

## Carrion Crown Session Summary 08/04/2013

### *Attendance*

On Saturday, *Georgina* reminds *Bruce* that Google Hangouts would be a better option for gaming than Skype. Bruce reluctantly admits to her genius, and after a quick test with *Chris* everyone agrees that Google Hangouts are looking extremely promising.

Less than 24 hours later, *Ernest* shows up and demonstrates that Google Hangouts support multiple participants, so suddenly Bruce enjoys multiple camera angles! Score! Even *Matt* is impressed, and that's not to be taken lightly because his week has been substantially better than last week. *Especially* in light of the worldwide malt vinegar shortage that Chris uncovered at a San Antonio-area Alamo Drafthouse.

By this time, Georgina is certain that nobody remembers that she was the first to suggest this plan, but she would be wrong.

*Tim*, *Paul* and *Patrick* all show up later, each for their own reasons.

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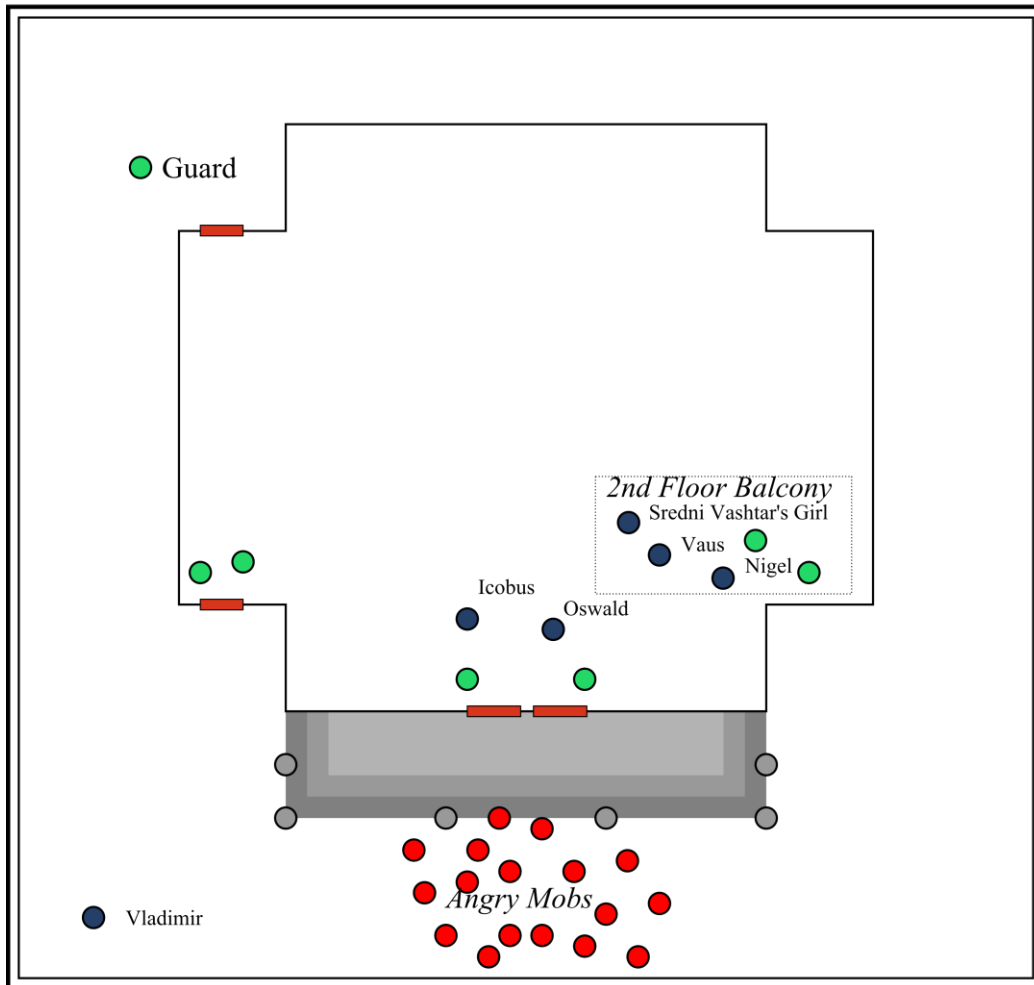
<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Level</i>
Oswald Bainbridge	Bruce	Grizzled Crossbowman	Fighter	4
Vladimir Vampijérovic	Matt	Pale-skinned Stranger	Hungry Ghost Monk	4
Nigel Snodgrass	Patrick	Emo-Gothic figure	Dirge Bard	4
Doctor Jegen Vaus	Tim	Elvish Eurotrash in leather pants	Alchemist	4
Sredni Vashtar's Girl	Ernest	Troubled Vudran Girl	Witch	4
Icobus Basilisk	Chris	Pale, poor nobleman	Oracle	4

