

## **Murders in Hullbeck:**

### **Overview:**

Hullbeck has been plagued by a series of brutal murders, each using different methods and with seemingly little linking the victims. You are tasked with getting to the bottom of things. The “murderer” is in fact 4 different people who have each been charmed by a succubus, May Palomezsk to kill. May herself is making them do this because a powerful Lich has captured a mortal she fell in love with.

Use the quest to explore ideas around what evil is: is it something people are? Is it things that they do? The quest may also be used to challenge the player’s understanding of who should be held responsible for what kinds of crimes, and whether all creatures thought of as evil, i.e., the succubus, should be characterized as such.

### **Key NPCs:**

Grimgar: Sheriff of Hullbeck, Grimgar will serve as the party’s main form of contact with the city and will provide them with their initial leads. He may also point the party in the right direction if they find clues but are unsure of what to do with them.

May Palomerzsk: Succubus disguised as a wealthy noblewoman of Hullbeck. She has charmed four citizens of Hullbeck to carry out the murders, since a powerful Lich has threatened a human, Tobias, she has fallen in love with.

Heinrich Tatum, male human: day laborer who admitted to murdering Lysandra, and has since been executed.

Margery Stansfield, female human: murder of Gwendolyn and frequenter of “Juliana’s” a local tavern. Juliana, the proprietor, will recognize the necklace found near Gwendolyn as Margery’s if asked.

Fenri Joll, male dwarf: six fingered dockworker and murderer of Baldric, he and Baldric were close friends according to any who the party asks.

Marvira Leaspirit, female halfling: apprentice herbalist at “Ill Concoctions” and murderer of Alarich.

Eryndor, male elf: sage and demonologist who may be able to provide expertise should the party find the right clues...

### **The Quest:**

The party will come across a number of guards standing around a body in the street, should they investigate, the sheriff, Grimgar, will engage them. He informs the players that there have been several murders in the city, all of which have been committed with different types of weapons. The guards have been unable to catch the murderer, but one of them was recently captured and confessed to the crimes. However, the murders have continued since then, confusing the city.

Grimgar gives the players a list of the previous victims and the locations where the murders took place.

Each Victim will have a key clue that may be found to put together the larger pieces of the puzzle.

The victims are:

- A wealthy merchant named Alaric, who was found dead in his mansion, the guards have not yet identified what killed him. Cause of death: Poison
  - Key Clue: A vial of poison is found hidden behind furniture in Alaric's home, with a label that reads "Ill Concoctions"
- A dockworker named Baldric, who was found dead in an alleyway. Cause of death: Strangulation
  - Key Clue: The strangulation marks around Baldric's neck indicate that his attacker must have had six fingers on one hand.
- A retired soldier named Lysandra, who was found dead in her home. Cause of death: Stabbing
  - Key Clue: Ornate dagger used to stab the victim, far more expensive than someone like Heinrich would be able to afford
- A local baker named Gwendolyn, who was found dead in her bakery. Cause of death: Blunt force trauma
  - Key Clue: A gaudy charm necklace is found next to the victim, which appears to have fallen off the attacker during the struggle.

As the players investigate each location, they will begin to realize that the murders were not committed by the same person. The style and method of each murder is different, and the players may eventually realize that there are four separate murderers at work.

When any of the four murderers are pressed about their motives, they will reveal that a beautiful woman began visiting them some time ago, asking for favors and before moving to petty crimes like theft and vandalism, eventually leading her to ask them to commit the murders. They all seem quite not quite there, as if they don't totally understand the implications of their actions and are very focused on the woman in question. If successfully pressed or convinced, they will provide a description of her, as well as a symbol she would draw for them.

Grimgar recognized the description of the woman as May Palomerzsk and will inform the party that she has an estate on the outskirts of town. However, he will suggest that the players investigate the symbol that was drawn for each murderer, as there may be more to the story. He will direct them to a local sage named Eryndor, who specializes in demonology and can help them identify the symbol.

Eryndor will recognize that the symbol is that of a powerful succubus named Lianna, who is said to have fled the service of the arch-demon Asmodeus some time ago.

The players can choose to investigate May's manor, a large estate on the outskirts of town, to find clues about her motives. Upon arriving at the estate, they will find that it is heavily guarded, but they can use their skills and cunning to sneak in undetected.

Once inside, they will find that May/Lianna is not home, but throughout the manor they will find drawings of a man, Tobias, scattered and hung on walls. Interspersed with them will be letters of love, alluding to her love for him and his capture by the Lich.

**Letter 1:**

My beloved Tobias,

I can't imagine an existence without you. For the first time I have known joy, I have known comfort. When I'm with you, the fires and darkness of the past fade away and I feel... mortal. You're the only thing that matters.

I'm not naïve the risks, that we're from different worlds. But I love you with all my heart, Tobias.

Forever yours,

Lianna

**Letter 2:**

My beloved Tobias,

I'm writing this letter in tears, because I don't know what else to do. He is making me do terrible things. Making me kill and terrorize innocent people, making me corrupt them. I can feel my soul slipping back, away from you and into the fire. I hate myself for it, but I can't refuse his orders. I can't risk your safety.

I'm so sorry my, Tobias. I hope you will forgive me; I hope this doesn't undo everything we've been through. Please know that I'm doing this for you. I'll do whatever it takes to get you back.

Please hold on, my love. I'll come for you soon.

Forever yours,

Lianna

**Letter 3:**

My dear Lianna,

I hope you are well. Know that I will not forget the debt you owe me for the safekeeping of your beloved Tobias.

I understand that you are doing all you can to keep me satisfied, but I must remind you that time is running out. The humans are growing restless, and if they were to discover the truth of their actions, all would be lost.

You must redouble your efforts to ensure that the mortals remain distracted, and that they remain on the path to our plans. Failure to do so will result in the slow and painful demise of your Tobias. I trust you understand the gravity of the situation.

Know that I do not make idle threats, Lianna. My power is vast, as vast as your former masters. Serve me as you served him, remember what you are and what you are made to do. I trust you will not disappoint me, Lianna. The consequences will be severe.

Yours in darkness,

Sha-Kar

While the players are investigating, Lianna will return. The players may choose to confront her, but she will be focused on fleeing and/or trying to reason with them, rather than killing them. The players can also try to ask Lianna about the situation with Tobias and the Lich, after which, if they are successful in getting her to trust them, she will plead for them to help her.

The players can then choose to rescue Tobias and confront the Lich, ultimately defeating him and freeing Lianna from his control. Alternatively, they can choose to report their findings to Grimgar and let the city guard handle the situation.

If Lianna escapes, which will be her goal, she may return to the party a later date and ask for their help once again...