The Lawful Marriage

THE DOOMQUILL TALES · BOOK IV

The Lawful Marriage

Orcos: The Ucillamope Library and Grand Canal, year 834



PENNED BY THE DOOMQUILL TALES

THE DOOMQUILL TALES PRESS · ORCOS · YEAR 834

The Lawful Marriage

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Set in Kidaneland, Bretbury Era 834.

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Rules of Play

Your Hero's Scores

Roll one six-sided die and add 6 for your **SKILL**. Roll two dice and add 12 for your **STAMINA**. Roll one die and add 6 for your **LUCK**. Record these scores on your Adventure Sheet.

Combat Sequence

In battle, roll two dice and add your current SKILL for your Attack Strength. Roll two dice and add the opponent's SKILL for their Attack Strength. The higher blows strikes the lower for weapon damage (default 2 points). If you wear armour, roll one die: if equal to or under your armour tier, reduce the wound by 1.

Testing Your Luck

When instructed to Test your Luck, roll two dice: if the roll is equal to or under your current LUCK score, you are Lucky. If higher, you are Unlucky. *Deduct 1 point from your LUCK score every time you test it.*

Provisions & Healing

Each meal of provisions restores 4 STAMINA points up to your initial score. You may only eat when resting or permitted by the text.

ADVENTURE SHEET

Hero Name: **People / Origin:**

SKILL	STAMINA	LUCK

Purse & Provisions:

Crowns & Shillings: Provisions (Meals):

Equipment & Weapons:

PROLOGUE

Rain covers the black waters of Orcos in a million needle-pricks. At the tavern of the Drowned Bell, Master Alvise slides a purse of four crowns and a brass key across the stained cedar. 'The Emperor of Balsozha claims Princess Réka was wed to his cousin before she took her vows,' he whispers. 'If that is true, Balsozha inherits the realm. If it is false, the war is a sham.'

The proof—the original marriage deed—lies in the subterranean vaults of the Ucillamope Library. Balsozhian arsonists are already crossing the canal with pitch-pots to burn the archive before morning. The Chancellor needs a blade in the dark. Find the deed, stop the arsonists, and survive the Emperor's champion.

Turn to Section 1 to begin your quest.

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1 *The Drowned Bell*

The bells of Saint Orso toll midnight over the misty canals of Orcos. Master Alvise pulls his cowl low and points through the tavern door toward the domed silhouette of the Ucillamope Library. Two choices lie before you: cross the Marble Bridge under the gaze of the city watch, or take a sculler's punt through the flooded cisterns below the foundations.

- ➔ Cross the Marble Bridge on foot under cover of the fog **TURN TO 2**
- ➔ Descend to the canal wharf and take a skiff through the cisterns **TURN TO 3**

2 *The Marble Bridge*

The fog is thick as sheep's wool on the bridge, but lantern light flickers ahead. Two city watchmen in yellow surcoats lean against the stone parapet, blowing on their knuckles. Beside them in the shadows stands a man in a feathered Balsozhian hat, murmuring orders.

- → Attempt to slip past them along the outer ledge above the water
- → Bluff your way through with the Chancellor's sealed pass

3 *The Flooded Cisterns*

Your oars bite into the dark, silent water. The cistern vault arches overhead like the ribs of a leviathan. Ahead, water laps against the grated water-gate of the Library. A chain hangs from the arch, but an iron portcullis blocks the sluice.

- → Use the brass key Alvise gave you on the water-gate padlock **TURN TO 8**
- → Wrench the corroded bars with your stiletto

4 *The Cornice*

Your boots find purchase on the carved gargoyles. You drop softly into the courtyard of the Library unseen. Rain hisses on the flagstones. Across the court, a side door stands slightly ajar, a smear of fresh pitch on the jamb.

- → Slip through the ajar door into the Lower Scriptorium **TURN TO 10**

5 *A Slip on the Stone*

A stone gives way under your heel! You catch yourself with one hand, but your lantern clatters against the flags. 'Who goes there!' shouts a guardsman, drawing his broadsword.

→ Draw your sword and fight the guardsman **TURN TO 11**

→ Vault over the parapet into the courtyard garden **TURN TO 4**

6 *A Royal Seal*

The watchman inspects the wax seal and pales. 'Pass, sir. But watch your step—the Balsozhian gentlemen have business inside by order of the Prefect.' You step across the courtyard and enter through the library portico.

→ Enter the Grand Vestibule **TURN TO 12**

7 *Suspicions Aroused*

The feathered man steps forward with a sneer. 'That seal expired three reigns ago, friend.' He draws a slender rapier with an ornate basket hilt.

> COMBAT ENCOUNTER:
> **Balsozhian Duelist** · SKILL 7 · STAMINA 8

8 *The Sluice Passage*

The lock clicks open. You guide your skiff into a narrow stone canal running beneath the book stacks. A dripping stone staircase ascends into the basement catalog room. On the floor lie three dead monks, their throats cut without a cry.

- → Climb into the Catalog Room TURN TO 14

9 *The Clanging Grate*

The rusty bar snaps with an iron shriek that echoes down the vaulted channels. A crossbow bolt splashes the water inches from your ear!

- → Dive into the water and scramble up the steps to the Catalog Room TURN TO 14

10 *The Lower Scriptorium*

Rows of walnut lecterns stretch into shadow under vaulted brick ceilings. The smell of turpentine and sulfur hangs heavy in the air. Two ruffians in leather jerkins are stacking bundles of straw soaked in pitch against the book presses.