### *The Natives Are Restless!*

The characters are at the courthouse in Lepidstadt in the night when the mobs start to gather. They pour out of the halls, out of the churches, and out of the taverns, drunk to

the gills and eager to seek bloody vengeance upon *The Beast*, plus anyone else who gets in their way.

### Lepidstadt Courthouse



The six courthouse guards, under the leadership of *Acting Sergeant Dunn* (his predecessor having drunk himself to death two weeks ago) barricade the doors and windows. *Icobus Basilisk* quickly determines that Dunn is unwilling to expend much effort preventing the mob from breaking in and slaughtering the Beast.

The characters prepare the scene, keenly aware that there are three ways into the courthouse and that the reliability of the guards might be highly questionable. They place alchemical grease along the entry stairs and seal the doors as best they can. *Oswald* and *Icobus* take stations in the windowless lobby while *Nigel*, *Sredni Vashtar's Girl*, and *Doctor Vaus* stand upon the second floor balcony. The guards are dispersed among the

characters, to ensure that no guard has an opportunity to just open a door and let the mob in. Nobody really knows where *Vladimir* is.

The mob brings up a makeshift battering ram to break open the door while some hotheads in the back take poorly-aimed crossbow shots at the characters on the balcony. The ram crew stumbles across the grease and slams into the door... weakly.

Icobus decides to *Enlarge* himself to ensure that the mob has something to see when they finally break the door down. Doctor Vaus notes that he's got some packets of flash powder. He uses one to blind a crossbowman. Sredni Vashtar's Girl turns to the others, putting one to *Sleep* and *Charming* another one.

Doctor Vaus creates a bit of additional excitement by dropping more flash powder at his feet. The others on the balcony are all blinded for a moment. Doctor Vaus, momentarily confused, leans too far over the balcony and falls to the ground (though the fall only barely hurts him).

Meanwhile in the lobby, Icobus has decided that he's tired of waiting. He wrenches the doors open, bellows, "Court is now in session!" and clubs the lead man on the battering ram to unconsciousness.

Oswald bellows, "Drop the ram! Drop it now!" To punctuate his message, he shoots it a couple of times. Two townsfolk let go and flee. Unfortunately, the rest of them drop the battering ram and rush forward with rocks and sticks. Icobus clobbers another one as he runs towards the door.

A mass of townsfolk delivers a vicious clubbing to Icobus and one of the guards. The guards do their best to fend the townsfolk off with halberds. Nigel uses his *Spider Climb* to move down the wall and club down another townsman. And thus, a screaming, greased up alchemist rushes into the fray.

The townsfolk decide that they've had enough. They run for their lives, even as Sredni Vashtar's Girl continues to *Charm* people in the crowd and inflict misfortune upon the ringleaders. Nigel clambers up to the balcony and starts yelling at the people to disperse and go back to their homes. To some surprise, one of the *Charmed* ringleaders speaks up, "He's right! We should all go home quietly!"

Thirty members of the militia show up. This is enough to persuade the rest of the mob to disperse quietly.

## And Vladimir Has Some News

Vladimir reappears to explain that he snuck away during the excitement to interrogate *Grind*, one of the two serial killers the characters captured last time around. He found Grind in his cell and tried threatening him, but Grind just stepped back into the shadows and suddenly was out of the cell and stabbing Vladimir! And then, Grind just slipped away, gone!

## *The Final Day of the Trial*

The mood of the courtroom is ugly as the characters assemble their evidence to present. Some particular items of importance:

- The characters recovered a charred head that is probably *Doctor Brada*, killed in the fire.
- There were alchemical items produced at Vorkstag & Grind's shop at the burned hospital
- The characters also found a suit stitched together from various skins, both human and animal; plainly a disguise intended to mimic the appearance of the Beast, at Vorkstag & Grind's shop.
- Evidence found at Vorkstag & Grind's beyond the Beast suit included mongrelmen workers and a variety of things suggesting that the two proprietors were serial killers responsible for a lot of crimes (including crimes committed disguised as the Beast).
- Vorkstag is skinless, and has a scar shaped like a caiman bite (from the second day of the trial).

