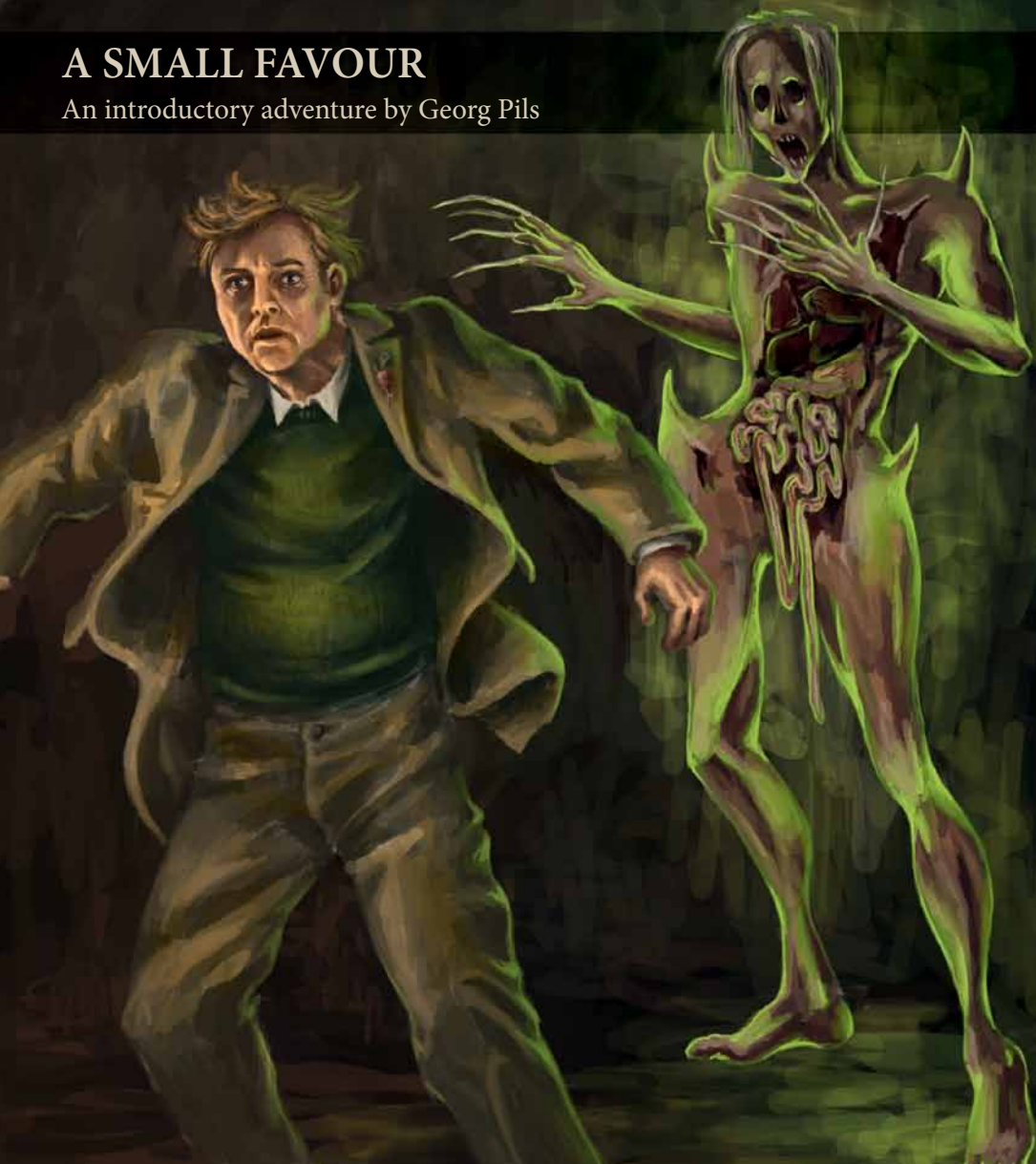


Finsterland

A SMALL FAVOUR

An introductory adventure by Georg Pils



A SMALL FAVOUR

Sample adventure for the Finsterland role-playing game.
For 3-5 persons aged 16 and over. **Duration:** 1-4 hours

Welcome to Finsterland, a role-playing game set in a world of magic and progress.
Use this pamphlet to get a feel of the game and to try out some of the concepts featured therein.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Every player comes up with a role that he or she wants to play – the character. This, of course, has to be a lead role, because a story where you are not the hero is rather dull.

One of the participants – the Game Master (GM) – tells the story and plays the extras (also called non-player characters or NPCs). This is a cumbersome task, but also a crucial and joyous one!

The story told does not only unfurl in the direction the Game Master wants it to go. It can also be influenced by the players describing the actions of their characters. This is something the GM should remember at all times.

If a situation arises whose outcome is unclear, the conclusion is decided by chance – the roll of the dice. This introduces an element of surprise and suspense.

Whether the heroes can complete their task and live happily ever after depends on the creativity, intelligence and luck of the players.

Please note: Role-playing is a shared activity. The Game Master is expected to entertain the players, not to antagonize them. The game should be gripping, funny, scary, or epic – it's best if it's all these things combined!

WHAT IS FINSTERLAND?

Finsterland – The Dusk Land – is a continent in a world not unlike our own, one or two centuries back.

It is a world in upheaval, with ancient traditions and medieval conditions on one hand, and rapidly advancing technology on the other. There are steam engines, railroads, telegraphs and skyscrapers, just like in our world.

But there is also magic; and clockwork-powered, almost sentient machines; robotic limbs for invalids or lovers of the curious (extra arms, anyone?).

An empire extends across the whole of Finsterland, divided up into many principalities. The biggest of these, the electorates, were caught up in a bloody civil war only a short time ago.

Now Finsterland has reached a critical point: Will it finally enter into an era of peace and prosperity?
Or will the realm crumble into blood and fire?
Only the heroes created by the players can decide the fate of this world.

PREPARATION

One of the participants takes on the role of Game Master, or GM. The others choose their characters from those enclosed in the back of this book. If you are not satisfied with the name, gender or description of a character, feel free to change them according to your wishes. You might not get to use every ability your character comes equipped with, but the GM is encouraged to add extra scenes to allow that to happen.

