

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

In the 3rd quarter of the Year 799 we are engaged to help some business people of Mittelmarkhuptstadt. Our contact is the Madame Dulcina, she runs an ‘Academy for young Ladies’. More importantly she is an agent for an entity named The Butcher (Amongst other things – he actually runs the butchers guild).

Our assignment is somewhat simply stated, in a round about way. In short we must find the person(s?) responsible for the deaths of some ‘businessmen’ and kill him. Note that Madame Dulcina did not say those exact words but I believe that is what she meant.

* I am reminded that official details are required, so know that the guild members involved in this action are ...

Lady Faith, Part time ambassador and Party Leader.
Arwen Valente, Troubadoreess and Military Scientist
Rochelle de Marques, (Loxi for short), This note was scribbled by me!

Lady Clementine, Bear of huge proportions and we are told that she knows stuff.
Lady Hope de Winter, Some day I hope to visit with her father at Beaucourt.
Hoo: A shoe fetishist, who prides himself on his Lilliputian stature.
and Glynn, Ex-Military towering hulk. We all know what they’re good for. He does seem to be kind and courteous. I do hope that is not so when it comes to the fray.

Security tells us that Mittelmarkhuptstadt is a city where crime and business are one and the same. You can get anything you want there if you have the gold to pay. Just my luck, to be sent there, with no gold and a lot of ‘wants’.
They told us that Mittelmarkhuptstadt is a favourite place for peerage to ‘winter’ – in fact some of the gentry have not seen their estates for years.

Madame Dulcina tells us that there is an eye-witness to one of these murders; An illusionist that was hired as a body-guard at the time. He had the good sense to run away when his charge was attacked. I don’t think that his career as a ‘security consultant’ will be going anywhere from here. We have to confirm this, but Dulcina tells us that he saw a large fellow sporting fur, antlers and wings. This ‘monster’ clawed his employer into a messy pulp.

As demonic as this entity sounds; we have some reservations. It seems that our perpetrator uses ropes to swing around on (giving us the idea that maybe his wings are not for real). Although, we are told that flying is just not done in Mittelmarkhuptstadt – something to do with the ancient defences.
So far we have not been told of him using any innate magic or otherworldly powers. He did have a rather nasty staff (now in the possession of guild security, held for us as one third payment when we succeed). You tell me – how useful is a staff that will destroy everything that weighs up to an ounce? The thought of silver coins disappearing in a flash of necromantic energy just sends icy waves through my spine.

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

We have arranged a cover in so much as we are the accompanying entourage of Dulcina’s sister ‘Charity’, played by Lady Hope. If that does not cut it we are also a band of entertainers – complete with dancing bear. Actually I do believe that we could make some money at the entertainment business – it’s just a thought!

Our journey to Mittelmarkhuptstadt through Beaucourt and Borderlay has been largely uneventful. I suppose we should be glad for that, **The Lady** knows that we are running straight into the dragon’s maw; the nasty staff used to belong to some drow. One begins to wonder how our murderer came into possession of a drow’s toy. Let us hope that he bought it because the other possibilities are too awful to contemplate. For the last leg, we are joined by the esteemed presence of Sir Ludiwig and his retainer. The gentle-elf is an elder. I did inquire after his family but he was more interested in talking about bugs and creepy-crawlies. Oh well maybe he grows tired. He was helpful about the life in Mittelmarkhuptstadt ... let’s see

- The opera is losing grace and style. No one seems to be singing in the proper tongue anymore
- The university library is very good. Especially the chocolates drink.
- and he does not trust certain personages namely Relain, Isillith and the Baroness Burghesburg (the Baroness has a very stylish carriage pulled by no less than six of the blackest horses I’ve ever seen)

Mittelmarkhuptstadt is an ancient city-state carved into a mountain, bordered on three sides by Aquillain and on the other by a waste ground – now controlled by certain guild members. The upper regions of the city are a system of very well lit tunnels – leading to some exquisite architecture. The lower quarters have literally fallen away – leaving very steep slopes for streets. We will be spending a lot of time down there. This is where people are getting killed by our ‘vigilante’. I just know that my calves are going to look great after this fracas. I know, I know – exercise is good for me.

Our interview with Verity the illusionist has cleared some questions and posed a few more. She tells us that she was visiting with a friend in that quarter on totally unrelated business when she heard a commotion. She saw, at the edge of her elvan sight, a tall/broad man dressed in a monster costume. He was wearing an executioner’s mask with ‘antennae’ poking out of it. He is quick, strong and mad. This will be fun!

We (that is Lady Hope) conducted some interviews with some of the vigilante’s victims. We learned that ...

- 1) The perpetrator has one killing claw – not a hand full of talons. He is also throwing small brass discus and spikes.
- 2) He ambushes his prey, usually from above.
- 3) We think that he has some very interesting toys. One of which will anchor itself into the rock. – I want one.
- 4) He speaks Reichspiel.
- 5) When hill kills – he introduces himself (which induces terror in some of his victims) and accuses them of killing his parents.
- 6) He proclaims an allegiance with a group called the Red Hand or the Red Claw.
We are not too sure of the translation from Reichspiel.

