

Carrion Crown Session Summary 02/16/2014

Attendance

Chris notes that even though it is noon, the only person who has shown up is *Bruce*, who doesn't need to leave his own office to attend. And this in spite of the fact that the table is supposed to be extra full today.

Matt shows up explaining first that he couldn't stay away from Maximize Spell as his new feat, and second that he and his boyfriend spent Valentine's Day doing their taxes. *Patrick* shows up next, heedless of the fiscally responsible tone of the day.

Paul proclaims, "We are displeased! Avail yourself of these chains and bind yourself in the corner!" Nobody is sure exactly what he's talking about, or how his statement might apply to Valentine's Day. Nobody really wants to know.

Tim shows up for the first time in a long time, freed of Sunday working hours for the time being. He is quite happy to proclaim that Doctor Vaus' alter ego Ironface is now Lawful Evil! Bruce admits that Oswald can at least see eye to eye with the "lawful" part of that.

Ernest and his old friend *Scott* who's visiting from Memphis for the week finally arrive, smelling oddly like strippers and somewhat the worse for wear.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Level</i>
Oswald Bainbridge	Bruce	Grizzled Crossbowman	Fighter	10
Xurak Darkfire	Matt	Mysterious cloaked traveler	Half-Orc Necromancer	10
Nigel Snodgrass	Patrick	Emo-Gothic figure	Dirge Bard	10
Doctor Jegen Vaus / Ironface	Tim	Elvish Eurotrash in leather pants	Alchemist	10
Sredni Vashtar's Girl	Ernest	Troubled Vudran Girl	Witch	10
Icobus Basilisk	Chris	Pale, poor nobleman, now become orcish!	Oracle	10

Our New Traveling Companions

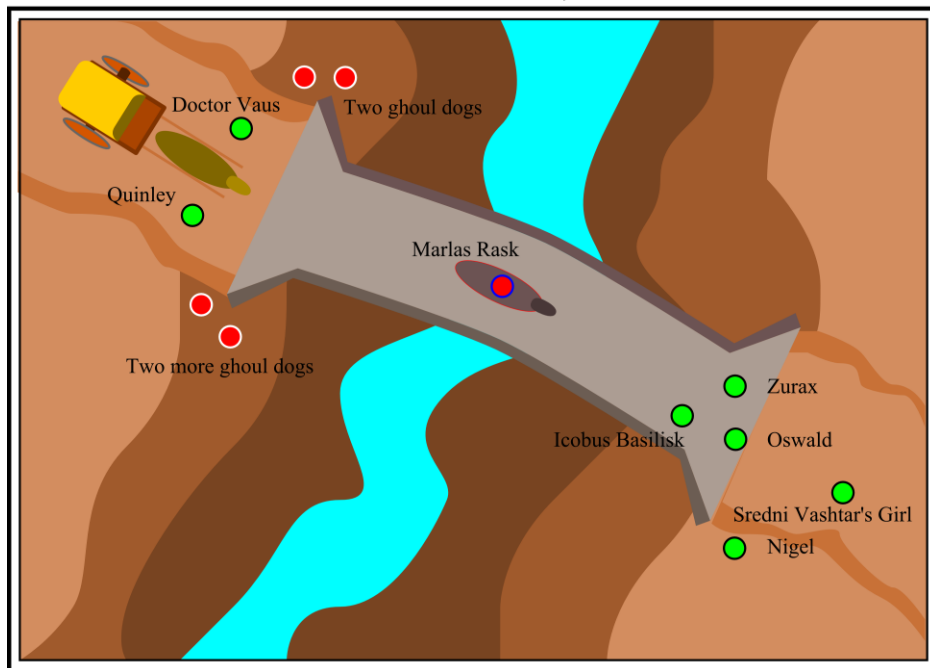
Quinley Basdell (guest soul: Scott) is a dhampir from Caliphas, raised among the vampires of the city. His mother (who was converted to vampirism when he was being born) was recently slain for good by the fearsome Vampire Slayer. He is now on a quest to track the slayer down.

Also, Laurel Sills, down-on-her-luck bar owner from Illmarsh, is traveling with Sredni Vashtar's Girl; the group hopes to set her up with a new bar in Caliphas.