If you have chosen to GM, you should read this folder carefully before the game and familiarise yourself with all the key points. The players, however, should not read the folder, to avoid spoiling the surprise.

MATERIALS

- This folder.
- Seats for all players.
- A table within reach of everyone.
- Pencils, erasers and sharpeners.
- A minimum of 10 ten-sided dice (d10) and 2 six-sided dice (d6)
- Paper for drawing and notes.

SYNOPSIS

An acquaintance asks the heroes for help. He owns an ancient house down in the old town, and rumours are that it is haunted. He has never noticed anything up until three days ago – but now he is too frightened to even go down into the basement. He asks the group to solve his terrifying problem.

In fact, shady fortune hunters are trying to keep the landlord out of his own basement so they can dig a tunnel underneath the house.

They plan to steal valuables from the lady magician living next door. Since the landlord did not want to sell his house, they opted to dig.

Unfortunately, there really is an evil demon dormant below the basement which, if woken, would obliterate the entire city.

Therefore: if our heroes do not act, the evil spirit will be freed and the city destroyed. But if they catch the thieves, the group will be rewarded by both the landlord and the magician.

THE GAME

It is the GM's task to describe the scenery, voice the NPCs, and react to and work with the decisions of the players.

The persons and locations you will need for the story are laid out in this folder. Should the players want to visit additional places and NPCs, the GM is encouraged to make them up as they go along (provided they fit the general feel of the story).

It is easiest to base them on known (historic) persons and locations.

When the players interact with a person within the story, there are two ways of acting this out:

- Third person narration: The players describe their character's actions and dialogue. For example, "The merchant says he's seen suspicious fellows last night".
- First person narration: This means pretending to be the character. This is mostly limited to dialogue – you do not actually want to leap across the table to strangle the GM (well, maybe occasionally). **Example:** "I seen odd folks creep about yesternight. Sent chills right down me spine, it did." Feel free to give each character a unique voice; part of the fun of being a GM is taking on different characters and acting them out.

From time to time, you might have to roll checks or saves. Victory or defeat, success or failure are all determined by chance.

COMBAT RULES

A check works like this: Each challenge requires a certain combination of abilities and skills from your character sheet. You roll d10s, the number of which is determined as follows:

The abilities are:

CHA: Charisma

DEX: Dexterity

INT: Intelligence

PER: Perception

STR: Strength

WP: Willpower

The second number of the ability and of the skill each tell you how many dice to roll. Every die showing 7 or more counts as a success. Usually, you only need one success to win the check. Every additional success tells you how well your character did. Rolling more than one 10 (0 on some dice) counts as a critical success. Some characters have special skills that allow a single 10 to be counted as a critical success. A critical success counts as three regular ones. If you have no dice for a check at all, you are allowed to roll one d10 – if it comes up as 10, you get one (regular) success. Unless specified otherwise, every challenge can only be done once per player, per round.

Examples of checks:

The narrative asks for a Dexterity + Stealth check. The player's character sheet says their Dexterity ranks is 6|2, their Stealth ranks is 2. So the player gets four dice. They roll 3/6/5/8. That means one success. Had the results been 4/5/10/10, it would have featured a critical success – which counts as three regular ones – resulting in four total successes.

If you fail an important check or need a better result, you can strike off up to 3 Willpower Points after your roll. Each point gives you one more die to roll. You can do this once per challenge. Willpower Points are restored at the end of the story.

Your characters might get into fights. These work as follows:

First, everyone rolls Initiative for their characters. The more successes you roll, the earlier your character gets to make their turn. The GM rolls for the adversaries. He/she then makes a list with all the results to determine the running order. Every character involved in the fight, be it PC or NPC, gets one turn. Once it is your turn, you have four options:

- You can attack. Thus, you roll as many dice as the attack requires and count your successes. The higher you rolled, the harder it is for the opponent to evade your attack, and the more devastating it will be.
- Take care of a wounded character. For that, check (Intelligence + Medicine). The treated character regains one Health Point for each success. This can be done once per fight, and once between two fights.
- Flee. This gets you to safety, but removes you from the fight. If all characters of one party flee the scene, the other side has won. The story ends for them.
- Use magic. This can only be done by magicians. Choose a spell from your spell list and roll (Intelligence + Spellcasting). Strike off the number of Mana points required by the spell. If you do not have enough Mana points, the spell fails and nothing happens. The spell works with a minimum of one success, and shows the effects described in this manual.

If an attack roll has at least one success, the attacked may try to parry. To do that, the player rolls either Parry or Dodge. Ranged or magic attacks can only be dodged. If you manage to roll as many successes as the attacker or more, you have successfully blocked the attack.

If the attack is not blocked, the attacker may roll as many dice as specified on their character sheet to determine damage.

If any of the damage dice comes up lower than the number of successes on your attack check, the result is raised to match this number. The result of all dice combined makes up the damage count.

The defender may subtract their armour rank from this number. The rest is struck off from their Health Points. If you have run out of Health Points, you are considered unconscious. When every player has made their move, the turn ends and a new one starts.

Example: Combat

Marianne and Wadim have an altercation with two goons. The first thing everyone does is roll Initiative. Marianne's player rolls 3 dice +1, Wadim's player rolls 6 dice. The GM rolls 4 dice for each thug.

The results are:

Marianne:	3
Wadim:	4
Thug A:	1
Thug B:	2

This makes the movement order Wadim – Marianne – Thug B – Thug A.

Because Marianne has the special trait Swordplay: Lunge, she gets +3 when she uses her sabre to attack. That would allow her to move first. Marianne's player decides to attack Thug A and rolls 7 ten-sided dice. The results are 8/5/10/3/2/6/8. Normally, this sequence contains 3 successes – but Marianne also has the special trait Swordplay: Piercing blow, turning the 10 into a critical hit (which counts triple), making the end result of the roll 5 successes.

The thug may parry. For this, the GM rolls 3 dice: 7/4/4. One success. The attack cannot be evaded, so Marianne's player rolls 2 d6 for damage: 4/1. But since the attack roll yielded 5 successes, the minimum result of each damage roll is 5.

The thug loses 10 Health Points and is almost defeated.

