Unguarded. Claws.
 - *Victor Crow* Could be tough. Poison.

- Defences:
 - 4 on balcony. Bows.
 - 8x2 on stairways. Halberds (ceremonial?) and swords.
 - 4 at main entrance. Guard room with 8? more.
- If F.T. is alone and hasn't encountered him already, Rrauw returns just as he is making his escape. Fight which F.T. loses. He comes to in a corpse cart that is being trundled out of the city. The papers are gone but there is a message from R in his pocket that reads as above ("You're like the others - weak. Do not try to stop me, little kitten.")

Other Events

If the heroes don't work it out straight away, the following additional events occur:

- Glint Crookstaff's bloodstained body is discovered shoved face-down into a well between Imperial Way and the Crookstaff Quarter. He has been stabbed multiple times.
- Gentle Dew sends a message to Fish Trader. She has received a communication from Rrauw, which just said "Be ready". If F.T. gets in touch, G.D. can identify the senior Everwayans and the thing they have in common.

Rrauw's assault will occur within 12 hours.

Alerting the Authorities

Assuming the heroes work out where the assault will take place, they could decide to leave it to the authorities. After all, they can handle a lone assassin, can't they?

Point out to F.T. that this would be a disaster. Peacemaster capabilities would be revealed to the enemy.

- Head of Great Council security: **Injunct Walker**. He can be found in the guard room of the Council House. Large, stout, self-satisfied. Unfortunately he is smug and believes that the forces he has will be adequate for dealing with a lone assassin (he has successfully foiled several assassination attempts in the past). Rathgard is the only one who will be able to persuade him to take action.
- Named Council members: All are too grand to talk to the heroes (Goldring Digger will try to have them arrested if Flame is present). Their lackeys will advise bringing matters of security to Injunct Walker.
- Absinthe Emerald: Probably no longer talking to the heroes. At best she will pass on their report to the Snakerings, who will consider it most likely a double bluff.
- Glint Crookstaff *et al.* Warning him will save his life - he will fake an illness and not go to work.

The Great Council

By contrast to the Palace, the Council House benefits from having been built by a single architect. It is based on a square design with four curving supports leading up from the corners to meet at the centre of a dome covered in lapis lazuli. Moveable slats in the dome allow sunlight into the parliament chamber below - further light is supplied by small windows high up in the walls.

A shady walkway with large openings to the square runs round the four sides, and two minarets contain bells which are rung at sunrise and sunset (when the Council supposedly starts and finishes its day).

The Council House sits in the centre of the diamond-shaped Council Square. Four streets lead off from the centres of each side. The courthouse complex where trials under the City

Justice take place lies off the square to the south and the remaining sides are taken up by bureaucrats' offices.

There is one 10' entrance with a passageway that leads to the central council chamber. This is guarded by 4 Watchers who stand with crossed halberds which they only unbar for recognised council members.

On either side of the main entrance, two narrow staircases, each with a Watcher, lead up to the public viewing balcony. The Watchers will confiscate any obvious weapons and magical items.

Inside the Council House

- The central council chamber is a 60' high by 120' wide four-sided domed chamber with rows of banked seats surrounding a central plaza. One side has seven throne-like chairs for the Seven Advisors; the Convenor sits directly below them. The other three sides have seats for the General Council members and their advisors. A pair of double doors leads to the outer walkway on the side opposite the Seven Advisors.
- Seven sets of stairs (from all four corners and three sides) lead down to the central area which has a circle marked out in on the inlaid floor where nominated speakers speak. A desk with a council stenographer stands in one corner near the Seven Advisors and another desk for the Official Recorder of council decrees stands at the other.
- Of the Seven Advisors, six are present. Ulrich is away.
 - Victor Crow
 - Goldring Digger
 - Serpent Moondance
 - Ardent Platinum Scratch
 - Grey Snakering
 - Lucent Stonebreaker
- The families of the General Council sit in groups around the other three sides. Each family has three formal representatives dressed in grand robes and a number of functionaries who sit below them.
- The topic of debate is supposedly the death of Wall Emerald and what it means for Palace security, but it has been derailed by the Stonebreakers' refusal to pay the City Tax. A motion has been proposed that Lucent Stonebreaker should give up her seat on the Seven Advisors until such time as the issue is resolved. Lucent is arguing passionately that their dispute is with the Emeralds and under the Bipartisan Principle, other families cannot be involved.
- Watcher guards are clearly in evidence. There are four armed with bows on the balcony and two guards at the base of each of the internal staircases. They are armed with halberds and swords, though the halberds appear ceremonial rather than practical.
- A wooden balcony for use by the public runs around the entire hall directly below the lapis lazuli dome which curves overhead. The slat mechanism can be found here. Below the balcony and above the highest rank of seats is a twenty foot wall pierced by windows. Wooden beams anchor the balcony to the walls.
 - Other than the four guards, there are only a handful of people on the balcony at present. They include two bored Scratch children with their tutor, a Motley who is asleep in a corner, and a fashionable-looking woman (Straw Sailson - From-the-North Sailson's daughter). The tutor is likely to get used as a human shield and suffer the consequences.
- Rrauw's actions:
 1. Overpower the balcony guard on the side above the Seven Advisors