- → Ambush the arsonists before they light the fuses TURN TO 15
- → Slip past them toward the Iron Stair that leads down to the Vault of Deeds TURN TO 16

11 *Fight on the Bridge*

The guard rushes you, shield raised. You must strike quickly before his comrades rally.

> COMBAT ENCOUNTER:
> **Corrupt Watchman** · SKILL 6 · STAMINA 7

12 *The Grand Vestibule*

High marble pillars support a gilded dome depicting the Seven Celestial Spheres. In the center of the hall, an old archivist is tied to a chair, bleeding from the brow. Over him stands a tall, armored knight clad in black plate, a greatsword sheathed at his back: Sir Vane, the Emperor's Champion.

- Conceal yourself in the shadows behind the pillars to overhear them TURN TO 17
- Hurl a stiletto at Sir Vane's throat to save the archivist

13 *A Fallen Blade*

The duelist falls back into the canal with a dull splash. From his velvet coat you recover a brass token stamped with the imperial wyrm of Balsozha and an ivory-handled lockpick.

- Slip across into the courtyard garden TURN TO 4

14 *The Catalog Room*

Shelves of calfskin registers line the walls. A wounded scholar lies slumped against an iron safe. 'The Vault of Deeds...' he gasps, pointing toward an arched doorway reinforced with bronze banding. 'They took the Master's Seal, but the door is barred from within!'

- Examine the scholar's wounds and give him a sip of your provisions **TURN TO 20**
- Search the room for the secret lever to the Vault **TURN TO 20**

15 *Ambush the Arsonists*

You leap from behind a tapestry with drawn steel. The two saboteurs drop their pitch-pots and draw broad cleavers.

> **COMBAT ENCOUNTER:**
> **Arsonist Brand** · SKILL 6 · STAMINA 6
> **Arsonist Casker** · SKILL 6 · STAMINA 6

16 *The Iron Stair*

You descend a spiral stair of cold pig-iron into the lowest foundations of Orcos. The temperature drops until your breath clouds the air. At the bottom lies a massive portal of Bog-Oak, bound with three bronze locks. Through the keyhole you smell burning parchment!

- Force the door with all your strength
- Test your Luck to pick the three locks before the deed is destroyed

17 *Words in the Dark*

'Tell me which chest holds the Treaty of 812,' Sir Vane's voice booms across the marble. 'Or I burn not just the scroll, but your daughter's cloister in Valsiari.' The archivist weeps: 'The third chest beneath the Saint's reliquary... the key of green glass.' Sir Vane turns toward the stairs.

→ Rush down the servant's stair to beat Sir Vane to the vault **TURN TO 16**

18 *A True Throw*

The stiletto strikes the champion's neck gorget with a sharp crack, deflecting off the hardened steel! Sir Vane turns slowly, unhooking his greatsword with cold deliberation. 'A rat in the library,' he murmurs.

→ Stand your ground and face Sir Vane **TURN TO 19**

19 *The Emperor's Champion*

Sir Vane steps forward, his greatsword gleaming with the blue edge of Balsozhian cold-steel. He is a master of the double-handed blade and has slain fifty men in the ring of Balsozha.

> COMBAT ENCOUNTER:
> **Sir Vane of Balsozha** · SKILL 10 · STAMINA 14

20 *The Secret Lever*

Behind a relief of Saint Jerome in the desert, a hidden brass rod pivots. With a groan of counterweights, the bronze-banded door recedes into the stone floor, opening into the Vault of Deeds.

→ Step into the Vault of Deeds **TURN TO 22**

21 *Fires Extinguished*

Both arsonists lie dead among the spilled pitch. You kick the smouldering fuses into a cistern bucket, saving the upper library. On one of their bodies you find a pouch of silver crowns and the master key of green glass.

→ Descend the Iron Stair to the Vault of Deeds TURN TO 16

22 *The Vault of Deeds*

The inner vault is circular, walled in ancient green granite. In the center rests the altar-chest of Princess Réka. Inside lies a vellum scroll bearing the royal seal of Orcos and the sigil of the High Patriarch: the marriage was solemnized under duress and formally annulled three months later. The Emperor's claim is an outright fraud!

→ Carry the scroll through the canal tunnel to the Chancellor's barge TURN TO 24

→ A Balsozhian envoy emerges from the shadows offering a mountain of gold for the scroll TURN TO 26

23 *Too Late at the Door*

You hammer on the oak door, but by the time the wood gives way, smoke pours into your face. An iron brazier has been overturned onto the treaty chests. The ancient deeds are nothing but black cinders.

→ Despair as the mission fails TURN TO 25

24 *The Dawn of Orcos*

You emerge from the canal water-gate into the grey light of dawn. Master Alvise and the Chancellor's royal guard are waiting with drawn bows. You present the undamaged scroll to the High Chancellor himself. The false war is exposed, the city of Orcos is saved from siege, and your name is inscribed with honor in the Great Book of the City.

★ VICTORY ACHIEVED ★

25 *Shadows of Defeat*

The deeds are ash, and the bells of Balsozha begin their war-toll across the border. You slip away into the alleys of Orcos, a hunted fugitive whose failure will cost thousands of lives.

† YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS IN DEATH †

26 *The Gilded Treason*

The Balsozhian agent slides an ebony chest onto the altar. 'Thirty crowns of pure gold and the title of Baron in the occupied province,' he whispers. 'Give me the scroll and no blood need be spilt.' You hand over the vellum. You are rich beyond your dreams, but your soul belongs to the dark.

★ VICTORY ACHIEVED ★

The Doomquill Tales

"Your fate is written in ink."

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