The Adventures of the Good Doctor

Doctor Jegen Vaus has found himself in the city of Caliphas, plying his trade as an alchemist and looking for quality psychological assistance. He has recently become friends with Quinley Basdell. It is through Vaus that Basdell has learned that there is a group of traveling monster killers (mostly, Whispering Way killers) he once traveled with in the area. The two of them travel out of Caliphas to find these fellows.

Road Encounter with Marlas Rask, Headless Horseman



The two groups meet up at a narrowing in the road. Between them is a bridge, guarded by a headless horseman. There are skeletal trees on either side of the stream. The end-posts of the bridge are decorated with threatening statues of axe-wielding warriors.

A booming voice rolls across the two groups, “I am Marlas Rask. Please introduce yourselves!”

The characters proceed to blurt out their names.

“You have a mace that I must have! Throw it to the ground!”

Nigel Snodgrass brandishes his fancy Raven-headed mace and proclaims, “Never!” *Icobus Basilisk* sees where this is going and casts *Righteous Might*. The headless horseman wheels about and charges. *Oswald Bainbridge* shoots him square in the chest. This doesn’t seem to slow *Marlas Rask* down even a bit.

Xurak Darkfire happens to know quite a bit about headless horsemen. They are terrible reapers of souls created from evil generals and sent back to harvest the souls of the living. They can summon a mount, and have additional abilities if they know the target’s name: they can place *Death’s Calling* upon nearby targets, causing all critical hits against them to be automatically confirmed and causing them to become sickened. Even better, should a CON check to stabilize and prevent death, the subject automatically fails. If the horseman knows the target’s name the save DC is increased. He also knows (for the record) that the goddess Pharasma hates the undead and would be very unlikely to use one as an emissary.

Xurak decides that he would prefer to not see this encounter end with an utter massacre. He flings a *Heightened Command Undead* at the horseman, and it takes effect. The others note that the spell will only make the horseman into Xurak’s friend, and won’t prevent the creature from massacring everyone else. Xurak shrugs and explains that he has to have his priorities.

Xurak asks the horseman to get off the bridge and give way to the characters. The horseman slowly canters off the bridge.

It is at this point that four slaving ghoulish wolves come out from under the bridge and thunder towards Quinley Basdell and Doctor Vaus. Quinley slashes at one of them. Two ghoulish wolves bite into Doctor Vaus, tearing at his succulent mortal flesh. Quinley strikes out again, piercing two wolves with a single strike from his rapier! He moves to place a wolf between him and Doctor Vaus.

Icobus Basilisk moves past the horseman, intent upon dealing with the ghoulish wolves. The horseman’s horse isn’t charmed, is plenty malicious, and takes a bite at him!

Icobus dodges aside, noting in the process that there are flames licking around the horse's hooves. Icobus thinks, "If we kill the horseman, I so totally want his horse! Sure, it'd probably take me to some horrible underworld, but for fifteen seconds I'd have the coolest ride ever!"

Nigel Snodgrass starts playing his drums. His dirgeful, dirgeful drums. Then he flings a *Hold Monster* at the horse, which promptly fails. It freezes up, its mouth still reaching towards Icobus' meaty thigh.

Doctor Vaus is up on his wagon, menaced by two ghoul dogs. He urges his coachman, "Drive! Drive for the wolves!" One unfortunate wolf is overrun! Doctor Vaus flinches from another as it slavers in his face... and then suddenly sprouts five crossbow bolts and falls.

Xurak has a brief conversation with Marlas Rask. It turns out that Marlas Rask works for the Whispering Way and would like to accompany his new friend (and his all-important mace) back to Caliphas to deliver it to the big boss.

Quinley starts to realize that the two ghoul dogs snapping at him are both blinded, courtesy of *Sredni Vashtar's Girl's* magic. He stabs one through!

Sredni Vashtar's Girl hovers over the bridge in lotus position, cackling madly and casting misfortune hexes upon ghoul dogs. Oswald perforates another one of the dogs, which dies without even uttering a whimper.

Icobus Basilisk charges one of the dogs pestering Quinley and cracks it on its misshapen head with his magical Warhammer. Wham! The dog seems somewhat dazed. Nigel Snodgrass rushes up and slams the creature with the *Raven's Head*. All of the raven beaks clack simultaneously as the ghoul dog crumbles to dust!

