

An Inquiry at Pinnokberg ...

By Mike Carniello

... In which the Players are asked to solve the mystery of a Burning Man ...

A top-level overview:

This adventure takes place over the course of one day, and is an ideal wedge between more complex campaigns.

It begins with the Player Characters (PCs), having just finished some certainly perilous adventure, making their way back home. Along the road, they enter the fair village of Pinnokberg, and decide to attend the annual “Turning of the Rose” Festival. This celebration honors harvest’s end, and features local food and ale, a traveling circus troupe, and, of course, political speeches.

After some merry-making, the PCs encounter a “bad boy,” young but claiming to be of the ancient Garpanian Cult. He provides some trouble but it is easily handled.

And then the pastoral scene is shaken; the festive event is marred by the truly odd spontaneous combustion of the Lord Mayor!

Various sets of locals accuse each other for the murder; this finger-pointing soon turns into full-fledged fighting. Civilization in Pinnokberg is breaking down fast. The local constabulary find themselves overwhelmed and contact the PCs for aid in solving the mystery of this Burning Man.

The PCs are granted full access to commercial sites they’ve encountered; they meet some resistance but most folk seem content to answer the tough investigators. The locals apparently even answer truthfully!

Several leads are more interesting than others. The PCs discover three separate but vaguely connected facts. These are:

- the Garpanian Cult had wanted payback or some sort of retribution from the Lord Mayor, as he had used their vile ways to attain his position
- the Hatterfeld family had a long-time blood feud with the mayor, and could not tolerate him in charge of the Village
- the Vice Mayor was not interested in talking to any investigators

After battling both the Cult, as well as members of the Hatterfeld clan ... it turns out that the Vice Mayor was indeed the culprit. The PCs find that all necessary components of the crime were in place: means, motive and opportunity.

The Vice Mayor is accused by the PCs. The villain comes clean and admits that he had supplied the potions necessary for the fires ... at the mayor's request!

It seems that the Lord Mayor himself had been dabbling in Black Arts. He believed that he could be resurrected as something more than human - if the right potions were used, if the right spells were in place. The Vice Mayor was his accomplice in the unholy task. To the horror of the PCs, they find this out just a tad too late, and the Vice Mayor manages to finish the resurrection process.

The Lord Mayor is reborn as a Daemon and turns angry to the Players (being a Daemon, and all). His humanity shed, the monster vows to rule with an absolute authority and grow his power to take over the whole countryside.

The PCs can choose to battle the Daemon and be the Village heroes, or run away to and fight some other day. Sometimes, discretion is the better part of valor.

The remainder of this adventure is divided into a Prologue, five Acts, and an Epilogue. A *Dramatis Personae* appendix details the individual attributes of key NPCs.

The GM has a lot of flexibility in this adventure to fill in details of the "Turning of the Rose" Festival and the town of Pinnokberg. These provide a background to this adventure but frankly aren't crucial to the central mystery.

Prologue

The winds off Mount Pinnok have changed direction and grown cooler, and the trees reflect golden brown leaves. The seasons are changing throughout the land, and this annual event is celebrated this year, as it is every year, by the fine residents of the fair village of Pinnokberg.

The "Turning of the Rose" Festival is in many ways the center of the village's year. It's a time when farmers can come in from their fields to share their efforts, merchants can trade their wares, and the townsfolk can come together for one last time before winter's onset.

The village of Pinnokberg has seen its share of bad times, and good times. Fortunately for the locals, these times bode well. The harvest has been bountiful, keeping both the food preservers and those businesses which support them (the glass blowers, the smithies, etc.) busy. Busy, yes, and rich, it may not be necessary to add.

Indeed, Pinnokberg is a fine place, a happy place, where bad things Just Don't Happen. Until this year ...

Act I

The Players are traveling back “home” (wherever that may be).

Along the road, they hear the excited shouts of children, the braying of merchants and the general hubbub of excited folk. They smell enticing foods which they've not enjoyed for a long while.

Entering the village, the Players find themselves drawn to GreenCenter, the aptly named park in the middle of town. There, the natives are enjoying the full bloom of the “Turning of the Rose” Festival.