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

Other stuff that we have learned about MMHS.

- ➔ Ulrich Platz is an area in MMHS that holds sanctuary law. Hence there a lot of vagrant types camped out in it. The Knights Panther also have a chapter house on Ulrich Platz.
- ➔ There is a disturbing lack of guards in the University quarter.
- ➔ It (the University) does do really good chocolate.

We ran some tests on the ancient anti-flying defences here. Don't ask about our methods – let's just say that some rabbit owners were not too happy with us until we switched to rats. The point is that we identified that the Defence is a greater curse that will cancel any flying magic, feather fall and levitate included, that passes through MMHS air space. It is arcane and its effects are instant, although it does not always work. The curse also affects natural flyers as well. They tell us that eagles have been known to fall out of the sky from time to time.

My thanks to Lady Hope for taking notes while I could not

Unfortunately, our intake of hot chocolate has diminished rapidly as we have realised that soon we will not be able to afford to stir out of our hostel.

We went off to pay our respects to the Healers Guild. We obtained entrance after some reluctance on the part of the Doorman, but eventually our leader prevailed. The chief healer was apparently off in Beaumont resurrecting the King. There were hushed conversations taking place in corners. We did get access to the poor unfortunate killed by the masked bug. The following facts emerged:

- He is under a preservation spell of hibernation
- He has also been preserved
- He seemed to be missing a small part of his anatomy - a piece of scalp.

Next stop was the university. The porter (Rudince) was a fine hobbit, who appreciated a good cup of hot chocolate. The Diviner was busy, but we spent some time with a rank 2 philosopher called Schopen, who worked for a publisher called Dark and Mills. (an old joke seems to be Dark Satanic Mills) . This used to be Dark, Mills and Burden. More on this later. He recommended philosophers and libraries, concerning demonology.

- The Gruffen - an excellent library
- BergsBerg - also excellent
- Duke Orelis - good library, especially on Alchemy and Elvish stuff
- The Michaelines - Good for demonology

We headed back to the University and . after hot chocolate the Namer(a hobbit called Charlemagne [Charletan by nature??]).

) divined what he could. This revealed the following”

- A divination costs 25 groats - 100sp. Luckily we had some reciprocal rights and got a discount
- The victim had been hot by a non-college fear curse
- The curse had not been cast, but probably as a result of spoken word(s)
- Speaking these word(s) disadvantaged the speaker in some way - e.g. sacrificing a spell. This also appeared to be a sacrifice involving Naming in some way
- Lack of hearing may or may not help against the Fear

We also tried to get access to libraries to study demonology, but the Chancellor, Dark (female), was away and was required to give permission.

17:56

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

An offer was made for the provision of false auras at 100sp per “question”, down to 3 for 500sp.

That night we went for a reconnoitre out on to the roof of our building and into the building next door. This was deserted but obviously had once been a place of some elegance. The door proved not to be a problem. We returned to our residence via the front door and saw Orris coming back across the park.

On other roof tops we were ambushed by those obviously on edge because of the Masked Bug, and Lady Hope suffered an arrow wound before we established that we would be better off friends. No one had need of the feather falling, but our leader proved that she need more carrots or the like as she seemed rather accident prone and clumsy in the dark, although she claims that she could see perfectly well in the dark. A case of denial, I think. I’ve seen this a lot in dead people. She operated much better when her vision was enhanced.

Back at our rooms, we continued to befriend Orris. He gave forceful advice on going out one way and coming back in the front door because the building is often watched by the Guard and others. As far as he could tell we not seen last night. Orris did turn out to know a Michaeline, whom he endearingly called Bob. His name (to us) was Father Roberto Xavier, the Deputy Commander of the Chapter House, and a Destinian! Orris kindly came with us to introduce us to him.

We had some delay as a Father Gravino offered us menial tasks to persuade us to leave as Bob was busy. We did these, or at we all helped according to our ability and upbringing. Orris did most or it, it has to be said.

Father Roberto wore a black robe trimmed with blue over a very good chain mail. He is barely thirty, had piercing blue eyes and a shock of white hair. His cavalier goatee was however golden. His voice was a quiet tenor. On his left hand he wore a sapphire and diamond ring - a woman’s ring. As the girls said, wasted.

He had little sympathy for the underworld members killed by the Masked Bug. He seems somewhat surprised we were trying to track him down. As he said, “those who walk in the dark are considered suicides.” The man had a way of looking you piercingly. Magic may have been involved, but our Earth Mages obviously felt it would have been impolite to DA the man. Some-one mentioned that he was a namer [although he had a Katana, rather than a hand-and-a-half?]. Although, of course, one cannot perform college magic whilst wearing cold-iron. Make of that what you will.