One ghoul dog remains. Oswald perforates it, shooting it three times in spite of intervening carriages, horses, characters and whatnot.

Marlas Rask draws out his flail. It bursts into infernal flame! He tells his "friend" Xurak, "Now is the time to ride them down and slay them all!" Xurak does his level best to talk Rask out of this plan, but his eloquence is ruined by Rask's nightmare horse, which tries to bite his face off. Rask calls out, "Whoa, Apple Blossom! Whoa!"

Xurak asks Rask, "Hey! Could you rein in your mount a bit?"

The nightmare glowers at Xurak. It *Plane Shifts*, carrying the confused Rask away in a cloud of foul-smelling smoke.

Revenge? Why Yes, That Is Our Business!

The characters introduce themselves to Quinley Basdell, who reciprocates. Once the characters establish that Quinley is on a quest for revenge (and is the dhampir they are looking for) they are quick to welcome him into their group.

Quinley Basdell tells the characters that the Caliphas Vampire Killer has been too selective and too successful to not have insider knowledge. He isn't that close to the vampiric inner circle of the city but he does know the ancient vampire *Luvick Siervage*.

Many years ago the streets of Caliphas were raised up to install a sewer. This meant that the ground floors of many buildings existing at the time suddenly became the basements, and their basements became sub-basements. This created a lot of underground spaces in the city, making the place uniquely friendly to vampires.

The characters also bring Doctor Vaus back up to speed on what they've been doing while he has been off developing new personalities and practicing questionable alchemy.

Consulting the Spirits

Sredni Vashtar's Girl pulls out the *Spirit Planchette* and asks after the location of *Vivian*, the Whispering Way contact in Caliphas. As per usual, the rest of the group stands ready to restrain her in case the spirits take over her body. Again.

The planchette spells out R-E-N-C-H-U-R-C-H. This doesn't mean anything to the characters. It also doesn't mean anything to Quinley Basdell, suggesting (given that he lives in the city) it isn't a well-known location.

Icobus Basilisk offers, "Perhaps it's the Church of Renfields. That would seem pretty popular in a town like Caliphas." The others don't think so.

Welcome to Caliphas

Caliphas is a large and cosmopolitan city, and the capital of Ustalav. It is surrounded by five castles, some built to protect the city from threats from Lake Encarthan and others serving local administrative purposes (prisons, customs for the port,

local government). Sredni Vashtar's Girl demonstrates her knowledge of local geography by describing all five castles, their purposes, history and construction. The others ignore her completely.



Caliphas

LN large city Corruption +4; Crime -3; Economy +4; Law +6; Lore +4; Society +1

Qualities notorious, prosperous, rumormongering citizens, strategic location, superstitious

Danger 20

Demographics

Government overlord

Population 15,640 (14,950 humans, 350 dwarves, 220 elves, 120 other)

Notable NPCs

Prince Aduard Ordranti III (LN male human aristocrat 3/fighter 8)

Countess Carmilla Caliphvaso (LE female human aristocrat 4/rogue 11)

Diaudin (LN male human rogue 10)

Luvick Siervage (LE male vampire aristocrat 2/fighter 15)

Marketplace

Base Value	13,600 gp	Purchase Limit	100,000	Spellcasting	5th
Minor Items	4d4	Medium Items	3d4	Major Items	2d4

A Short Tour of the Capital

Quinley Basdell recommends that the characters take their horses to the Royal Livery, the best livery stable in the city. Oswald worries about the cost a moment after everyone else worries about it.

The orcish members of the group (Xurak and Icobus) take standard precautions to hide their identities, *Alter Self* and the like. The road to the Old City market takes the characters past several local sights, including *Restoration Park* in the shadow of *Castle Stryfe*. Oswald appreciates the reflecting pools and the greenhouse, then unwisely asks Sredni Vashtar's Girl what it celebrates. To everyone's dismay, she tells him: it celebrated the restoration of the city after the creation of the sewer system. She also knows that it is one of the key access points to the vampire underground in the city.

The characters are amazed by the scale and variety of the Old City market. Tiny shops selling all manner of goods are crammed into the cramped streets and alleys. Street merchants sell flowers, curios and the directions to places to buy diamond dust (handy for *Restoration* spells). Varisian dancers and acrobats entertain the masses and provide cover for Sczarni thieves.