Without the special trait Piercing blow, Marianne would only have had 3 successes and therefore caused 7 points of damage.

After Wadim's and Thug B's attacks (which we will leave out to keep things simple), Thug A attacks Marianne.

The GM rolls 4 dice: 7/5/3/9.

2 against Marianne.

Marianne's player rolls to parry with 6 dice: 9/1/10/6/7/1.

That's one more than the thug, successfully blocking the attack.

STORY COMPONENTS

The story is made up of the following parts:

- **Intro:** The players learn about their goal.
- **Investigation:** The characters investigate the scene and gather intelligence.
- **Confrontation:** They confront the villains and hopefully manage to avert the looming catastrophe.
- **Conclusion:** The characters gain a reward and fame. Or they have failed and are most likely dead.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

After the GM has explained about Finsterland and every player has chosen their respective character, the players should think about how their characters know each other. They should be friends and trust one another.

A few ideas to jog your mind:

- Two of the characters are related.
- Two of the characters know each other via mutual friends.
- They have bested dangers together.
- They have been to school together.



Then, the GM may read the following paragraph, or retell it in their own words:

A train is labouring up the mountainside. Black smoke billows past your window. The steam engine is struggling with the steep slope of the North Bank. Outside, you can see ragged peaks and jagged mountain faces. Then, Merting creeps into view.

It is not a particularly big city – small houses huddled together, separated by narrow streets. The city wall has huge gaps where it is being knocked down to make room for new districts. Further away, the first tall belching smokestacks are blackening the sky; progress has reached the city.

You get off at the stop and walk past the tiny station building while workers are struggling to unload goods from the train. There is a horse-drawn coach waiting for you at the station entrance.

Bernard Chardon, the man who called you here, is a gentleman of a certain age. He waves his hat to get your attention, then greets you enthusiastically. He has gained in circumference and lost hair since you've last seen him, and looks tired and worn.

If the GM likes, he or she can welcome the players as Bernhard Chardon.

He says, "I'm so glad you could make it! You have my gratitude. If you'll follow me to my coach ..."

As soon as you are on board, he explains:

"You know I wouldn't call you if things weren't absolutely serious. Do not laugh, please – but my basement is haunted! I've seen it myself. There've been noises all night, so I went down to check... didn't give it a lot of thought, my guess was that a wild animal had gotten in. So I grab a lamp and walk down the steps ... and the noise just gets louder and scarier, and suddenly I smell something... sulphur. That was when I saw it! It was terrible! A sort of human-like figure, but transparent, and rotten, innards and all ... it

spotted me and approached me! That's when I ran."

Bernhard is very pale now, clearly disturbed by the recollection. Then he continues, "You know it's a very old house, that sort of stuff is not unheard of. So I went to the city watch for help, but they couldn't find anything. They spent a night down there, then they laughed at me. Unfortunately the haunting hasn't stopped. You must help me, I'm frightened out of my wits! If this continues, I'm going to have to move out."

What Bernhard actually saw was the dummy ghost made by the burglars to frighten him. They want him to look like a drunkard or madman, so they were hiding when the city watch inspected the cellar.

The players may now ask Bernard questions if they want. These should be answered by the GM if possible. The most important facts are:

- The mansion is ancient – over 500 years old – from the time of the Middle Empire. There is only one basement level which probably used to be the ground floor of the building that stood there before.
- Hauntings are not a commonplace occurrence in the city. There are a couple of legends about ghosts and demons, but nothing significant. The players can now roll (Intelligence + Orientation). One success means knowing the historian Eduard von Leskovits lives in this city. Visiting him might yield further clues about spirits.
- Nothing extraordinary has happened in the days before the haunting (no important astrological dates, no major accidents). But one thing jogs Bernard's memory: 10 days ago, a wealthy young man asked if Bernard would sell the house. That man, a certain Gustav Svenson, introduced himself as the chief engineer of one of the new companies looking for a suitably representative domicile. But Bernard turned him away, directing him towards the neighbour's houses.
- Bernard is unable to describe the ghost in more detail. It did not remind him of any-

one he knows. Neither does he know what it wanted in the basement, but so far it has not been seen anywhere else in the house. The mere thought of that possibility frightens him.

- The mansion is located at the edge of a steep decline and there are only two adjacent buildings: The home of a reclusive lady magician right next to it, and a little further away the house of an older lady who agreed to rent her house to Svenson.

After the questioning has finished, the coach arrives at the house. Indeed it does it look old, derelict and eerie.

PART II – INVESTIGATION



BERNARD'S MANSION

Generally, the characters may visit as many sources as they like, in no particular order. But after the tenth visit, night should fall and the haunting commence.

If they choose to spend the night in the basement, you can skip this part and go straight to part three. To avoid that, you can advise them not to rush things and ask whether they really feel ready to confront the spectre.

The following chapter describes the stations available for the characters to visit. Should the players want to see a location or character not listed here, the GM can make up something adequate – or tell them that this particular venture was fruitless.

The mansion is a low-rise building with a recently renewed roof. It offers every comfort, boasting of a water closet and a big lion-pawed bathtub with a hot water tap. There is even a telephone line scheduled for installation within the coming weeks. All in all it seems as if Bernard has tried to fill up the old shell of the house with modern amenities to suppress the unsavoury feeling emanating from the walls. Unfortunately, it doesn't work. The dwelling appears sinister and unsettling.

When the characters search the place, they should mention a room they expect to find. Then they may check (Perception + Alertness). No matter which room they are searching, they do not find anything to help make sense of the haunting.

But no matter what the players come up with, after a total of six rooms have been searched,

they find that the furniture in all of them has been displaced ever so slightly, as if by earth tremors.

The basement by day

This is the loftiest part of Chardon's residence, with high, vaulted ceilings. There is no light down here, only whatever the characters bring with them. Even then it is easy to get lost. Bernard may have candles for the heroes.

In order to search the basement unscathed, every player must roll (Dexterity + Alertness). The number of successes needed is determined by the light source the character is carrying: a candle requires 2 successes, an electric or magic torch 1.

If a character fails the check, they bang their foot or head against an obstacle in the dark and lose 2 Health Points. Armoured characters may subtract their Protection from the damage. Damage can never be less than zero.