He said that he was not here in the city when the Destinian ambassador was killed, probably by Drow or people from the South. He was killed in a night club hours after arriving in the city. As far as he was concerned, the case was closed, although he seemed rather cagey about this. As far as he knew, the Ambassador had no children. He was however, a close relative of Don Calos (Bastard half-brother-presumably a bastard of Carlos’ Father, the former Marquis of Calatrava. By the way, the half-brother was probably much older than King Carlos [irrelevant detail].?) (I.e. the present king of Destiny). He kindly (and suspiciously gave a list of people who may have the Destinian device which confers immunity to location, mind reading, etc) - These were:

The Cardinal, Don Carlos, His Sister, one or two bastards, a diplomat etc. He considered that the device that the ambassador had may well have turned up again. Our questions dried up and he made some comments about undesirable professions, handed out some religious tracts to those who would take them and showed us out.

Orris also turned out to be a fan of the Novel. He showed us

The Count of Godrock, Lady B, about the slashing of Nuns,

which only got past the censor because these were Raphaelite Nuns and there were none in the city. Some of these best sellers had a run of 2000 books, and went all over the Kingdom. He had a copy of Dr FlyderMouse - about a sinister demonic cult, the Purple Hand, which unfortunately for the Author, Burden, actually existed. These people took exception to the book and burned him on a pile of his own books out on the road outside the city. This was explained by our philosopher friend. See also below. This book’s plot seems to bear more than a passing resemblance to our own situation here - so close that I feel this can be no coincidence. Note that our party leader did enquire as to

09/09/99
17:56

5 of 17

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

who had bought this novel (maybe 5 remained) but no lists were maintained by the publishing company.

I enclose a summary of the book (Thanks Michael!):

The Purple hand.

Last year, the publishing house of Dark, Mills, & Burdon published a three-part novel, bound in one volume (Only 6 Crowns; or 7 Kr if bound in embossed fake Naga-hide). By itself it was unexceptional, indeed boringly typical in its lack of true artistic merit or redeeming quality other than as a sound financial investment. It was called “Doctor Fleidermaus: an historical romance”, a tale of revenge against a sinister demonic cult called “The Purple Hand.” (which was also the title of part 1).

Plot of Part 1: Our hero, a young noble, saw his parents slaughtered by minions of the cult because his father, the good Baron, had righteously suppressed them. Our hero [supposedly] fled South, and a lackey of the neighbouring Evil Earl put on his father’s throne. Actually, after a few brief adventures, Lord Wayne was taken in & trained by the local abbot in arms, strategy, and the virtue of herbs.

Plot of Part 2: Lord Wayne is now grown-up and goes amongst the poor peoples of that country, disguised as a humble physician, but at night he wreak his revenge on all doers of evil dressed in a fantastical bat-cum-man costume. -The excessive use of “the virtues of herbs” is an **excessively** overplayed plot device (or “twist” as the author called it) enabling the hero to do many quasi-magical things, or to strike terror into the hearts of the lily-livered minions of the Purple Hand. The locked room where the terrified minions are mysteriously killed [they killed themselves a candle with a poisoned wick is particularly ludicrous] is particularly ludicrous-obviously this historical romance is set before forensic divination or necromancy were invented.

Plot of Part 3: Faithful Rudiger, the good Baron’s barber [& “grass”] realises that Lord Wayne is actually alive & tracks him down; and together they depose the usurper, who turns out to be the lodge-master of the Purple Hand. Somewhere in there Lord Wayne falls inlove with the gypsy’s grand-daughter (who turns out to be a noble heiress) which the gypsy (who turns out to be a good gypsy) had brought-up as her own child to protect her. It all ends happily, although there is space for a sequel as the enquiring reader will wonder what role the Evil Earl **really** played in all of this.

Unfortunately for Master Burdon, the author, there actually was a secret cult in MMHS called “The Purple Hand,” and they didn’t take kindly to being mocked. Mr Burdon was burned to death on a pyre of his books. The firm of Dark & Mills (which Rellane calls Dark satanic mills) are still publishing, but only after each story is carefully vetted by the house astrologers.

Total party costs in this session: 100sp for the divination, 30groats on hot chocolate & bribes.

Things get more and more interesting as well as less and less clear, also more and more expensive.

As Lady Hope comments – the plot of Doctor Fleidermaus does seem to be happening in Mittelmarkhuptstadt at this time, under our very noses. Well ; the Bat cum Bear-Bug killing off businessmen of questionable nature bit anyway.

Lady Hope has asked some of the victims if they belonged to the Purple Hand, non of them did so we don’t know if they are part of this scenario or not yet.

Curfew has become an issue, as we need to use the rooftops for our investigations. Strangely enough, it is easier to be in the Northern, affluent, districts after curfew than in Southgate – go figure.

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

Our Airmages have been whispering to the winds. Actually they seem to talk to them in normal voice – it seems to be the winds that are whispering because I certainly can't hear them. I say winds – there are two winds in Mittelmarkhuptstadt that we have access to. The wind in the south blows over the south gate and around the forests. He is barred from the North by the city's magicians, it is something to do with the scents that he carries with him. He does carry a lot of fragrance, not all of it good! Clementine asked some questions of him and he was not very helpful until she put her hand to her head and waved them around like antlers. I don't know but I think that winds have a particularly strange sense of humour. We did learn that he has seen the bug-man around town and that he does his dirty deeds in the south and then carries the victims away to the North. It is also interesting to note that he has murdered some people in the forest. Maybe they were Purple Hand cultists, we should probably get Lady Hope to have a chat with them.