The characters start by invoking the spirit of the deceased *Doctor Brada*, using a *Speak With Dead* spell cast by a cleric they hire in. Vladimir asks who killed him, which the shade answers as, "A flesh golem." (nuts).

Nigel does much better, laying out how Doctor Brada had business dealings with Vorkstag and Grind, and further that the two of them wished Doctor Brada dead. Sredni Vashtar's Girl follows that up by presenting the Beast skin-suit. And Oswald and Icobus finish it off with the information that Vorkstag was a skin-changer who had been killing many people, and that he had a caiman bite matching the testimony of the day before.

The prosecutors make their closing statements, asserting that the Beast is a menace to society and should be punished in the traditional manner using the Burning Man. The defense presents a closing argument that the evidence shows the Beast to be innocent, and in fact that Vorkstag and Grind should be put on trial in his place.

### **Testimony Is Done – Time for a Verdict**

With that, the judges retire to consider their verdict. For their part, the characters have lunch with *Ilsa Kindler* the author. She is impressed by the way they handled the mob the night before. She asks the characters “Are you familiar with the legends of the *dark folk*?” The characters indicate that they are not. She explains that they are malevolent creatures who live deep under the ground, but sometimes emerge to commit awful crimes. She thinks that Grind is a *dark creeper*, a creature blind but able to sense by hearing. They are fond of poison and sneaking about and when they are killed they explode in a blaze of light. She is not certain what Vorkstag might be. It is possible that he is a *dark stalker*, larger and more intelligent than the creepers. Both types are pale-skinned and typically wrapped in rags. They live in strange villages built of stone and fungus.

After an hour the justices come back. They look grim. The chief justice speaks, “We have listened to the evidence and are glad that we have done so, for otherwise we might have condemned an innocent creature...” When he is done, the people respond with cries of rage.

Minutes later, the courtyard is full of people howling, “Burn the Beast! Burn the Beast!”

The guards unlock the Beast’s manacles. Sredni Vashtar’s Girl tells him, “Come with us and we’ll get you out of here.”

The Beast announces, “I would not hurt you! You are my best friends!” He indicates that he wants to go be with his father, *Caromarc*. The characters accept that they will be visiting beautiful *Schloss Caromarc* soon enough, once the guards escort them to the edge of town. They release him in the swamps there. He vanishes quickly.

### *A Day of Ease*

The characters have some spare time, so they divide up some treasure. Particular items of note:

<i>Oil of Keen Edge</i>	Oswald
<i>Darkvision Goo</i>	Icobus
Potions of <i>Cure Light Wounds</i> (3)	Nigel, Icobus, Vaus
Vials of acid (2)	Vaus
Vials of antitoxin (4)	Vaus, Icobus, Girl, Nigel
<i>Potion of Invisibility</i>	Oswald
<i>Potion of Water Breathing</i>	Vaus
<i>Dust of Tracelessness</i> (2)	Vladimir
Silver crossbow bolts (12)	Oswald

The remaining items are sold, with a share of 496 gold for each character.

Afterwards, the characters talk to *Judge Derrimed*, who rewards each character with 100 platinum coins and congratulates them on ensuring that the Beast received a fair trial. She does note that there are still some townfolk intent upon tracking the Beast through the wilderness to inflict some rough justice, leaving the characters to think that they really should have given the *Dust of Tracelessness* to the Beast.

Oswald takes up his coins and runs to *Ye Olde Crossbowe Shoppe*, where he buys a shiny *Heavy Crossbow+1* for 2305 gold.

For proving the Beast innocent, the characters receive the *Hidden Truth* card. It may be used once to provide an automatic success on a Diplomacy or Knowledge check to gather information.

### *Picturesque Schloss Caromarc*

Schloss Caromarc is some 25 miles northwest of Lepidstadt, though marsh and swamp. Getting there will take at least two days of travel, with an evening spent camping in the swamps.

The characters follow Oswald's seasoned Survival advice and take the roads. They ignore Doctor Vaus when he speaks up, "I think we should head directly through the swamps!"

The characters are driving down the road when they see a woman in the swamps about 100 yards from the road. Her skin is the color of the swamp-plants, with hair as brown as tree bark. The characters conclude that she must be some kind of swamp-fey.

