

Ultima ~~V~~ Forsan



The Confessional of the
Black Penitents

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ULTIMA FORSAN

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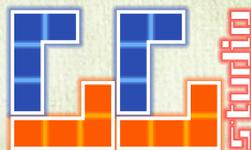
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free Ultima Forsan adventure for three to six Novice heroes. Originally created for Play - Modena, the greatest gaming festival in Italy, now here in a final, revised version. The adventure can also be played as an introduction to the forthcoming campaign The Iron Crown.

Francesco Guicciardini, the Podestà of Modena, entrusts the heroes with a secret and delicate mission: locate and rescue two of his spies, prisoners of a group of Teutonic Inquisitors.

The setting of this adventure is the Italian city of Modena and the fief around it, although it can easily be adapted to other locations by changing the names of places and NPCs.

You can download some [pre-generated characterm](#) or create your own.

BACKGROUND FOR THE GAME MASTER: A SECRET MISSION

Francesco Guicciardini, Podestà of Modena and Head of the Canossa League, has for some time had in his service three (Tainted) spies. They usually have the task of collecting, disguised as beggars, news and rumors among the small community of Tainted in his Fief and along the backroads of the countryside (or, at least, this is what Guicciardini tells the heroes).

Unfortunately, two of them (Paolo and Gherardo) have recently been captured by a group of zealous Teutonic Inquisitors, who, after charging them

with being infectors, have dragged them to the Monastery of the Black Penitents, a monastic reformed group of the Teutonic Church. The Inquisitors want to question them and "make them confess". The third spy has managed to avoid capture and to report to Guicciardini on the fate of the others.

INTRODUCTION

Guicciardini calls on the heroes, who he has personally selected, to salvage the situation. Their task is to enter the Monastery, find out where the prisoners are kept, release them and take them back to Modena. And all of this must be accomplished without causing a diplomatic incident, which means the mission must be completed without bloodshed and with no evidence revealed of the involvement of the Podestà. The promised reward is 500 florins for each character.

The heroes receive religious clothing with which to impersonate monks or nuns, one horse for each of them, plus two others which will serve for the prisoners, and a (fake) letter, signed by the Bishop of Modena, commissioning them to search the library of the Monastery for any documents on the life of Matilde di Canossa.

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The research in the library is not just an excuse to enter the Monastery. According to information gathered by the Podestà, the library contains a secret passage to the crypts below, probably the only place where it would be possible to hide and torture prisoners without upsetting the other inhabitants of the monastery

SCENE 1 - AT THE MONASTERY

The journey passes without incident and, after a day on horseback, the heroes arrive at the Monastery. The monks examine the letter and welcome them, arranging for the care of their horses and assigning to each of the characters a small, spartan cell. Women are housed in the guesthouse, a small brick building within the walls of the monastery, between the garden and the barn. After evening prayers and dinner, the monks say goodnight to the newcomers and postpone the visit to the library until the next morning. They do not speak of the presence of the Inquisitors,

if not explicitly asked about them, and even then only refer to them as "Pious men who fight against Infection, and travelers who have asked for hospitality." The inquisitors "are housed in different quarters" and "they have asked not to be disturbed because they are carrying out their duties".

SCENE 2 THE LIBRARY

The monastery library is large, untidy and dusty. It consists of four connected rooms, dividing the texts by topic: sacred texts and commentaries, herbal medicine and science, chronicles and histories, hagiographies and lives of famous men. The ceilings are very high, and intermediate floors and wooden stairs grant access to the higher shelves.

Access to the crypt is hidden behind a wooden panel. Behind the wooden panel lies a narrow passage within the main wall, with a narrow staircase leading down to the underground halls.

The Monastery

The monastery is a castle-like structure surrounded by solid stone walls with a strong door. Inside the walls there is a large courtyard used as a kitchen garden, which also houses the guesthouse (a small brick building where non-religious visitors and women, including nuns, can be accommodated, and which also includes space for possible quarantines), stables (wooden, to accommodate horses, as well as chickens, sheep, cows etc.), a well, and an orchard. The main building is the Monastery itself, made of stone blocks and masonry. On its two floors, it contains the cells where the monks sleep and pray on their own (and where they host other visiting monks), a chapel for common prayers, a refectory, kitchen and pantry, a herbarium / infirmary (with various doses of Cautery), storerooms for wood, and a workshop for arts and crafting, tailoring and various repairs. At the center of this structure there is a cloister with arcades, where the monks who die in service are buried (after the necessary security measures are taken to ensure that they rest in peace). And, of course, there is the library (see Scene 3).

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NIGHTTIME RESEARCHES

If the heroes try to visit the Library at night, they must make a Stealth roll (+2) not to wake any of the monks, and a further Stealth roll (+2) for each Notice roll they make to look for the secret passage (see below). If they fail a Stealth roll, 1d4 monks wake up and come to investigate the noise. In this case the heroes must find a valid excuse for their presence there!

DAYTIME RESEARCHES

By day, the PCs can count on the good friars Alfonso and Ferrino, eager to help them in the search for documents on the life of Matilda.

To search for the passage, the Heroes must find a way to occupy, distract or send away the two friars.