We followed our lead to the North. This is where it got expensive. We now know that it costs 3 Krone to hire a private bathing room for 2 hours. At this rate we will be paupered, clean but poor. It was a relatively good way to get into the bath house and onto the roof without too much fuss. Clementine and Glynn began to question the North Wind of Mittelmarkhuptstadt. I believe that winds can take on the traits of the people that it touches. Let us say that this zephyr was somewhat distant to reality, like the caged beauties in the palace or indeed the scholars in their ivory towers. However – she did remember seeing Bugface running around. Apparently he visits the Healers Guild and the Cathedral. When he goes to the Cathedral – he runs along the roof to the spire, does some maniacal laughing and disappears into the belfry. A very important clue is that he smells of herbs, bats and crushed insects.

We decided to investigate the belfry first.

On top of the Cathedral of Ulric the Founder is a sloping roof leading to an apex layered in silver with pretty swirly bits along the side. To get to the spire one has to traverse this silver strip. On the instructions of Lady Faith, we crawled along it – not elegant but safe. This is the night that I learned about the pettiness of gods.

We were a short distance from the spire when we heard the thunderous voice of Ulric the Founder. At least that is who we assumed it was for it challenged us saying “Who disturbs the rest of Ulric the Founder and why do you do so?” being the person on point I took it that it was up to me to answer. I am always honest in these matters so I told the voice that it was ‘me’ and that I was curious. I mean if a god can't tell who it's speaking to then its not much of a god is it? Well – Ulric the Founder got all uppity and started some quite impressive weather displays – instant thunderclouds. So I tried to rephrase, I told him that we needed some questions answered. At this point he mocked us for approaching on all fours and lashed out with lightning. Yes, the founding deity of Mittelmarkhuptstadt is just plain rude. He ended up killing Mistress Arwen by shoving her off the Cathedral Roof (some 180 foot high). It's not like we came to steal anything or the like. I am of a mind to go back and have a chat with him about manners. Of course I may bring along some sort of protection from lightning. Next time we want to talk to the bats in the belfry – I think we will just ask them to come to us.

Bang goes one of our pre-paid healing vouchers. I do hope that Lady Valente is worth it. We have, maybe, been compromised by having to retrieve her body. Lady Hope is

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

now known to the Lord Captain of the guard and champion to Graffin Flavia. He thinks that we are her lackeys and that she is ‘slumming it’ at the academe. Although – perhaps this situation could be turned to our benefit, who knows!

As it happens – our next stop for clues was the Healers Guild so Arwen was in the right place. The house healers said that it would take around five days to put her back together again. They really did mean back together again, I do hope that we found all the important bits. It was very messy.

We were advised that the Healer Elect, Dr Frank [*Dr Frank Einstien - oh please*] has been out of town for some time and we don’t know when he is coming back. This is one of the parts that fit into the Dr Fleidermaus story. (Doctor turns vigilante). We got to look around the Guild building and learned some stuff ...

1. Dr Frank use to have an assistant that was known as Nurse. Lady Hope filled us in on the entity known as Nurse and her flunky. She was a nasty character that, amongst other things, created potions that would let you have the attributes of the contents of them ie crushed cockroaches will give you nigh indestructibility and make you grow antennae (apparently). She (Nurse) is well and truly dead – so says The Guild. The flunky seems to be a magically created super-but-dumb elf. I find the very thought repulsive and should hate to meet one.
2. Dr Frank is a cross dresser and he had a string of pearls that are magically enhanced to make you feel good. **The Lady** only knows why you would have to use magic to feel good about wearing jewellery.
3. There is a room in the Healers Guild building that has all the stuff for making Nursey’s potions. We have thought to hide out here and see if we can observe BugFace. This would, maybe, confirm our suspicions about Dr Frank.
4. Also, one of the healer assistants noticed that half a jar’s worth of live cockroaches had disappeared over the last few days. For some inexplicable reason, they didn’t try to blame us. (Thankyou Hoo)

I think that I will try to just shut up from now on – What ever I say to the people around us seems to bring us trouble. Oh well people were never my strong point.

As we thought – it is a lot easier to get bats from the belfry to come to an air-mage than to go visiting: What the air mages do with the bats is another story. Glynn got hold of a particularly obstreperous belfry-dweller as Clementine found out by the amount of ‘maybes’ she got for answers. Then she got hold of the poor thing for real and the Airmages started a good mage worse mage routine. This got them a few things ...

1. Accused of assault and *battery*.
2. A dead bat (Care of Clementine’s neck breaking skill)
3. A flock of vengeful friends and family.
4. One dead Airmage
5. Some relevant information.

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

Action or info ? Action!