If a character loses all their Health Points, they pass out. The other characters should bring them back upstairs and allow them to recover. To once again find the spot where Bernard has seen the spectre, the players must successfully check (Intelligence + Orientation). One success suffices. Otherwise, searching the cellar counts as two visits of the allotted ten, but then they do find the place. Should this fill up their time quota, the third part of the story commences after this part of the investigation.

Location Of The Haunting

As the characters are getting near the spot where the ghost appeared, they will notice a faint smell of sulphur. Additionally, the air quality down here seems to be quite bad – the characters will experience headaches and find it hard to breathe. While in this room, all dice rolls have a penalty of -1.

There are old wine barrels stacked against the wall, opposite shelves with a number of bottles containing wines of great age and quality. The carpet is old as well, and threadbare. The plaster on the walls is crumbling.

These are the areas the characters can examine. Each one yields certain clues:

- **The barrels:** Rather good wine in these, but it needs to be decanted to become palpable. Maybe later.
- **The shelves:** Irregular layers of dust indicate that these bottles have been opened and occasionally drunk over a length of time. The wines are also of high quality and might be of interest later on.
- **The carpet:** if players roll (Perception + Alertness), they may uncover a newly installed trap door, locked from below. If the characters can produce 4 hits on (Dexterity + Craft), they'll manage to open the trap door. If not, they will have to wait.
- **The walls:** The plaster has crumbled over time, revealing the wall underneath. Players can see frescos that give them chills. If the characters take down the rest of the plaster, they find a large and detailed painting showing a huge demon beast with enormous teeth, claws and horns pouncing on a small city. People are depicted screaming and fleeing in terror. The dim lamplight makes the scene appear even more gruesome. There is writing on the wall as well, but the letters are ancient and the characters do not recognise them. If they attempt to read the writing, they may roll (Intelligence + Orientation). One success offers them the hint to ask Leskovits or go straight to Bernhard.

If Leskovits is present, he will gladly translate the ancient script: It speaks of a frightful beast being trapped beneath the city, held by a powerful magic seal. It lies dormant for now, but should the seal be broken, it would awake and obliterate the city. According to the fresco, the seal is located right underneath the magician's mansion. Should the seal get damaged, disaster can still be averted by fighting the demon, as it will still be in a weakened state from its imprisonment. But after defeating the beast, an expert magician must restore the seal.

The trapdoor

The trapdoor leads down into a tunnel which seems to be connecting Bernhard's mansion with the old lady's. Beneath the old lady's house the tunnel ends in a steel door which cannot be opened from this side.

On the other side the tunnel continues towards the magician's house, where it ends. Mining tools can be found in this cul-de-sac. Everything looks quite professional.

One of the boxes stacked along the tunnel walls contains a puppet soaked in luminescent paint. It looks revolting and was probably used to fake the haunting.

If the characters show Bernard the puppet, he will be enormously relieved and thank them eagerly. But should he try to talk to the watch about the whole thing, he still will not get taken seriously.

If the characters examine the work in progress at the magician's end, they find the seal still buried and intact. Still, the burglars must be stopped this night.

Any attempts to block the tunnel would bear a high risk of making the building collapse and freeing the demon.

THE MAGICIAN'S MANSION

This house was built right on the precipice of the chasm. It is very old and slightly decrepit, with a slumping roof. In one place, someone has installed an observatory. The building is only accessible from the front, all other sides are cut off by the chasm. Above the door there is a statue of a hooded person fighting a demon. If the characters knock, it will take a while until a massive figure of about two metres height opens the door. It is clad in a generously cut suit, a scarf and a hat, eyes hidden by black sunglasses. The giant is standing there silently. If the characters try to pass this sentry, it will gravely move to block their way. Whoever touches the guard will find its skin to feel like stone. This guard is impossible to trick or bypass.

Anyone rolling (Intelligence + Education) or (Intelligence + Spellcasting) will realise that this is a golem, an artificial creature created to protect a place or person.

If the characters are polite and state the purpose of their visit, they will be allowed to enter, as long as their intentions towards the magician are benign. Should they be accompanied by Leskovits or the watch, they will be refused entry. Leskovits is disappointed about that. The watch officers simply take the opportunity to have a snack break.



Chatting With The Magician

The guardian leads the characters through a derelict, but tidy building full of winding passages, obscure doors and mysterious equipment. When they finally reach the study, they are greeted by an attractive lady of about 30, lying on a divan, engrossed in a book while smoking a cigarette with a holder. She wears her black hair fashionably short.

As her guests enter, she gets up, and the characters will notice how tall she is. Her elegantly cut night blue dress and tight corset show off her figure. The magician's voice is smoky, her manner self-assured. She introduces herself as Magistra Isabelle Lamuraille – the title of „Magistra“ means she has studied at a magic university.

While talking, her gaze wanders sometimes, as if looking for inspiration.

After everyone has finished introducing themselves, the magician offers her guests champagne or cigarettes, showing impeccable taste in her choice of brands.

The characters can learn the following things here:

- Bernard Chardon is a nice guy, but pretty much a bumpkin. His stories have always been outlandish, but since the haunting incident they have become much stranger indeed.
- She thinks Leskovits is odd, with outdated ideas of magic and mysticism. She wants nothing to do with him.
- The old lady is too old-fashioned and anxious in the magician's opinion, but she still holds her in high esteem.
- Svenson has called once, but insulted her and was ushered out by her servant Joseph. The players may roll Perception + Empathy to find that she is hiding something from them. If they press on, she will pause, relish her cigarette, and then divulge that Svenson has offered money for a book in her possession. Not only is this book forbidden to non-magicians – it is also insulting to offer money for it. After all, she is not a fishmonger at a market stall. If one of the characters attempts to present themselves as a magician in order to see the book, she will just laugh. But if Friedrich's player wants to see the book, she will say that something can be arranged. Next week they could meet for tea and talk about it. In short, the book contains a specific earth magic ritual. She refuses to go into

more detail now, as these things require more time to explain.

The magician eschews meddling in the party's affairs. If the characters tell her about the demon underneath Chardon's mansion, she reacts with dismay and gives them a magic talisman, an amulet on a chain, which will weaken the demon.