As they are thirsty and hungry, the Players can choose among many food vendors, among them:

Susula Overbrip, who some say is the best pie-maker in this whole countryside. Her specialties include apple and pear pies, as well as small tarts which combine local fruits and dairy in a most exquisite manner.

Bobor Feyonner, who is known for his way with grilled meats. The tantalizing smells from his stall is one thing that led the Players to this Festival in the first place!

Horatio Rippon, a brewer who made the leap from home-based brewing for friends and family to a commercial enterprise. His easygoing manner and wide, open face make him well-liked amongst the villagers, and as such, he's the source of many secrets.

If equipment is needed to be replaced or repaired, Mister Wilkon and his aide Gioboldi are among the finest in Pinnokberg.

Everyone who the Players meet so far has been warm and open, kind and generous. Which makes it all the more jarring to encounter Jopps Kuggleman, a young man who is spending his afternoon following around those who “enjoy the party” too much. Kuggleman operates his thuggery by taking advantage of drunken mistake – this results in a loss of coin, or blood spilled ... or worse.

Kuggleman is a Garpanian Cult member, who decides to take on the Players in an overmatched street fight. It is expected that the PCs are more than happy to enjoin the young fellow in a street fight.

At this point, the PCs can decide to leave the village, but the GM should persuade them to stay and explore. It's also up to the GM to "guide" them over to the Speech Stand, where various politician types are behaving, well – like politicians.

The PCs catch the Lord Mayor Farleen in the middle of his speech:

“And so I say to you, my fellow Pinnoks, do you not want peace with honor? Do you not want a good life, a rich life, for you and all of your descendants? We are not blessed to be on this place, in this Empire, for too many years.”

“Let me help you during our short time together. Let me aid you on your journey throughout your lives. I can do things for you that you dare not even dream!”

And then: Farleen stops speaking, and looks frantically around, an odd look on his face as he seems to search the crowd for someone familiar.

Most unexpectedly, he bursts into flames.

Act II

The GM must convey the ensuing mayhem to the Players; the crowd is stunned and many things happen at once. Some start to scream, the weaker members start to flee, and the really weak just plain faint!

This is a decision point for the PCs; they can choose to stick around and find out what that was all about – or they can give a virtual shrug of the shoulders and move along to their next adventure. Again, the GM should nudge them along, as necessary, to stay.

The local constable, Petros Skoldink, races to the Speech Stand and tries to calm the crowd: “Remain calm! All is well! I am in control now!”

“Do not fear, this is not the work of Chaos! Surely, there must be some clear explanation...please, everyone, remain calm! All is well!”

And so the constable insists, evidence to the contrary.

If a **perception test** is passed, the PCs note that a black-cloaked figure idles quietly to the Stand and peers at the burnt body intently. Although not known to the PCs who that is, the GM is aware that Vice Mayor Boohus is the unknown person.

Several townsfolk encircle the Speech Stand, with shouts of “He deserved it!” and “It couldn't have happened to a nicer fellow” and similar sentiments.

An easy **perception test** by the Players reveals that these fellows look very much alike, as if they could be brothers. Which they are – several members of the Hatterfeld family.

This group is joined by another set of men; another successful **perception test** indicates that their clothes are identical to Jopps. The GM should be aware that these men are fellow Cult members.

The two groups don't seem to like each other, and while constable Skoldink is still trying to calm the crowd, the men break out into a fight.

The PCs can engage the fighters, but it is hoped this won't happen.

Skoldink notices the Players and recognizes them as adventurers who might be able to help him out.

He speaks to them: "Fine adventurers, please, wait. I fear that I alone cannot resolve this situation. I need your help. I implore you!"

"The Pinnokberg treasury is rather ... flush, shall we say, at the moment. I need you to solve this mystery – I need you to find out how and more importantly 'why' our dear Lord Mayor has, uh, suffered this unexpected misfortune. Your efforts will not be in vain. A reasonable explanation can calm this village. Please help me. I can offer a reward on behalf on the village ... some coin: 5000 gold pieces."