The screeching flock billowed out of the belfry and homed in on the murderous Clementine. Anyone who was on the cathedral roof became targets in short order. Each person was buffeted, scratched and covered in guano. The real trouble started when Lady Hope almost fell of the roof. Our courageous elf-warrior (Glynn) made a dash to save her. Unfortunately, he must have fallen foul of some bat droppings, he went over the edge instead – landing in a messy heap on the ground; some 180ft down; very close to the spot where Arwen met her death. The people of the city are waiting for the third body to fall – completeing some sort of omen. Our question is – if it the same person, does it count?

Extremely pulpy and we now have Glynn written on our second and last healing voucher.

We managed to get his body back before the spare parts merchants claimed him and now there are city officials that think Glynn and I are siblings. It is a good thing that they didn't get to hear my 'brother' speak – we have totally different accents.

Okay – Information :-

(collected by various different means)

1. The bat was bound. About 6 weeks ago.
2. The bat corpse was purged of all parasites and diseases. 5 or six weeks ago. We believe that this was the effect of the staff (now in guild custody)
3. The bat did admit to being a friend of Bugface.
4. We confirmed that Bugface hangs out in the Belfry.
5. We have hints that the victims are brought to the Belfry and the bats eat them.

Other things wot we did –

Nicked the jar of bugs from Dr Frank's Lab.

Got some info on Duke Orelus and The Purple Hand from the Hobbit community. They really are quite chatty and are willing to feed you if you can provide stories for them. Not food fight stories; they were most disgusted with Hoo's tale of Fairies and their food throwing fracas. (Hoo tells me that it was the food that did the fighting. I think that we all miss heard and the thought is still repugnant, Sorry Hoo)

Lady Hope chatted with some more dead people.

One of the latest victims was a town guard in Southgate. He was carrying 'the takings' back to the Guard Captain when he got jumped by the vigilante.

Out in the forest this time. She even spoke to the author – Mr Burden. He was not very helpful, poor soul.

I did ascertain that his place of death was linked to a demon who goes by the title Duke of Changes.

Hope also talked to a witch that fell victim to old buggy. As it happens – she may have released a death curse on her killer. It was something along the lines of 'May you be destroyed by your friends'

You never know – this may come in handy.

09/09/99
17:56

9 of 17

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

Visited with Duke Orelus – he told us some stuff:-

1. The jar of cockroaches is a mix of various types.
2. Cockroaches are stupid.
3. They are crepuscular (they are suited to twilight)
4. They don't like bright lights.

The good duke also extended an invitation to the opera. We are going to see an Elven revival piece. It may also be were some action happens (Bugface related)

The main other thing :-

After some professional skulking, we found out that there is an official bell polisher at the Cathedral of Ullrich. He happens to be on Cpt. Rodreigo of the Town Guard. Rumour has it that he is a war hero. In Mittelmarkhuptstadt a war hero is someone who prolongs a war that the city merchants are making fine profits from – thank you very much.

He is the Captain of the Southgate guard, therefore a minor gangster. The Butcher would prefer that we did not kill him but breaking his legs is okay.

After a short, expensive (this was the point that my big mouth almost made it very expensive. Saved by Faith's deft boot to my sore ankle) interview we came away with the key to the belfry. It was very satisfying to see the brave captain go an interesting shade of green when he learned that he had been sitting yards away from the Bug-Man and certain death.

Like the fools we are – we plan to search the belfry, during day light – Even we aren't that stupid.

From Hoo ...

I thought the Butcher wasn't too concerned one way or another.

An interesting thought - maybe his lieutenant thought we were going to kill him? He was surprised when we came out - it was either that or he thought the Captain was going to do for us.

From Lady Hope ...

These are excellent scribe notes, so I'm only quibbling, but colour schemes are important - I thought that Cpt. Rodreigo went white, not green.

It may be worth noting that Bob would quite like to talk to us.

It seems to me that we need to take roof expeditions a lot more seriously. Perhaps we should rope ourselves together in the manner of mountain climbers! I also note that every time the party splits up, someone dies. Maybe someone is trying to tell us something.

We nailed Bug-Face at the cost of two deaths (1 free and 1 very expensive) and some near deaths. All thanks to Clementine for patching us up. Faith tells us that as party leader – she tried to die for us, but I think her torq got in the way.

17:56

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

- It could be said that Hoo was killed by our military scientist. More accurately : Dr Einstien used Arwen as a club and bludgeoned Hoo to death with her.

I don't want to hear any more criticism about appropriate answers to odd questions! It is quite apparent to me that when we are jumped by insane people and/or gods – we have a tendency to stick to the truth. This has got us into trouble so far.

I do apologise for not going with my first instinct of sticking my rapier into Buggy when he stuck his head over the open trap door. That may have given us some more time to deal with him.

As far as our suppositions went we were correct on a lot of things. Bugface was Dr Einstein. He was quite loopy, due to the true-lead wig that he was wearing. The astrologers couldn't find him because of a magic broach that he wore. All the bats in the belfry stuff was right.