THE OLD LADY'S MANSION

This is an old building as well, with permanently closed shutters. If you ask around the city, you will learn that the house is built around a courtyard and the owner is very frightened.

If the protagonists knock on the door, nothing happens at first. If the players wait 30 seconds in real time, the old lady answers. The GM should imitate an anxious, cracking voice for the old woman. The old lady is surprised by their visit and refuses to open the door, but they can have a conversation through the door. She tells the characters the following things:

- Svenson has rented the house for himself and his colleagues. He is paying quite a sum, but is rude and makes a lot of noise in the basement and in the back of the house. The gramophone is constantly playing, and people are talking loudly all the time. The group takes meals only among themselves and are constantly talking about technical things. Svenson has insisted that she never let in strangers because he fears having valuable trade secrets stolen.
- She is scared of the magician and Leskovits and has got nothing else to say about them.
- She thinks badly of Bernard Chardon on account of him being a rake and an immoral person in general. Apart from that she thinks a man of his age being afraid of ghosts is ludicrous.
- If the players show up with the city watch in tow, she also refuses to open the door and threatens to complain to the mayor. Under

no circumstances will she tolerate random strangers to slander her name; hers is a respectable house.



After this visit, Svenson knows that the characters are on to him. He will then set a group of goons on the party to keep them from making any more inquiries. The thugs will attack after the visit after the next. Should the characters decide to spend the night in the basement before that, the ambush will not take place.

THE AMBUSH

As the party is ambling through the streets, they are suddenly assaulted by a group of brutes with clubs and knuckledusters! There is one goon for every player character. If the GM wants to make things more challenging, they may add an additional opponent.

The fight lasts until one side is incapacitated. Should that be the heroes, the story ends for them.

If they win and interrogate the thugs after the fracas, they will be told that the thugs have been hired by an unknown person to rough up some troublemakers. They would recognize him if they saw him again, but do not know any names.

The goons have these combat ranks:

Initiative:	4 d10
Attack:	Club – 4 d10
	Damage – 1 d6
Parry:	Club – 3 d10
Dodge	2 d10
Armour:	None
Health Points:	12

Each goon fights against only one hero, shouting things like:

Blimey!

Gotcha!

Ya plonker!

I'll rip ya a new one!

The goons do not help each other out; if they realise they have no chance, they run for it.

After the fight our heroes may seek medical care. If they visit a doctor, they get 8 Health Points restored. A character cannot have more Health Points than he or she had initially. If a character has been incapacitated, they also get tended to and receive 8 Health Points. Wadim regenerates 2 Health Points in any case.

LESKOVITS' HOUSE

If the characters visit Leskovits' domicile, they are greeted by Paula, his housekeeper. She is wearing a plain green dress with an apron and straight brown hair mostly hidden underneath a hat. She is dismissive of them at first, saying the professor does not want to be disturbed. If they want to get ahead here, they have to think of a good reason why they want to speak to the professor. Then they have to check (Charisma + Persuade). The better their reason, the fewer successes they will need.



Bad or fuzzy reasoning requires 4.
Compliments and small presents require 3.
Logical and reasonable arguments require 2.

If they bring up the fresco in Bernard's basement, they get admitted immediately.
If the players get the unwise idea to threaten Paula or even use force, the maid will lock the door and telephone the city watch. This automatically ends the story because fighting watch officers is futile, and the only way out is leaving the city. The GM should point that out before the players try these methods. That aside, they may try out anything they can think of.

Talking to Leskovits

If the characters manage to convince Paula, she will lead them to Leskovits' office. It is stuffed full of books and files as well as boxes with shrouded items. Among other technologic toys there is also a telephone in this room.
Leskovits himself is a little man with narrow shoulders, wearing a bespoke suit that looks

a little dated. He wears his beard full and his hair, which is still dark despite his age, parted on the right. When he has to read something, he produces a monocle from his breast pocket. His voice is deep and friendly, his phrasing pompous and roundabout.

FINSTERLAND RANDOMISATION TABLE

If you have no dice and still want to play Finsterland, you can use this table. If you need the results of a ten-sided die, close your eyes and point at a number with a pencil. The number you hit is your result.

If you need several numbers at once, you can instead drop a number of one cent coins equal to the number of dice you need at it. The squares they cover mostly are your results. If in doubt, the GM decides.

Fold up the sides of the table to prevent coins from rolling away.

Repeat results higher than six if looking for d6.

To make it quicker, the numbers from 7 to 9 are set in light grey, whereas the 10s are dark grey.

7	9	5	8	10	9	1	6	9	1	4	8	10	8	3
10	3	4	2	6	4	5	10	1	10	7	5	7	9	6
4	7	5	3	5	1	2	2	7	2	3	9	2	9	1
10	9	1	7	9	5	3	8	6	8	6	3	7	8	9
6	3	6	2	5	10	1	4	1	6	7	9	10	4	8
2	6	4	1	5	3	8	5	7	6	8	10	1	9	3
9	8	10	5	7	1	1	2	7	3	4	7	5	5	2
3	6	5	10	2	4	9	5	9	6	2	8	9	10	1

2	7	8	9	8	10	4	6	3	10	10	1	4	2	10
5	2	9	6	2	3	7	4	8	5	4	9	4	10	4
9	8	1	7	3	8	10	6	3	7	8	7	3	6	2
8	6	7	6	4	2	5	3	9	1	10	4	1	3	5
8	1	9	3	7	4	8	2	3	2	3	6	2	2	1
7	8	3	10	4	8	1	5	1	5	1	10	2	5	10
4	6	5	4	7	6	4	2	7	6	5	9	4	1	3
6	7	8	3	7	4	8	6	9	5	10	1	10	9	2

He can give the heroes the following information:



- While he does believe in ghosts and spectres, he is certain that they are not harmful to humans. If they ask him about the tremors, he will say that hauntings are normally incorporeal, so nothing should bump or rattle. He does not think that they are dealing with a supernatural phenomenon.
- He has no contact with the old lady, Chardon, Svenson or the magician. He would like to get to know the magician, but she has been refusing to see him so far. He is not interested in the other persons.
- He is very interested in the fresco in the basement and would like to see it with his own eyes. If the party agrees, he accompanies them into the cellar.