The PCs are expected to agree to help, the promise of a reward is sufficient. However, they can choose to move along, which unfortunately ends the adventure pretty much right there.

The Players start their investigation. There are no suspects at this point, and it is expected that they'll start by interviewing the townspeople that they've already met.

Act III

The PCs will interview several Pinnokberg residents in this Act. These events are laid out below in no particular order; the GM can guide the Players along as needed.

Jopps Kuggleman

Intimidate tests

- Jopps reveals that he personally knew the Lord Mayor.
- Jopps indicates that the Cult was warring with the Hatterfelds; he says that it was those two groups were fighting after the Lord Mayor “combusted.”
- Jopps says that the Cult also harbored a great dislike for the Vice Mayor.

Command test

- Jopps says that the Lord Mayor had had some dealings with the Cult in order to be elected. Apparently, though, the Lord Mayor had turned his back on the Cult, which was resultantly not pleased with him.

The PCs can decide to engage Jopps in another combat session, or can simply let him go.

Susula Overbrip

Charm tests

- She had a “crush” on the Lord Mayor
- She knew that the Vice Mayor had been heard to be involved in some sort of sorcery training

Gossip tests

- No information on the Cult
- No information on the Hatterfelds

Horatio Rippon

Charm tests

- He liked the Lord Mayor; he was a fellow drinker
- He liked the Vice Mayor – and had several times gave him “odd” brewing ingredients – such as powerful hop flowers and wild yeast strains

Gossip tests

- He had heard the Cult was after the Lord Mayor
- He had heard that the Hatterfelds were after the Vice Mayor

Bobor Feyonner

Charm tests

- He enjoyed the Lord Mayor’s company.
- He liked the Vice Mayor as a great customer – but had wondered what he needed such items typically rendered non-edible. Things like internal cow organs, and hoof parts.

Gossip tests

- The Lord Mayor was out to “get” the Cult for some unknown reason
- The Lord Mayor was seen often arguing with the Hatterfelds

Mister Wilkon

Charm tests

- He was fond of the Lord Mayor and seemed like a person of “fine character.”
- He liked the Vice Mayor as good customer; it seems that the Vice Mayor had recently purchased some custom-designed harnesses.

Gossip tests

- He has no use for the Cult, and considers them a pack of thieves.
- The Hatterfelds have held a grudge against Wilkon for many years, and he can’t recall why.

Gioboldi

Gossip tests

- He’s seen the Vice Mayor and Lord Mayor “experimenting” – like something out of a child’s tale – when we accidentally wandered into the basement of the town hall.
- He was aware that the Cult was plotting something against the Lord Mayor.
- He thought the Lord Mayor was actually a Hatterfeld, but had more-or-less disowned his heritage.

At this point in the adventure, the GM needs to make sure that the Players have somewhat focused on three main suspects:

- the Vice Mayor
- the Cult
- the Hatterfelds

Since the Vice Mayor is the lone named individual who the PCs haven’t yet talked to, it is expected that they would want to.

A **perception test** reveals the Vice Mayor, in disguise, is that cloaked figure who still is monitoring the burnt body of the Lord Mayor closely.

The Players should choose to engage the Vice Mayor in conversation (if not, the adventure ends with the Players failing in this mystery quest).

Assuming a **very easy command test** is successful, the Vice Mayor denies knowing anything about this event: “The Lord Mayor burning, I know not what happened. Surely, I am next in line to lead this village, but be assured, I had nothing to do with this. Nay, this is the work of Chaos, in some unholy form. It is not me!”

He runs away at this time, too quickly and unexpectedly, and the Players cannot even attempt to find him (at this point, of course!).

Act IV

The Players are reaching the endgame. The GM should guide the PCs to two encounters, involving the Cult and the Hatterfelds. These can occur in any order.

The Garpanian Cult

The Cult is found not in some sort of secret hideout, but in the tavern which they call their own: “Drink And Eat.” The tavern is located on a street off GreenCenter.

An old fellow greets them: “I’m Poppo Kuggleman. I hear that you have met my son Jopps.”