I have no idea what the doctor had to do with Destinians or the Opera though.

At times, it seems like the purpose of this assignment is ; to see how much hot chocolate we can possibly drink. We did, however, find out some interesting things.

We sat around the belfry while Hope played Seventy-one Questions with the late Dr Einstien (apparently that is not his real name but the only other reference that we have for him is 'Healer Elect' or possibly distant cousin to the Baron Mulburry of Beaucourt). The relevant information was ...

1. Father Bob knew of his antics and only tried dissuading him once or twice. But later Father Bob says that a true friend only makes a few attempts at dissuasion. (~Hoo)
2. He got some of his kit from Father Bob. (Due to the pedantic nature of a dead person's logic we are not sure if Bob actively give it to him but there you go)
3. The Opal Broach is the Destinian device that we mentioned before.
4. The silver bracelet is the piece that gives the wearer the power of terror via voice. It does take a price for this – but we have not figured out the exact nature of that price. Oh – and it's cursed.
5. He was not part of the Purple Hand and his parents were not killed by them. (He was loopy and his beliefs were equally loopy)

After some sporadic and heated discussion we, somehow, decided not to just go home and to start digging up more dirt. Maybe decided is too decisive but the fact is – we are still here and not on a coach headed for the guild or simply waiting in hot chocolate shops for The Butcher to come up with our payment.

We took advantage of Mistress Quickly's safe (no – wait, that doesn't sound right) we put our new found possessions in the safe, wrapped up in a sheep skin in a box, protected by the Opal broach of hiding stuff. We are guessing that the safe has a trap set into it of a mechanical nature.

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

Once more at The Barn we found ourselves imbibing of the chocolate and talking to the hobbit rumour mill, and later at MUMS. They told us about the Healer Elect and of Father Bob.

- The Healer is an office appointed to serve the Margrav, who has been missing for some 400 years. It is not surprising that a few people have held the title ‘Healer Elect’ whilst waiting for His Honour to return.
- Dr Einstien was a Healer turned Mechanician (or the other way around), aslo a master silver/gold smith. He had an obsession with making artificial parts for people. (Indeed he had replaced internal bits of himself. The very thought is disgusting.)
- Father Bob and the Doctor were very good friends. Do Destinians have friends, I wander, or just acquaintances of a useful nature?
- (We did find out some VERY interesting things about the Destinian Michaeline, If you want more – ask Lady Faith)
- It was surprising to find out which bits of Bobs kit were magical or not.

A visit to The Butcher gave us no more work but blessing to operate outside of his territory and 20 pounds of sausages.

When we returned from our day’s digging – we had been robbed! Isn’t it funny how adventurers take extreme umberance when their new-found wealth is threatened. Actually – only the broach was taken. That in its self was scary. We interviewed Horrace while he was eating a fair amount of sausage meat and in a round about way established that the broach had made it’s way ‘back’ to Father Bob.

Next stop, the Michaline Chapter House. (Yes we are impetuous fools, but then again how else would we have an interesting life. I mean that it what we’re all in it for isn’t it?)

If I didn’t know better, I would have thought that Father Bob was expecting us – okay, maybe he was. We established that there were no misunderstandings between us and that all possessions were where they were ‘meant’ to be. That Detinians drink their hot chocolate very sweet. That Clementine now understands that we wont be getting the ten percent finders fee for the broach (something to do with not exactly finding it just lying around). That Bob would really like to find the body of the Doctor to have it resurrected.

We got the most of the Doctors body back to the Healers just in time for it to be preserved. After some deliberation we have decided to send the Healer Elect to Seagate where he can be resurrected in alacrity (and monitored by our people). It is said that death will cure insanity (just one of the many things that death will cure) but I for one would like to be sure of the Doctor by the time he gets back to Mittelmarkhuptstadt.

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”



*I wanna go home,
I wanna go home,
Don't wanna play with no 'roaches no more
Demons and servants settl'in' scores.
Take me back to the Sea –
- Gate is where I wanna be.
Oh my I don't wanna die
I wanna go home.*



Lady, Hear me now! I know not how I got myself into this. On the morrow we shall be bait for The Purple Hand and their demon masters. Actually, *I* can not be blamed for our current predicament. For Arwen and me sat at Mistress Quickley's, studying, while the rest went gallivanting on the snowy rooftops of Mittelmarchstadt. Although I am not certain of the whole story – They did contrive to re-assert the beliefs that the vigilante was alive and ... kicking – businessmen all around town.

This was in response to a poster campaign with messages like
“ Purple Hand – 1 : Cockroach 0.
Signed ‘Those who know’ ”.

The Butcher was most unimpressed that his advantage had been cut short. He instinctively blamed us and I believe that Faith put him right on that score.

Somehow a body found it's way onto the Plague Memorial Statue looking somewhat like a Bug victim.

Only a few hours later (okay several hours) there were fresh posters on the walls of the city decrying ‘The false cockroach’ and threatening his death within two days.