If Leskovits should get involved in a fight for any reason, he will hide nearby. Once per fight he will distract the opponents and thus cancel one attack completely, even after the outcome of the opponent's roll is known. The players decide when that happens. After that he panics and flees the site. Leskovits does not get attacked.

CITY ARCHIVES

A visit to the archives enables the players to do research. Once there, they may check (Intelligence + Education). The amount of information they can uncover there depends on the amount of successes rolled.

- 1 or 2: An edict from the early time of the empire prohibits tearing down buildings on the plot that is now Bernard's. The house sitting there was commissioned by a charitable merchant as donation to the city and has been standing empty for a long time.
- 3 or 4: Bernard's mansion sits on the ruins of an ancient temple that was once at a safe distance from the settlement.
- 5: In ancient, very dusty scriptures you find mentions of a demon, a huge monstrous spectre, that was banished far back in the past. If disturbed, it will lay waste to the city.

CITY WATCH

An inquiry about Bernard gets laughter and verbal abuse from the guards. Hallucinating drunkards are a problem to which they have a simple solution: One night in the drunk tank, and then onwards to the sanatorium. They honestly hope that the characters are not nutty as well.

If you ask about the old lady or the magician, the guards tell you that they have nothing on these two, but both are weird in their own ways. Questions about Svenson are answered with shrugs. He registered as an engineer when he turned up with a band of assistants. The advent of industrialization brought many like him to the city.

If the characters try to report Svenson, the watch will make them jump through a lot of bureaucratic hoops, but are obviously not really doing anything of consequence. These matters are for the local governor, who is on holiday until next week. He will gladly deal with them when he returns.

If the characters insist that something dangerous is going on and are able to produce sensible proof, they may be accompanied by two guards. In case of a fight against more than one opponent the watchmen remove one opponent from the fight and “bureaucratize” said opponent’s private parts. Talking to the city watch equals two visits.

THE TEMPLE

Naturally, the city has a temple. If the characters talk to the local priests about the incident, they stifle laughter and say that perhaps Mr Chardon should abstain from spirits if he wants to stop seeing them. Spectres and ghosts? Ridiculous.

SVENSON’S COMPANY

It is not entirely clear which company Svenson is working for. If the characters check all local companies, they will find that no head engineer called Svenson exists. To gain this information, they each have to check (Charisma + Persuade). All in all the party needs 3 successes. But it is tedious business and requires four visits.

PEOPLE ON THE STREETS

If the characters ask passers-by in the area around the mansion, opinions are unified: The house is spooky; nobody is surprised about it being haunted. On the other hand, Bernard is not well-liked in the city and is known for being eccentric; his living in a haunted house is taken as further proof of his oddity.

Yet if the players ask whether anyone has noticed anything unusual recently, they may roll (Perception + Empathy). With one success, passers-by will tell them about tremors near the house, usually at night. Questioning people on the streets equals 2 visits.

BERNARD’S FRIENDS IN TOWN

If the heroes call on Bernard’s local friends they will be told about Bernard liking to have a few from time to time and his inclination to tell many an odd tale. They don’t take the whole ghost thing seriously, and consider it a warning sign that Bernard is losing it. They do not want to interfere, but in their opinions it would be better if he got a hold of himself and maybe cut out drinking entirely.

SHOPPING

Most everyday items can be bought while visiting the city. Most interesting are probably torches, ropes and bandages. Weapons and armour cannot be acquired as easily.

PART III – CONFRONTATION

This part begins when the heroes lie in wait to ambush the burglars. If they start with that without investigating first, what follows is going to be much more dangerous for them. The GM should encourage them to follow all the leads first.

SPENDING THE NIGHT IN THE BASEMENT

Waiting in the darkness is unnerving business. The characters will start noticing every sound, no matter how small, and after a while, also start seeing shapes in the darkness. Finally, they'll hear noises from the tunnel. After a while, the trapdoor opens and the ghost dummy is mounted above it. This looks quite unsettling and intimidating in the gloom. A while later, the digging starts.

If the players decide to intervene, there are two possibilities: Either they confront the burglars verbally and try to talk things out, or they attack.

The opposing party includes as many members as the player characters, plus Svenson. He is a lean, wiry man in stained work clothes, with goggles over his blue eyes and a shock of wild ash-blond hair.

PEACEFUL SOLUTION

If the characters immediately talk to the burglars, the villains will freeze in surprise. If the players want to convince the burglars to stop digging, they may roll (Charisma + Persuade). Essentially, they need 6 successes. Depending on the argument, they may require fewer.

- If the heroes show the fresco: 5 successes
- If Leskovits is present and asked to explain: 4 successes

- Finally, if the characters show the magician's talisman and explain its purpose: 3 successes

If they reach the allotted number of successes, the GM has the following options:

- The burglars show their understanding, apologise for causing trouble and leave. Thus, the scenario ends and the conclusion follows.
- The burglars show their understanding, but Svenson himself doesn't. He berates his companions for being cowards, breaks free and before anyone can stop him, he uncovers the seal with a pickaxe and destroys it. The demon awakes!

If the group does not manage to persuade the intruders, combat is unavoidable.

CLASH WITH THE INTRUDERS

Fighting the intruders works the same as the ambush described earlier. Each burglar only fights against one player character at the time. Svenson falls back and tries to injure the best fighter in the player characters with his pistol.

The burglars have the following combat ranks:

Initiative:	4 d10
Attack:	Knife – 4 d10
	Damage – 1 d6
	Pistol – 5 d10
	Damage – d6+4
Parry:	Knife – 4 d10
Dodge:	2 d10
Armour:	None
Health Points:	14

Svenson has the following combat ranks:

Initiative: 6 d10
Attack: Truncheon – 5 d10
Damage – 2 d6
Pistol – 4 d10
Damage – 1 d6+4
Parry: Truncheon – 3 d10
Dodge: 2 d10
Armour: 4
Health Points: 16

If more than half of the intruders are defeated, the band flees. Svenson never retreats. If the burglars defeat the player characters, move on to the conclusion.

The GM may conclude the story after this scuffle. But if the GM prefers, he or she may also have Svenson free the demon after all.