“We Garpanians hold our blood ties strong in Pinnokberg. We do not take kindly to strangers who do not treat our, eh, ‘family’ with the highest respect. And as the blood father of Jopps, you must realize that a price must be paid for your transgression.”

“The disrespect is disapproved!”

And with that turn of the phrase, Poppo engages the Players in combat.

After defeating Poppo, an **intimidate test** reveals nothing if successful.

The Hatterfelds

The Hatterfelds are found in their banking establishment. The leaders seem to be two brothers, Aleph and Daleph. They are quick to meet the Players; it is Aleph who speaks first: “The Lord Mayor deserved his fate. He is ... related ... to our family, and turned his back on us.”

Daleph is not silent: “We have long memories. Once a Hatterfeld, always a Hatterfeld. It is best that you leave this inquiry, but we can see that you will not treat this advice with the gravity it deserves.”

And so Aleph and Daleph challenge the Players to combat.

After defeating those two, a **intimidate test** reveals nothing if successful.

The Players are down to their final suspect, Vice Mayor Boohus. Although not sure of the motive exactly, they should at least realize that more information is needed.

If the PCs can't recall a previous mention of the town hall basement, the GM should feel free to guide them there. Once there, the Players find Boohus and it is hoped that they will accuse Boohus of the murder.

And Boohus will have words for the Players, as well:

“Fools! You should have let this inquiry go. Poking your noses into business which is not your concern was a bad decision. Let me tell you this.”

“I didn't murder Farleen, I did him a favor. Although you may see me as a simple politician, you should know that I am more than I appear. The Black Arts have served me well. I've been practicing, you see...”

“Murder Farleen? Murder?” Boohus literally tilts his head back and laughs.

“I killed him, yes I did – set the potions and designed a spontaneous combustion apparatus. I did all that and I killed him but I did NOT murder him.”

“It was HE who asked me to do this deed!”

Act V

Boohus continues:

“This was all part of the plan – Farleen's plan to rule Pinnokberg not as a human, but as a Daemon!”

There is no time for the Players to react to this revelation.

Boohus unwraps a fabric-covered lump which was on a table; this reveals the burnt body of Farleen. Again, there is no time for the Players to do anything.

Boohus pulls a bag from a drawer in the table; he throws a foul-smelling bit of rotten raw flesh onto the body and straps it on with a complicated metal harness. He flicks some what appear to be powders on the body and incants:

“Black is the night,
And Black shall be the day.
I call on the Chaos:
Let the people pay.
Sharp be the blade on the edge of my knife,
The Chaos so decrees that this man shall see new life!”

The room becomes dark as if it were the dead of night. A stirring is heard ... and the lifeless body is lifeless no more!

The darkness is cut by the fires burning within the body again. Farleen the human is no more, and Farleen the Daemon is born!

The Daemon turns to the Players and begins an attack.

Epilogue

Tough situation for the PCs at this point, and it's up to them to decide if they want to fight this daemon and go for that reward ... or if they decide that discretion is truly the better of valor, and run away!

XP allocation:

If the Players have survived the whole adventure, they get 125xp each. If they decide to take on the daemon, and win, that's an additional 75xp. It's -25xp if they run.

If the GM likes, the Players can get 5xp for each positive decision (which kept the adventure moving forward).

Dramatis Personae

Susula Overbrip

Career: Burgher
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24 %	22 %	31 %	27 %	21 %	21 %	24 %	25 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	12	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Search, Speak Language (Tilean, Reikspiel)

Talents: Dealmaker, Savvy

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: None

Trappings: Abacus, Lantern, One Set of Good Clothing

Bobor Feyonner

Career: Burgher
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24 %	22 %	25 %	21 %	21 %	25 %	21 %	22 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Search, Speak Language (Tilean, Reikspiel)

Talents: Dealmaker, Savvy

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: None

Trappings: Abacus, Lantern, One Set of Good Clothing

Horatio Rippon

Career: Burgher

Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
23 %	23 %	22 %	26 %	22 %	20 %	21 %	23 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Consume Alcohol, Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Search, Speak Language (Tilean, Reikspiel)