Alfonso and Ferrino: If necessary, use the stats for the Common People in the *Ultima Forsan: Setting Book*. Alfonso is Elderly, Hard of Hearing and Lame, but definitely intelligent, and is responsible for the library, while Ferrino is his Young, Clueless and Big Mouthed assistant. Ferrino is ready to help with the heaviest work: carrying dusty old tomes, reaching texts on the higher shelves, bringing water, food, ink, candles, emptying chamber pots, etc.

FINDING THE SECRET PASSAGE

To find the passage, the heroes should examine each of the four sections. Each character can examine one section at a time, and each examination requires half a day (see section **What if...?**).

The passage is located in the herbal medicine section, right behind Alfonso's desk, which he normally never leaves, entrusting Ferrino to assist the visiting "monks" in the other rooms.

The wooden panel that hides the passage has scratched the stone floor, and the heroes can notice the signs with a successful Perception Roll.

If the heroes specifically examine the floor in the herbal medicine room, they find the scratches on the floor without rolling.

Once they find the suspect area, characters examining the shelves can find the opening mechanism with a Notice or Repair Roll, or they may break through the wooden panel with a Strength Roll.

CONVERSATION WITH FERRINO

The heroes may also attempt to fool the good Ferrino, who is eager to help them in any way. A Persuasion Roll, together with a good excuse, is enough to make him blurt out where the passage is, and also the fact that the Inquisitors haven't showed up for a whole day

The Monks

About 30 monks live in the monastery. Their everyday lives are marked by prayers and meals; in the rest of their time each monk fulfills his own tasks. Obviously, the PCs are invited to participate in all the group prayers of the day: in the morning, at noon and in the evening.

Among the NPCs that the heroes may meet there are Procopius, the Abbot, Maurilio the cook, Feliciano the tailor, the wise Fiorenzo, the gruff Michelino who manages the stables, and the four cleaner monks: Marcello, Stefano, Graziano and Filippo.

SCENE 3 - DOWN INTO THE OLD CRYPT

The staircase and the underground halls are very dark. After the first few steps, those in the passage can hear a faint voice: a man pleading for help. The crypt is dark and the heroes need at least a candle to navigate the passages. In the first large room there are oil lamps, tables, chairs and bedding, bowls and jugs, and the disgusting torture instruments of the Inquisitors. Signs of struggle and violence are very obvious: broken pitchers, overturned chairs, blood and atrament on the floor.

From one of the side passages, some footsteps can be heard. From the darkness emerges what remains of one of the Inquisitors. It is a Husk! After the first round, the others arrive as well, ready to dine on the heroes! In addition to the first one, there arrive a total of 1 additional Husk per character.

After three rounds (or earlier, if the heroes quickly defeat the Husks), Paolo the Possessed joins the fight.

Note that these Dead have all died only few hours ago and thus have the appearance of living men but very battered and wounded! (Paolo clearly appears to have been a Tainted, while the Inquisitors were Untainted).

THE PRISONER

Inside a locked cell (whose key is in the possession of one of the Husks) lies Gherardo, one of the two Tainted spies captured by the Inquisitors. He can explain that the Inquisitors accidentally killed Paolo during their interrogation, and that he immediately raised and overwhelmed them. All of the Inquisitors died, and resurrected as Husks.

WHAT IF...?

If the heroes fail to find the passage by the evening of the first day, the troubles begin. At sunset, Paolo the Possessed manages to open the passage into the library and starts to massacre the monks. If the heroes are taking it easy and sleeping, they can make a Notice Roll to hear the noise.

The first roll is at -4, the second at -2, the third without modifiers and the fourth at +2. For each failed roll, Paolo has found and killed 1d6 monks, and each of those has a 1 in 6 chance of immediately raising as a Husk.

If the heroes are in the library when Paolo emerges from the passage, they can deal with him right away. One round after the Possessed arrives, the Husks that were the Inquisitors emerge as well.

EPILOGUE

The monks will surely appreciate the intervention of the heroes, even if their disguise is discovered, and promise eternal hospitality (as well as deliver all the texts on the life of Matilda, if Alfonso and Ferrino are still alive).

Back in Modena, the heroes receive from Guicciardini the reward of 500 florins each. After proving their qualities, they might well be chosen as special envoys for the campaign *The Iron Crown*, or be sent to the Universal Council in Lucca for the campaign *Once upon a time at Lucca*.

BESTIARY

HUSKS

Inquisitors turned into Husks. They wear black leather armor so they have Toughness 8 (1). Each of them also has a flintlock pistol and a rapier or dagger (that they cannot use in their current state). Infected monks (see **What if...?**) have Toughness 7 instead.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (D), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4

Pace: 4, Parry: 4; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Dead:** These creatures have all the Special Abilities of the Dead.
- * **Shuffling Gait:** Husks cannot run.

PAOLO THE POSSESSED

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (D), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Swimming d4

Pace: 6, Parry: 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special abilities:

- * **Claws/Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Dead:** Paolo has all the Special Abilities of the Dead.
- * **Go for the Throat:** When fighting unarmed, Paolo instinctively goes for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on his Attack roll, he hits the target's least armored location.
- * **Hardy:** Paolo does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- * **Improved Frenzy:** Paolo may make two Fighting attacks per round without penalty.
- * **Weapons:** Paolo can use weapons, but will only do it if he happens to stumble upon some kind of weapon.