The characters stop. Doctor Vaus steps off the road and calls out, "Hello! I would like to pay my respects! What is your name?"

She gestures for him to come closer. He obliges. Nigel follows him, on the notion that if he's going to die he shouldn't die alone.

She asks them, "Would you help me? There are trappers who make their living in these woods, and they have trapped my pet. Would you help?"

Vaus answers, "Absolutely!"

"My pet is a wolf, I can hear his desperate cries, but he is too far away and I cannot go to him." She points to the northwest. The characters are disappointed that her pet isn't a Sharknado.

Oswald pulls on his swamp-tromping boots and heads out to help. The others follow suit. It doesn't take them long to find an emaciated wolf caught in a bear trap. Sredni Vashtar's Girl uses a slumber hex to put the wolf to sleep, and then Doctor Vaus uses his disable device skills to free it from the trap. The characters think that the creature is strong enough to make it back to its mistress without help. Icobus provides a *Lesser Restoration* and Sredni Vashtar's Girl casts *Cure Light Wounds* to ensure that it does.

### *The Fortress of the Caromarc*

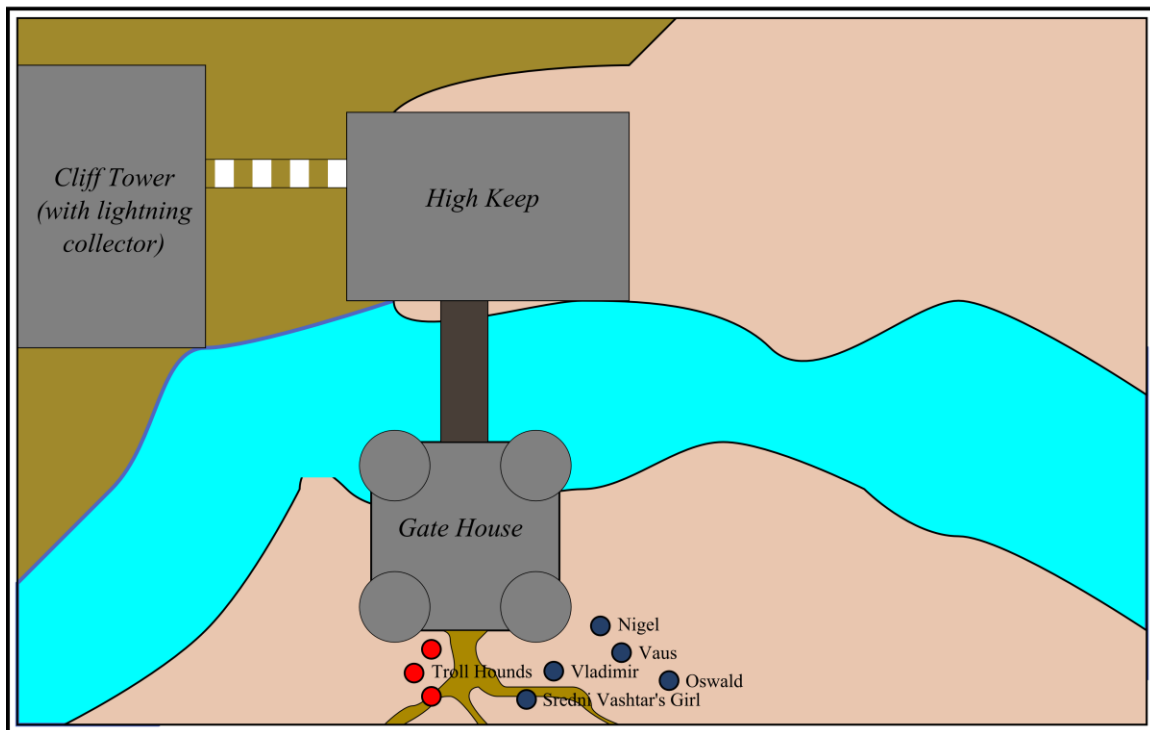
The next day the characters reach Schloss Caromarc, a massive complex built into the side of a mountain. It includes several buildings that are visibly in poor shape, and a huge tower rising above all, with a huge lightning conductor at the top.

The characters arrive at the gatehouse and immediately encounter a pack of *troll-hounds*, creatures that are often bred by alchemists and similar folks. It is rumored that their incredible healing powers require troll blood to create. They have horrible disposition and unending appetite.