The city is also the site of a massive Temple to Pharasma, a miraculous building of black stone and tall towers. Oswald makes a point of visiting to give his thanks to Pharasma for keeping most of the awful nightmares away.

The Sweet Proceeds of Adventuring

Sredni Vashtar's Girl finds several merchants willing to purchase the group's extra magical objects and assorted loot. Each character gains 5546.7 gold pieces, after leaving 5000 gold in the group treasury to cover *Resurrection* (if needed). Oswald pays out 2 gold for random items bought at the fair, and 10 gold for his prostitute.

Quinley Basdell examines one of the puzzle eggs the characters have been carrying around (unable to open). He determines that opening it up is no magical feat – it's just a simple trick. Inside, there is a little skull replica! The eggs are like Whispering Way kinder eggs! He opens up the other one as well. Vaus and Nigel each take one of them, learning how to open them from Quinley. The others share out some of the other Whispering Way identifying items to ensure that everyone has something.

Where Is the Palatine Order?

Rooms in Caliphas are quite expensive: 10 gold per night, with meals in the common room included. The characters arrange for lodgings then head out to look for the Palatine Order.

The Palatine Order turns out to be a very secretive group. The characters manage to learn that they sometimes meet at the Harriday Theater on Constance Street. A man named *Edjurias Modd* runs the place, and is probably involved in the Order. Nigel Snodgrass drops *Judge Garrigan's* name in a few appropriate shadows around the theater. He learns that the next Order social function will be upon the next Oath Day, tomorrow. He gets the characters invited to the event.

There Has Been a Murder! A Flammable Murder!

The common room of the inn is awash in rumor the next morning – there has been a murder! The characters ask around, but it is swiftly clear that nobody knows who was actually murdered. There are a lot of lurid details that they are able to uncover: there were multiple bodies, all of them completely drained of fluids! In many cases before, the bodies turn to ash when the morning comes.

The characters find the murder scene easily – there is a headless body surrounded by constables, watchmen and bystanders. It lies upon its front, perhaps as if it fell from a height.

Nigel learns that inquiries should be directed to *Captain Hoppler*. The Captain has a pinched, dour expression and doesn't want to answer questions, especially questions from some kind of bard. Eventually, he admits that the constables think the body fell from the roof of the inn. There are two large piles of ash up on the roof, ash in human outline. They appear to have been staked in the sun.

As the Captain talks, the constables drag the headless body out into the sunlight. Xurak yells, “NO!” just as it bursts into flame.

The constables drag the remains of it back into shadow just in time. A constable lamely points out, “Hey, I just found another stake!” Xurak ignores him and examines the body. It seems to be almost completely drained of blood.

Sredni Vashtar’s Girl floats up to look at the roof. The ash piles are there, plus a small amount of blood. She can see two stakes, placed in a way indicating that they were originally piercing the victims’ hearts. She searches through the ash for anything of use, but comes up with nothing.

Meanwhile on the street, Captain Hoppler is discussing theories of the crime with Nigel Snodgrass. The Captain does not think much of Nigel’s ideas. He scoffs, “Vampires? That’s ridiculous! There haven’t been vampires in Caliphas for hundreds of years! And vampires hunting vampires? That’s even more strained! Your explanations are becoming increasingly intricate! They fall apart at the slightest touch!” Nigel rolls his eyes and enters another name upon his “City Officials in Thrall to the Vampires” list.

Xurak casts *Blood Biography* and learns that the decapitated vampire in the alleyway is *Kazo Romulus*. He was attacked by two witches and a vampire last night.

Captain Hoppler thanks the characters for their assistance, then indicates that he’s going to take his men out to a nearby pub for a celebratory drink. The others suspect that Captain Hoppler may be the sort of officer who takes his men celebratory drinking all the time.

The characters decide to let the city watch do what it does best (clean up corpses) as they turn to other activities for the day.

Some Light Shopping

Oswald Bainbridge discovers that there is a *Heavy Crossbow +2* for sale in the city. He buys it, and sells his *Heavy Crossbow +1*.