BATTLING THE DEMON

Waking the demon shakes the whole basement, including the tunnel. The characters can hear a terrible, ear-piercing cracking, followed by a deafening roar. Suddenly, a huge shape composed of burning flesh bursts from the ground, adorned by giant horns, tusks and claws. It roars again, then pounces on Svenson and rips him apart in one fluid movement. The group has to overpower the beast in order to entomb it again. The demon always attacks the player character with the most remaining Health Points with its claws. Additionally it attacks whichever character it has attacked in the previous round with its tusks.

The beast's fight ranks are as follows:

Initiative: 5 d10
Attack: Claws – 7 d10
(cannot be disarmed)
Damage – 2 d6
+ Tusks – 5 d10
(cannot be disarmed)
Damage – 1 d6
Parry: None
Dodge: 4 d10 (twice per round)
Armour: None
Health Points: 63

If the heroes possess the talisman and show it to the demon, its claws only cause 1d6 damage. If they come up with good ideas for encumbering the demon during the fight, they may make appropriate checks. Succeeding penalizes the demon two attack dice for the following round. If the heroes use guile to injure it, a successful check causes it to lose 10 Health Points. If the demon seems to be losing too quickly, the GM may raise its Health Point count or add another die for attack and dodge rolls. If it is too powerful, then the GM can reduce its Health points and/or remove some of its dice.

If either beast or party are defeated, you may move on to the conclusion.

PART IV – CONCLUSION



If the heroes do not manage to defeat Svenson or the beast, the beast will grow to its original size and make short work of the city. Maybe the military can manage to eliminate the unleashed fury, but things are not looking good.

If you can work out a peaceful solution and the demon remains dormant, Svenson will take his leave as gentleman thief and master burglar with the words “You’ve won this round! I’m looking forward to next time.” His companions are probably going to jail.

If the characters manage to overpower the beast, they can re-seal its prison with the magician’s aid. The city is safe again. Leskovits will write an article about the whole affair and travel to the capital to have it published. The burglars go to jail, where they may ponder the error of their ways.

If the players want to spread word about their victory, they get a reception at the town hall and honorary citizenships. Maybe they will even have a square named after them.

If they want to practice discretion about the whole affair, it will be forgotten pretty soon.

In any case, Bernard will give them profuse thanks for their help and for solving the mystery. If they go through Svenson’s personal belongings they’ll find clues about his employer. The GM can use this adventure as a branching point for future stories of their own devising.

The main Finsterland book contains a plethora of ideas for stories in this adventurous and mysterious world. Also, you will find plenty of opportunities for customising and enhancing your character as well as monsters and opponents to fight, plus another ready-to-play adventure!

MARIANNE D'ARGENTAIRE

Knight

Marianne is the only daughter of a penniless aristocrat. After her mother's untimely death, the growing tomboy was raised and schooled by her father, who prepared her for a military career from a young age. After graduating from military academy she now serves as a knight for the Emperor. The times are peaceful now, so she spends her spare time adventuring and making a name for herself.

Motivation:

Sense of duty, honour, thirst for adventure

Appearance:

Eyes: Dark green,

Height: 6' / 1.80m,

Gender: Female,

Hair: Dark brown,

Weight: 150 lbs. / 75 kg,

Origin: Feuerthal,

Complexion: Tanned,

Build: Wiry,

Age: 23

CHA: 5|1 DEX: 5|1 IN: 5|1

PER: 6|2 STR: 6|2 WP: 4|0

Athletics 2, Close combat 3, Coordination 1, Drive 1, Marksmanship 2, Alertness 2, Craft 0, Empathy 0, Persuade 2, Stealth 1, Education 1, Medicine 1, Nature 1, Orientation 2, Technology 2
Spellcasting 0

Health Points 17, Mana Points 16

Initiative: 3 d10 +1 success

Attack: Sabre – 7 d10

Damage – 2 d6

Revolver – 2 d10

(ranged attack)

Damage – 1 d6+6

Parry: Sabre – 6 d10

(Marianne can also

parry attacks on her

allies)

Dodge: 2 d10

Armour: 4 points

SPECIALTIES:

Swordplay

Crushing blow: Sacrifice two dice from your attack pool to knock your opponent over. While the opponent is prone, everyone still on their feet gains two extra dice when attacking them.

Defence: If you spend one round of combat without attacking, you may parry a second time.

Lunge: +3 successes to Initiative when attacking with a melee weapon.

Piercing blow: Every 10 rolled when attacking with melee weapons counts as critical hit.

Psychology

Calm: Every 10 rolled when trying to calm characters down and allay their fear counts as critical success.

Detect lies: Every 10 rolled when trying to figure out whether another character is lying counts as critical success.

Sense mood: If you successfully roll Perception + Empathy, you gauge the attitudes of all persons close by, towards your character and towards each other.

Sense motive: Every 10 rolled when trying to sense a character's motives and soundness of intentions counts as critical success.

MAGISTER FRIEDRICH GÜLDENSTERN

Magician

Friedrich's talent for magic was recognised early. His school teacher found that the highly intelligent, vivacious boy was able to perform simple magic tricks. Still it was at the famous Ignaz von Pyren University where he became a renowned magician at last. Now Friedrich is self-employed and solves people's magic-related problems for a reasonable fee.

Motivation:

Curiosity, money, meet challenges

Appearance:

Eyes: Black,
Height: 5'11" / 1.78m,
Gender: Male,
Hair: Light brown,
Weight: 152 lbs. / 76 kg,
Origin: Buchburg Moor,
Complexion: Rosy,
Build: Stout,
Age: 27

Athletics 1, Close combat 1, Coordination 0, Drive 0, Marksmanship 0, Alertness 2, Craft 0, PEmpathy 2, ersude 1, Stealth 2, Education 2, Medicine 2, Nature 2, Orientation 2, Technology 1, Spellcasting 3

Health Points 13, Mana Points 27

Initiative: 3 d10
Attack: Wand - 1 d10
Damage - 1 d6
Parry: Wand - 3 d10
Dodge: 0 d10
Armour: None

SPECIALTIES:

Fire magic

All spells are cast with 7 d10.

Flame:

No Mana points required

In a dry environment, the magician may create a small flame on his body. This will not burn the magician, but enables them to ignite flammable items. This uses one action. A note on the side: most things are not flammable unless they've been doused in gasoline or similar substances.