Oswald responds to the slaving hounds by shooting one twice, almost killing it. A hound tears into Nigel, just as he starts pounding his spirit drum. Sredni Vashtar's Girl calls out, "Cover your soft parts!" Nigel neglects this advice and ends up diseased.

Doctor Vaus flings a bomb at a troll hound, demonstrating that he is fully capable of hitting his foes with explosives in a way that leaves his nearby allies unharmed. The troll hound fails to regenerate from the blast the way it is regenerating from Oswald's bolts.

### Schloss Caromarc



Sredni Vashtar's Girl stops the second hound by putting it to sleep. Vladimir uses alchemist's fire to burn it down to the bones.

And then two trolls show up on the ramparts of the Gate House. They waste no time but send a cascade of rocks down upon the characters' heads. The characters dodge out of the way.

Sredni Vashtar's Girl decides that she's had enough of thrown rocks. She pulls out her scrimshawed mammoth tusk and uses it to cast *Ice Storm* upon the trolls. They are battered by falling ice. The characters hear the pained grunts of the trolls, and also the awful screaming of their goblin servants, dying in droves from the spell.



Vladimir uses his esoteric ki powers to move to the base of the wall. Shortly thereafter a third troll comes to the battlements, a bigger and meaner troll carrying a crossbow. Vlad ignores the creature in favor of sending a rope up and starting to scale one of the towers. Oswald does not ignore him, shooting him once.

Icobus mourns that all of his friends appear to be directly assaulting a gate-house, the stupidest thing they could possibly be doing. But he figures, “When in Rome!” and runs slowly towards the gate house.

Vladimir finishes clambering up the walls, then kicks a troll back along the battlements, right into position for Oswald to shoot it twice. Doctor Vaus clammers up the rope after Vladimir. He watches as two more of Oswald’s crossbow bolts thud into the troll’s side, then steps forward with his heavy mace swinging. Unfortunately, his foot meets with a patch of slick ice and he finds himself back at the bottom of the wall. Fortunately, he is only slightly hurt.

The troll on the ground fixes upon Icobus and tears at him with teeth and claws. Icobus is slain! The massive troll on the wall growls at Vladimir, at which point Oswald’s crossbow takes him down, but only for a moment. It rises, just in time for Vlad to move up with his temple sword and slash at its teeth. The troll is only mildly wounded, but loses his balance and plunges a hundred feet into the river below.

Sredni Vashtar dashes forward to take Icobus’ soul while his Girl attempts to blind the troll down on the ground. The troll shakes off the spell. It advances upon Sredni Vashtar’s Girl, sending her spinning with a vicious backhand. Oswald shoots the creature twice, barely gaining its attention. Sredni Vashtar’s Girl rather desperately hurls a slumber hex at it, dropping it to the ground.

Up on the wall, the third troll attacks Nigel. The bard manages to evade his strikes. Vladimir moves in to assist, but is in bad shape so Nigel zaps him with an *Inflict Light Wounds* from the very strange-looking wand that Vladimir had given him. Vladimir strikes at the thing and downs it!

The focus moves to the sleeping troll on the ground. Doctor Vaus is called to the fore to destroy it with a bomb. His explosive works as promised, but the troll manages to survive! The others pile onto it before it is able to recover fully, but not before it nearly shreds Oswald.

### *Icobus Returns!*

The characters decide to head back to town to obtain a *Reincarnation* scroll to bring Icobus back, though maybe not in the same form. Sredni Vashtar's Girl leads the ceremony, bringing Icobus back as an orc. He gets +2 STR, low-light vision and ferocity out of the deal, plus proficiency with great axes and falchions. Unfortunately, he is also light sensitive and a member of a race that recently raided Ustalav. He also ends up with two permanent negative levels to work off. Fortunately, the characters probably have enough money to get a couple of *Restoration* spells for his benefit.

Nigel starts to feel the effects of the *bloodfire fever* he picked up from the trollhound on the way back to town. On the first day on the road he suffers 2 points of STR damage and 3 points of DEX damage. Sredni Vashtar's Girl treats him with some lovely tea. He manages to shake off the sickness after a bit of rest, but he is much the worse for the wear.

### *The End of the Session*

Everyone goes up to 5<sup>th</sup> level. Oswald's hit point roll is 8. Vladimir picks up the Blooddrinker feat, which is sure to make the others wonder about him even more than they already do.