The Harriday Theater

The old Harriday Theater is an impressive wooden building with quite a bit of heritage. It has two entrances, west and south. The characters see well-dressed servants outside each of the doors, welcoming carriages and turning away the riff-raff. The

characters invitations are at least good enough to get them into the lounge, where they must wait until the initiation ceremony is completed. From what the characters can overhear, the ceremony is disappointingly normal – all chanting and ponderous singing, very little spanking.

Once the ceremony ends the characters are allowed to mingle with the Order members. *Abraun Chalest* is a corpulent order member who looks like a child molester. He examines Icobus Basilisk's family crest and seems to recognize it as one of the older families. He expresses surprise that they are still alive. He is the curator of the Quarterfaux Archives and is quite interested in history. The Archives are a combination of academy and museum. The curators' goal is to bring the wonders of the world home to Ustalav. He is very excited because the Archives just got a shipment of Elven longboats – dragged overland at great expense.

A Midnight Rendezvous in the Archives

Abraun's specialty is Osiriontology, the study of the ancient Osirians. This is very interesting to Sredni Vashtar's Girl, who actually speaks ancient Osirian. Soon enough, she finds that Abraun is starting to fall for her – apparently he doesn't encounter many exotic witches who know Osirian. He starts to ask many questions and very much wants to know her views on various obscure aspects of Osiriontology. She chats with him cheerfully, making the occasional joke in Old Osirian. When she brings up Renchurch, he suggests that there must be some mention in the archives. She shyly asks, "Would you be willing to let me do some research... in the archives?"

Icobus can barely believe the things he's hearing Abraun Chalest say, or the things that Sredni Vashtar's Girl is saying to him. He watches as archivist and witch head down to the basement arm in arm (as that is where the Annex archives are located). There is a vault down there, piled with statuary and art. Piles of books and scrolls are stuffed into the corners. The center of the chamber is dominated by an untidy worktable is covered in books, scrolls and tablets. The archive is worth a +6 bonus to Knowledge checks, but each check takes 6 hours to make.

Sredni Vashtar's Girl finds that Renchurch is a haunted monastery only miles from Gallowspire, the Whispering Tyrant's prison. It is in many ways the headquarters of

the Whispering Way. When the Whispering Tyrant was cast down huge numbers of his mortal followers were executed and interred around Renchurch, a place where undead monks had meditated for centuries. Since then, a number of them have risen to take up offices in the monastery. The master of Renchurch is the *Grey Friar*, an ancient undead cleric of Urgathoa. Eventually Chalest gets a little handsy; Girl hits him with a slumber hex and takes a soap impression of his key to the Archives before heading out.

The Idle Nobility

Nigel Snodgrass, Doctor Vaus and Quinley Basdell strike up a conversation with the *Count Lucinian Aldana*. He is ruler of a somewhat distant Ustalavian province who just happens to be in town visiting the court. He speaks with the weary tones of the truly dedicated aristocratic dilettante, “These social occasions are expected of me, but I find them rather boring. You look like you have had some adventures. Did you know there is a trophy room here – perhaps you would like to tour it with me?”

The three characters accompany him to see the trophies. As they peer at the taxidermied remains of various unnatural entities, Doctor Vaus tries to find out if he knows anything about headless horsemen plaguing the countryside. Count Aldana proves unwilling to tell the characters anything of real substance.

The Old Theater Master

Xurak, Oswald and Nigel see the master of the theater, Edjurias Modd, talking to a gaggle of admiring sycophants. Modd is a pretentious aristocrat with an oversupply of attitude. He is holding forth on the effects of the latest palace rulings upon the fortunes of the rich, a subject the characters know nothing about. In contrast to the other members of the Order in the establishment who are true scholars, he appears to be interested mostly in money. The characters approach. Xurak (dressed like a fine nobleman) hopes to ask him about the horrible murders. Nigel is dressed as if he’s Xurak’s consort, with lots of lace and ruffles, and Modd explicitly takes him for such. Oswald is dressed like a campaigner out on holiday and Modd barely acknowledges him as an obvious dogsbody bodyguard.

Modd exclaims, “Oh, the rabble are always rising up. That’s what whips are for.”

One of his faceless sycophants trills out, “Absolutely, yes!”

He continues on, “Those cities run by associations of commoners will never last – they just haven’t been bred to lead!”