We took a poster to Father Bob to see if he could give us any clues on the origin of the purple ink used on these flyers and ended up being the object of a plan to ensnare some of the high ranking Purple Handites.

The good Father is convinced that the cult knows about us and our (I use that term loosely) complicity in last night's subterfuge. He believes that an assassination attempt will be made on us whether we stay here or go. He says that we would make a good object lesson and serve to increase the terror that the Purple Hand hold over the upper-middle class citizens of Mittelmarchstadt, that by killing us they will be able to extort more money from the commerce district.

Faith says that we should go along with the Michaeline plan because there has been some bad press, recently, about The Guild and some of its members. Our actions will

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

go some way to repair the good reputation of our association. Apparently some guild people have been bad : so I have to sit in a cell and wait for demon consorting, cult-criminals to try and kill me while I trust a *Destinian* to help us haul our arses out of trouble, catch the bad guys for questioning and not leave us to rot. Who me? – Bitter? Never...

So, here is the plan :-

We get arrested by the Michaelines and handed over to the City Guard.

Father Bob arranges to post a squad of Michaeline Knights to watch over us and he also manages to be with us. His broach of obscurity should stop any astrologers from figuring out that he has anything to do with this plan.

The priest will bring to us the weapons that we will need while we sit and wait for some, unquantified, people to come and kill us.

Simple really. What could go wrong? Don't get me started!

Scribe notes : The slaughter before the fight.

We have learned some useful things during our incarceration.

- MMHS has got at least one really claustrophobic jail cell. Very , very dark.
- Father Bob is as good as his word, so far. All our kit was delivered along with the extra astrology readings.
- Hot chocolate is as good underground as it is in the free world.
- The sewer system runs along side our cell.
- The demarcation between merchants and adventurers is vast.
- Clementine really is "a bear and a big bear too."

So ... We were arrested by Michaelines and marched quickly to the north city guardhouse. It is important to note that Horrace was sporting enough to be 'arrested' with us. Faith was carried out on a plank. This was according to her 'plan'. The priest-knights handed us over then convinced the secular guards that they (the Michaelines) needed to stay, to keep watch over us.

Our cell is two flights of stairs down. It is hewn from the mountain, like so much of the local architecture. Some of it is 'bound' - presumably to stop people like me from just tunneling out onto the street. As Faith put it - you are welcome to tunnel under the sergeant's desk anytime. The hobbits' city plans shows a sewer system running along side this prison.

Faith's plank idea unfortunately fell short because of the cell being hewn and not built. She wanted to attach the plank to a wall to make a shelf - so that she could gain some privacy and an advantage in the fray (putting her at head height of passing assailants). My plans for installing trip wires and such were similarly stymied.

Over the next day or so father Bob made several visits. Some people would have it that his main aim was to interrupt their purification rituals. On the other hand, he did bring in our weapons and laid some wards against the

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

types of mages that we thought might be attacking us, namely Mind, Necromancy, Summoning, Bards and he had a Gabriellite priest consecrate half the cell. The trigger for the wards is an unaccompanied apple. Faith decided this - I am not sure what is wrong with her, I would have never thought that she could throw food away. I guess stress does funny things to people.

One highlight of our day (apart from chocolate) was a visitation from a local noble type. We identified him as pacted to the duke of changes (good for us). He tried to convince us to repent and accompany him to go and seek mercy. Yeah right! We righteously told him that we didn't understand the city's allegations much less committed the crimes charged against us. During this conversation Clementine ducked behind us and started to transform into a bear. We thought that we were about to be attacked. In this kind of situation - paranoia pays. As it happens he left in a huff. Admittedly the huff could have been me asking his name, in a non-too deferential manner. I sport bruised ribs for that stunt. Faith did get a good look at him though and she feels that we could locate him later.

We got another unscheduled visit. :-

The wall on the sewer side began to glow as two overlapped tunneling spells evidenced. A veritable throng of humanoids holding torches and swords started to spill into the cell.

Master Hoo

Did they have swords? I don't remember them doing so.
I've just figured out why the healer's guild offers good rates to adventurers - it is because of the resulting increase in patronage from bystanders when a party is in town.

Michael Answers

Some did; others had long knives of one sort or another; a few were empty-handed. Like all such groups of disgruntled locals, most held torches in the other hand.

Like any good paranoid adventuring group we met the attack full on. Glyn took of the bug potion, Clem and Horrace charged the lines backed up by Faith and myself. Much magic started to fly about and we beat the invaders back with alacrity, gusto and other theatrical verbiage.

During the glorious battle, Horrace stopped fighting, looked confused for a bit and then started to pull me out of the fray saying that they were friends and we shouldn't hurt them. Well what would you think? Probably just what we thought - 'Oh ho- he has been got by a mind-mage, poor fellow, we better knock him unconscious for his own good' and so Lady Faith saw to that duty with some flair. Meanwhile Glyn was having a ripping good time out in the tunnel. He was picking people up from his vantage point (the ceiling) and discarding them like so much trash. He finally dispatched two of the

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

three people running the incursion.