Talents: Dealmaker, Savvy

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: None

Trappings: Abacus, Lantern, One Set of Good Clothing

Mister Wilkon

Career: Tradesman

Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
22 %	24 %	21 %	21 %	24 %	25 %	22 %	24 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Gossip, Drive, Gaggle, Evaluate, Perception, Read/Write, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Trade (Armourer, Smith)

Talents: Savvy

Armour: Light Armour (Leather Jerkin)

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 1, Legs 0

Weapons: None

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jerkin)

Gioboldi

Career: Servant

Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
21 %	21 %	21 %	21 %	21 %	21 %	21 %	21 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Trade (Cook), Blather, Dodge Blow, Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Perception, Read/Write

Talents: Flee!, Hardy, Very Resilient

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: None

Trappings: One Set of Good Craftmanship Clothing, Pewter Tankard, Tinderbox, Storm Lantern, Lamp Oil

Jopps Kuggleman

Career: Thug

Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35 %	26 %	32 %	26 %	29 %	21 %	26 %	24 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow, Gamble, Intimidate, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue)

Talents: Lightening Reflexes, Disarm, Resistance to Poison, Wrestling, Strike to Stun

Armour: Medium Armour (Mail Shirt and Leather Jerkin)

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 1, Body 2, Legs 0

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Dugel), Knuckle-Dusters

Trappings: Knuckle-Dusters, Medium Armour (Mail Shirt and Leather Jerkin)

Petros Skoldink

Career: Soldier

Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
22 %	22 %	23 %	22 %	23 %	22 %	24 %	22 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Heal, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Drive, Gossip, Intimidate

Talents: Disarm, Strike Mighty Blow, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder), Rapid Reload, Mighty shot

Armour: Light Armour (Full Leather Armour)

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 1, Body 2, Legs 0

Weapons: Hand weapon (Sword)

Trappings: Firearm with ammunition for 10 shots, Shield, Light Armour (Full Leather Armour), Uniform

Vice Mayor Boohus

Career: Politician

Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
22 %	26 %	26 %	32 %	35 %	22 %	22 %	22 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	2	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History), Academic Knowledge (Law), Blather, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Performer (Actor), Read/Write, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Schemer, Streetwise, Master Orator, Public Speaking

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: None

Trappings: Best Craftmanship Hand Weapon, Best Craftmanship Leather Jack, Pamphlets

Popps Kuggleman

Career: Assassin

Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36 %	33 %	25 %	33 %	35 %	25 %	33 %	29 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	2	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Disguise, Gossip, Perception, Prepare Poison, Scale Sheer Surface, Secret Signs (Thief), Shadowing, Silent Move

Talents: Quick Draw, Lightning Parry, Sharpshooter, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Specialist Weapon Group(Throwing), Street Fighting, Streetwise, Swashbuckler

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: 4 Throwing Knives

Trappings: Net, 4 Throwing Knives, Grappling Hook, 10 yards of Rope, 1 dose of Poison (any)

The Hatterfelds (Aleph and Daleph)

Career: Thug
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24 %	23 %	26 %	22 %	28 %	22 %	22 %	22 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	2	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow, Gamble, Intimidate, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue)

Talents: Lightning Reflexes, Disarm, Resistance to Poison, Wrestling, Strike to Stun

Armour: Medium Armour (Mail Shirt and Leather Jerkin)

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 2, Legs 0

Weapons: Hand weapon (Knuckle-Dusters)

Trappings: Knuckle-Dusters, Medium Armour (Mail Shirt and Leather Jerkin)

Lord Mayor Farleen (as a Lesser Daemon)

Career: Lesser Daemon
Race: (was Human)

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
60 %	55 %	68 %	56 %	48 %	35 %	40 %	52 %
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	6	5	4	0	0	0

Skills: Dodge Blow, Intimidate, Perception, Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic), Speak Language (Dark Tongue)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Fearless, Flier, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Strike Mighty Blow

Chaos Mutation: Tail

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Claws

Trappings: None!