Nigel breaks in to the conversation, “We saw some constables attempting an investigation earlier today. They just had no idea what was going on.”

Modd is quite cheered to hear someone agreeing with him so enthusiastically, “It is unbecoming of a nobleman to become directly involved in such things. You believe in vampires? How charming!”

Nigel allows as to how there are all manner of awful things in the world, and that vampires are but one of them.

Modd remains unconvinced, but he does acknowledge the existence of necromancy. He very seriously tells Xurak, “It is never possible to rescue someone after they have sold their soul to necromancy – they may as well be dead!” Xurak does his best not to laugh out loud.

Fortunately, Modd does know of a Renchurch monastery, though it has been long abandoned. He urges against visiting it. Xurak and Nigel (in his role as consort) charm the socks off old Modd. Modd also tells the characters that *Adivian Adrissant* is the local boss of the Whispering Way. He is a member of the local Caliphas nobility.

Xurak scans the room for potential Whispering Way types, while Nigel looks around for vampires. Neither spot much of anything.

Late in the night the party comes to an end and the characters head off to their rooms at the inn. Sredni Vashtar’s Girl remains behind to do research in the archives.

More Questions for the Archives

The poem the characters took from the necromancer *Orrin Vrude* is a formula for an elixir to create a lich, specifically the Carrion Crown elixir. It was created for someone specific, but exactly who is not clear. Normally anyone likely to become a lich needs to be a fairly remarkable individual, so the list of suspects will be relatively small. Each stanza of the poem refers to another artifact drawn from the characters’ recent adventures – the *Raven’s Head* mace is necessary for the ritual, and is the one piece that the Whispering Way does not yet have. The recipe was written by a now-dead nobleman

from Caliphas who fell in with necromantic study and alchemy at some point. Unfortunately, Sredni Vashtar's Girl is unable to figure out who.

Later in the evening, she shows the poem to Doctor Vaus. He generally agrees with her assessment, and is also unable to identify either the intended beneficiary or the author.

The Raven's Head

The *Raven's Head* is holy to Pharasma and is the symbol of office to the Bishops of Caliphas. It is an artifact, with a huge variety of powers accessible to clerics of Pharasma. If it is used as part of the creation process for a lich it will be destroyed – this is the only way to destroy it. This also explains why it is an ingredient in the ritual to create the elixir of the Carrion Crown.

The Bishops of Caliphas lost the *Raven's Head* about 150 years ago. They had believed it to be permanently lost.

Recuperating at the Inn

Sredni Vashtar's Girl returns to the inn at dawn with her notes. She hands them to the characters as they come down to the common room for breakfast, then staggers off to sleep.

Xurak manages to find a scroll of *Permanent Image* for a very competitive price. The characters take up a collection to get the money for it, with the idea that it will be useful to conceal the *Raven's Head* from detection by the Whispering Way.

Entry into the Vampiric Underworld

There is a vampire druid who rules Restoration Park. If the characters wish to speak to the vampiric elders of Caliphas they will need to get past her.

Oswald suggests, absolutely deadpan, "We could kill her, grind the body up in a meat grinder, pack the remains into an amphora, and seal it with lead."

The others stare at the crossbowman with expressions of horror. Icobus whispers to Nigel, "You know, he's still carrying the Lopper's Hand Axe. I bet he whispers sweet nothings to that thing every night before bed."

Nigel whispers back, “Yes, and now it’s started to whisper sweet nothings back to him.”

Sredni Vashtar’s Girl is much more practical. She points out that if Oswald kills the elders’ designated guardian, then the elders will rip out his intestines through his dick and beat him to death with them.

Icobus asks, “Why would they choose to beat him with his intestines rather than with his dick?”

Oswald answers, “That’s clearly because she hasn’t seen my dick yet.”

Nobody chooses to dignify his comment with a response.

The characters walk carefully through Restoration Park. They find it a very pleasant park with some nice statues (that don’t appear to animate quite yet) and a circle of standing stones. Nigel and Icobus both spot blood on the standing stones.

The characters make their way to the Greenhouse. It is daytime, so the doors of the place are open. The Greenhouse showcases plants imported from warmer climates – it is hot and humid inside. Sredni Vashtar’s Girl recognizes several of the plants from her homeland. The ceiling is vaulted, forty feet high, with four stone columns supporting the glass.