Light:

Mana Points: 2

The magician creates a wispy sphere of light by concentrating mystic energies commanded by their will. This light source follows the magician and expires when the party leaves the place where it was conjured.

Cauterise:

Mana Points: 3

The magician lays their hands on a sick or injured person, healing wounds by

transferring some of their inner psychic strength. The treated character regenerates as many Hit Points as are rolled by their player on 2 d6.

Fireball:

Mana Points: 4

The magician uses their psychic powers to heat the air around a target until it bursts into flame, resulting in a noticeable explosion. Damage for this spell is determined by two 2 d6 plus 2. This attack cannot be parried, only evaded. The magician has to be able to see their target.

Thaumaturgy

Counter magic: Every 10 rolled when countering spells counts as critical success.

Identification: Every 10 rolled when trying to spot and understand magic effects, objects or spells counts as critical success.

Magical concentration: Every 10 rolled when casting a spell counts as critical success.

Sense resistance: By rolling Perception + Spell Casting, the magician can determine a visible target's magic resistance.



WADIM JEPHAIMOWITSCH MILARIN

Machinator

Conscripted for military service as a young man, Wadim had to witness the horrors of the Great War first hand. After that terrible experience he returned home and found that his previous lifestyle no longer held meaning for him. To cope, he devoted himself to the eastern philosophies of Tarasia. He wants to change the world for the better, and now abhors a world that could create such nightmares as wars.

Motivation:

Discover secrets, change the world, escape loneliness

Appearance:

Eyes: Grey,
Height: 6'2" / 1.85m,
Gender: Male,
Hair: Black,
Weight: 164 lbs. / 82 kg,
Origin: Eisenfeld,
Complexion: Golden,
Build: Muscular,
Age: 31



Athletics 2, Close combat 1, Coordination 3, Drive 2, Marksmanship 1, Alertness 2, Craft 2, Empathy 1, Persuade 0, Stealth 2, Education 1, Medicine 2, Nature 0, Orientation 0, Technology 2, Spellcasting 0

Health Points 17, Mana Points 15

Initiative: 6 d10

Attack: Unarmed – 6 d10

Damage – 1 d6+4

Pistol – 3 d10

(ranged attack)

Damage – 1 d6+4

Parry: None

Dodge: 2 d10

Armour: 4 Points

SPECIALTIES:

Tarasian Martial Arts

Agility: The target can only dodge attacks by the character, not parry them. This ability can only be used in unarmed combat.

Injure: +6 damage if you roll a critical hit when employing unarmed combat.

Nerve punch: Unarmed attacks by the character cause 1d6+4 damage. This is already included in the attack profile.

Quick evasion: Every 10 rolled when dodging counts as critical success.

Sports

Climbing: You gain two extra dice for Climb checks. Every 10 rolled when climbing counts as critical success.

Jumping: You gain two extra dice for jump checks. Every 10 rolled when jumping counts as critical success.

Sprinting: You gain two extra dice for Sprint checks. Every 10 rolled when sprinting counts as critical success.

Swimming: You gain two extra dice for Swim checks. Every 10 rolled when swimming and diving counts as critical success.

CHA: 4|0 DEX: 5|1 INT: 5|1
PER: 6|2 STR: 6|2 WP: 5|1

LARISSA MONTEFIORI

Dilettante

Larissa has always had everything. Her every whim was catered to; everyone wanted to please her. After a while, she got bored of her life, which had started to feel hollow and pointless. Looking for new sensations and distractions, she turned to occultism, adventure and art. She is still very rich, and her name opens doors, but now she is also known for publishing her spooky diaries.

Motivation:

Tackling boredom, curiosity, fame

Appearance:

Eyes: Dark blue,
Height: 5'10" / 1.74m,
Gender: Female,
Hair: Ash blonde,
Weight: 110 lbs. / 55 kg,
Origin: Südbuchten,
Complexion: Pale,
Build: Slim,
Age: 24

Athletics 2, Close combat 2, Coordination 1, Drive 2, Marksmanship 2, Alertness 1, Craft 0, Empathy 2, Persuade 3, Stealth 1, Education 1, Medicine 2, Nature 0, Orientation, Technology 1, Spellcasting 0

CHA: 6|2 DEX: 6|2 INT: 6|2
PER: 5|1 STR: 4|0 WP: 4|0

Initiative: 4 d10

Attack: Épée – 4 d10
Damage – 2 d6

Charm

Beguile: Sometimes you have to butter somebody up to make them compliant. When trying to change a person's mind, fast-talk them or to appear likable and trustworthy, the first 10 already counts as critical success.

Elegance: A master of light banter always keeps their cool and never loses their composure. Besides, you just have to admire their social light-footedness. When defending oneself against social attacks, the first 10 rolled already counts as critical success.

Manners: This enables the character to know the vernacular and habits of every environment and act accordingly without attracting suspicion. If you want to know how to behave in any given situation, and the GM asks for a check, the first 10 already counts as critical success. If no check is required, the character may know all common accents and colloquialisms of their mother tongue as well as how to behave.

Poetry: A suitable and well-phrased poem may open a person's heart, perfectly describe a situation or act as an enriching piece of art. For attempts at poetry, song writing, or simply finding the right thing to say, roll Intelligence + Persuade. The first 10 rolled already counts as critical success.

Pistol – 5 d10
(ranged attack)

Damage – 1 D6+4

Épée – 4 d10

0 D10

None

Parry:

Dodge:

Armour:

Larissa is immune to fear. At the start of a fight against several enemies, she can take a check on (Charisma + Persuade). If she succeeds, one of the enemies leaves combat.

SPECIALTIES:

Fencing master

Lunge: +3 successes to Initiative rolls when attacking with melee weapons.

Disarm: Rolling two successes on attack rolls disarms the opponent. This has to be announced before the attack roll. No damage is dealt, but the target loses their weapon and must spend one action to retrieve it. Attacking or parrying is not possible without a weapon.

Humiliating blow: -6 Initiative for your opponent for the duration of the fight if your attack is successful. This has to be announced beforehand and deals no damage.

Precision: Substitute Strength for Dexterity in attack rolls. This is already included in the attack profile.



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