Between bear and bug, the enemy force was not faring too well.

As the fight went on - we began to hear complaints from the people being crushed between Arwen's Earthy Hands and the back of the throng. They too were trying to tell us that they were friends and this was a rescue mission.

By the time that the tunnel spells gave out we believed the poor wretches who were now sharing our temporary home.

They were merchants who thought that we were the heroes, unjustly accused.

That we should be rescued from the clutches of our evil oppressors. It is nice to know that someone appreciates you no matter how misguided they are - no wait, their appreciation was not misguided. We did sort out their bug problem. They just didn't know about the next stage of our plans. Life can be tough at times.

The other lesson learned that day was - trust a merchant to find the best price for the goods that he trades in, not to strategize a rescue attempt.

So - we wait for the Purple Hand to make their next move. I wonder, will the demon servants be more surprised, by our increased numbers, than the merchants at the nature of our opponents.

Michael comments.

Perfect notes; except perhaps

- > no wait, their appreciation was not misguided. We did sort out
- > their bug problem.

Actually they DIDN'T have a bug problem, because the Coackroach [almost always] only attacked criminals, the poor, and other dregs of society-all of which of which, as respectable merchants know, are a drain on MMHS's legitimate economy.

Indeed, as real bug or pseudo-bug, you are viewed as responsible for the Purple hand's going to ground recently. *Directly* saving the merchants as a whole, in just those few weeks, some tens of thousands of Groats in unpaid extortion; not to mention thereby increasing the legitimate flow-on & trickle-down effects to the city.

And ... It did not take long for the Purple Hand to strike.

We had only finished dusting ourselves off when we heard a knocking without.

‘Without what?’ someone will probably ask. Without subtlety of any kind is what.

Where the merchant earth mage tunnelled into our cell the minions of the Purple Hand sent elemental(s?) to knock through the walls. This was done under the cover of earthquakes in the area, both natural and summoned.

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

Just before the ground shook, Hoo noticed an invisible spider lurking on the ceiling of the cell. We thought that was both odd and fitting and so Faith threw an apple at it. This pinpointed its whereabouts for us and set off the ward underneath it. I tried to control the animal (we earthmages do that kind of thing – I’m told). Funnily enough – it turned out not to be an animal at all but a half devil.

Arwen did hold it off with Hands of Earth for a while until it revealed itself by shapeshifting back to imp form. It slipped the hands and jumped on Hoo (after deciding that Faith and her demon slayer weapon was a non option).

Meanwhile, Skeletons poured through the holes, newly created. Horrace took umbrance and flight, Clementine lead the merchant posse in a blocking action and thus proceeded to engage in a slow crush-a-thon. I believe that Arwen was eventually dragged into that fight.

Just as the imp was taken care of ... more masonry crumbled and fell. One whole corner of the cell collapsed and a bit later on the centre of the floor gave way to a newly created lower chamber. Waiting below – one ‘tiger’ and one earth elemental. Hoo and Horrace volunteered in the traditional way to go to meet the new foes.

At this juncture I was having trouble with upto three skeletons. Apparently, even pommel bashing does not impress them. It was time for a tactical retreat. I leapt into the hole, figuring that rapiers can actually do damage to tigers. Unfortunately, for me, I had pulled succubus locating duty. I completed my task by landing squarely on her braced daggers. That saw me doing a reasonable impression of a puddle.

Tigers are tough, but not so tough when they volunteer to inspect the ceilings via wind walk spells. Thankyou lady Hope.

Everybody in! The crew jumped the demonic assassin with varying successes, using Horrace to occupy her teeth.

By the time the succubus was dealt with, the tiger returned. A good thing in a way because this kept the elemental from being too active. (I believe that Arwen kept the elemental from doing too much damage)

Clementine and Faith dispatched the tiger – who turned out to be the Lordling that I annoyed beforehand, in a magical skin. They used him like a puppet to convince the elemental that it should not attack yet while they rescued Hoo and me. (Yay for the Hobbits)

Father Bob turned up at this point to mop up the mess.

Eventually, three ranking officers in the Purple Hand were brought to justice and bits of them are displayed on the city walls (all nice and charred, unresurrectable). It is said that there is one more person at large, so I guess that we should be careful. Of course there is the demonic duke – he is most probably upset with us, but what can I say? We did rain on his devious parade. Personally, I am planning on not bumping into any hostile demonic entities never mind the DoC.

09/09/99

17 of 17

17:56

“Send a Thief to catch a thief.”

Excellent. Apart from the selfish, egocentric wish to point out that I killed the imp & succubus (admittedly while Clem & 'Orris held her down and were bitten) and knocked the shape-shifted tiger out, and the correction that we rescued you, Hope & the tiger (the dead were left) and ran away until we bumped into Father Bob.

It is also traditional to point out who died (and if you survived, what they should have done differently!!)

Overall score:

Hobbits 3 (+ 4 skeletons)

Bad Guys 2 (+ 4 merchants)

Church 1 (+ trial)

Party 0 (+ 3 skeletons)

Faith