The characters carefully move inside, looking for the mind slaves and their vampiric mistress. Quinley Basdell leads the characters to a great white-petaled flytrap and assures them, “The entrance is somewhere around here!”

Sredni Vashtar’s Girl recognizes the plant as a giant flytrap (surprise!) and quite dangerous. It seems to be dormant – perhaps the vampire druid uses magic to keep it quiescent during the day. It certainly isn’t eating the tourists that are walking up and petting it. Nigel is able to see that there is a spell upon it. He tries to identify the spell, but finds the idea of Druidic magic so hilarious that he’s unable to learn more. There is sort of a pit underneath the thing.

Icobus walks up and touches it. It does not react.

Sredni Vashtar’s Girl knows that the flytrap is a mobile plant. If the path to the vampiric underworld is beneath it, getting in may require persuading the plant to move out of the way.

Xurak suggests using *Dimension Door* to get underneath the plant. He has the ability to bring three others with him. After some discussion, those characters that are able to speak well go with him: Nigel, Sredni Vashtar's Girl and Icobus Basilisk.

They teleport and find themselves in a large circular chamber. Large roots have worked their way in between the ancient stones. They see some doors, and a crooked tunnel from which they can hear running water. The doors prove to lead to a storeroom containing gardening supplies. The characters conclude that the vampires must be in the other direction.

The characters come to a sewer section, a narrow five foot walkway on one side of a flowing torrent. They see a bridge across the sewer ahead, and an odd, sickly tree apparently growing in the sewer. It is pale, as if it has no blood (sap?). The characters successfully guess that the tree must be the vampiric druid, and address her as same.

Merik dismisses her tree shape and growls at the characters, "If you are trying to trick me, you will regret it!"

Xurak explains the characters' business – to investigate the Whispering Way and prevent them from creating a lich and restoring the Whispering Tyrant. The characters manage to convince her of their bona fides, though she points out that they must come back tonight because the vampire elders they wish to speak with are all asleep in the day.

Return to the Vampiric Underworld

The next evening most of the characters descend into the vampire underworld, except for Sredni Vashtar's Girl, who decides that she would prefer to hang out with Quinley Basdell and Laurel Sills topside.

The characters find themselves in a vampire commons. Vampire spawn sit languidly around, smoking clove cigarettes and feeding from *charmed* prey. Oswald's Lawful Good trigger finger starts to get very edgy – he sees a lot of things that he would like to simply shoot.

Xurak whispers to him, "They'll meet their end soon enough..."

The characters travel through the sewers for an hour. They encounter a patrol of eight young vampires. The leader of the pack sneers, "You are intruders here!"

The characters use Quinley as their bona fide, but Icobus thinks the vampires are acting as if they were drunk, or high (even if he doesn't know what kind of liquor would affect a vampire).

The characters manage to talk their way past the vampire gang, courtesy of Nigel's incredible persuasiveness. He is truly silver-tongued, so much so that the vampires offer him the chance to go off and do some drugs with them. They also offer to escort the characters to their audience.

The vampires alternately laugh like hyenas at nothing visible and engage in senseless violence. One of the shows Nigel a little vial, confiding that it probably wouldn't work on him. "Don't tell Merik about it, or any of the master vampires. It frees us from their control." The vial is half-full of a thick red liquid. Even Doctor Vaus the alchemist doesn't recognize what it is. He convinces one of them to give up a sample of the stuff, explaining, "I have a friend who is a brilliant alchemist. He could totally make up some of this stuff."

After the Scribe's Departure

The characters continue to investigate. They determine (they think) who the killer is by tracing the stakes used to a furniture store. Across the street they found a tailor's shop that serves both the human and vampiric trade. The characters explored the tailor's shop and found three ghouls in the stockroom, four vampires in the basement, and lots of shoppers drawn by the excellent selection and competitive pricing.

During this adventure one of the vampires spots Doctor Vaus, prompting the vampire tailor to tell his minions something like, "Wake up the guards upstairs, pull the shutters, and murder everyone in the store."

The End of the Session

The characters end the session expecting everyone in the Vampire Tailor Shoppe to be murdered.