2. Use his bow to shoot Grey Snakering from the balcony (FC to see if he succeeds in killing him)
 3. Turn into cat form and jump down onto Goldring Digger before her guards can react.
 4. Take out Serpent Moondance - claws
 5. Take out Lucent Stonebreaker - claws
 6. Take out Ardent Scratch - claws
 7. Kill Victor Crow with a poison dagger (FC again)
 8. Climb up and escape through one of the windows below the balcony.
- Rrauw moves twice as fast as any guards, who only get an action every other round. He moves so quickly that he is very hard to hit with missiles.
 - Goldring Digger's two personal guards are in the row behind the Seven, but are unarmed. They can only get in Rrauw's way (and pay the price).
 - The Watcher guards at the base of the stairs will reach the Seven Advisors' chairs in round 5.
 - There will be panic and a mass rush for the doors. Heroes who are too slow to go after Rrauw can help to stop people being trampled.
 - The heroes' success will depend crucially on their preparedness. If they work together and are prompt in getting to the Council House, they can catch Rrauw as he enters (he is in his Yew Threadlip disguise). If they are late or dilatory, Rrauw is on the balcony before them. If he recognises any of the heroes, he will start his attack immediately.
 - If the heroes succeed in downing Rrauw and F.T. is present, he gets some Final Words. "Everything we fought for - gone! The Peaceful Isles - A mist came... Everything changed - war between the clans, then men - invaders - White Scorpions... My little kittens - all dead... Avenge us! Avenge us all!..."
 - If the circumstances are more dramatic, F.T. can find a paper from Peacemaster Ryaouw on Rrauw's body that essentially says the same thing.

Rewards and Consequences

- If Rrauw succeeds (even partially), it will cause a major political upset. Several senior Everwayans killed and a new threat to the city is revealed. Paranoid Wanted posters go up ("Is *your* friend a were-tiger?"). All guards and patrols are doubled.
- If the heroes succeed in saving most or all of the Seven, one or more Everway families will be grateful.
- Fish Trader may learn of trouble in his home realm.
- *Fish Trader may face his fate: The King - Authority / Tyranny - Serving the people vs serving your own desires.* At some point it may be necessary for FT to choose between defeating Rrauw and revealing his true nature to the heroes and quite possibly the Everwayan authorities. Which does he choose? Does he serve his country by sacrificing himself as a pawn in the game, or does he keep his secrets? If F.T. gets to hear Rrauw's final words, he may also change his Fate card.

Character Stats

Peacemaster Rrauw

"You're like the rest - weak."

Occupation and History

One of the [Peacemasters](#) from the [Peaceful Isles](#). He has been working as a spy in Everway for [Gentle Dew](#).

Physical Description

Human (Yew Threadlip): Lithe, strong, long yellow-brown hair streaked with grey, deep set eyes, mature face with deep wrinkles from eyes to mouth. White goatee beard.

Cat: Cheetah head, human body

Distinguishing Feature

His eyes bore into you.

Values and Motivations

Rrauw has been working in Everway for a year, having been sent there because he was causing trouble in the Peaceful Isles. He is a fanatic who thinks that the Peacemasters are superior to humans and should take their rightful places as their masters.

Interactions with others

A loner. Has little time for anyone, even his own kind. The exception is his family - wife and two kittens - that he left back in the Peaceful Isles.

Useful Knowledge

He has been working in the Great Council and knows much of the politics.

Exceptional Attributes / Skills

Incredibly fast and deadly.

A 2 Medical knowledge

E 6 Resist blood loss

F 8 Fatal claw

W 2 Ambush

Powers:

3 Shapeshift to Human (frequent, major, versatile) - human form

undetected to Water score of less than 7.

Requires slight effort to maintain. Unlike Fish Trader, Rrauw can adopt a variety of guises.

0 Nocturnal - needs no sleep (except cat naps)

Watcher Guards

A2 Follow orders

E3 Stand solidly

F4 Sword / Bow

W3 Crowd control

Powers: One Watcher has magic detection abilities

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