

DON'T LOOK NOW – THE EXTRA BITS

By Clive Oldfield

The following text contains a number of sections from *Don't Look Now*, the scenario we published in *Warpstone* issue 23. They were cut for reasons of space but we think they are still worth publishing for those GMs who wish to include.

Cover Story

As a one off adventure or a scenario played without the context of a campaign the following may suffice as a players' introduction.

You were staying at the 'Hole in the Wall', a boarding house, doss house, inn type affair in *Kruiersmuur*, a run down area in the Southeast corner of *Marienburg*. It's five Shillings a night, and it shows. There seems to be loads of foreigners about, *Brets*, *Luigis*, those sorts. Sometimes you get work and sometimes you don't. Though not having a permanent job kind of suits you, most of the time. If you can't get by in *Marienburg* on your wits and your will, where can you get by? There's money all over the place, here, you can smell it. You just can't get hold of much of it. There's also plenty of places to spend it.

So this guy came, he looked alright. He said he was *Rotter*, a merchant. But the way he sort of hung his head to one side when he said 'merchant', made you think he might be a little more (or a little less) than that. He said he was expecting a cargo up on *Daankkanaal* very soon and he needed a few strong arms to unload it, quickly. The way he hung his head to one side when he said 'cargo', also gave a certain impression.

He said he wanted it done quickly and with a number of you helping it could be done in less than an hour. There would be a *Guilder* for everyone. A *Guilder* for one hour's work; it just doesn't get better than that. Luckily he chose you as one of his crew. So you all filed out up onto *Daankkanaal* and waited for the boat. It didn't arrive. *Rotter* was looking a bit anxious, and the longer you waited the worse it got. Someone mentioned that you ought to be paid more for the wait. *Rotter* said he'd pay for the work, but he wasn't gonna pay for someone to sit out on the quay all afternoon, sunbathing. If he didn't like it, he could go back to the *Hole in the Wall* he crawled out of.

After another hour, a couple of the work crew left. You stayed, even though you thought it might be some kind of

wind up; you needed the money. Then, not before time, the boat arrived, a small one-master, up from *Carroburg* by the look of it. The crew looked a bit hardened and weather worn and eyed you suspiciously. *Rotter* looked relieved and supervised the unloading. It was getting late and he wanted it done before it got too dark. You loaded the barrels (no idea what was in them, not liquid, for sure) onto carts and *Rotter's* men took a cart somewhere, returning after five minutes while you loaded the other cart. In little more than an hour it was all done. *Rotter* was thankful, paid up twenty *Schillings* and to make up for the wait, treated everyone to a roast sausage, *grevenfeld* and beet kebab from an *Arabyan* vendor who was passing. Then he was gone and so was the boat.

It was pretty dark, and no one else was around as you sat on the quay of *Daankkanaal*, passing the time of evening, and finishing your kebab, which was pretty good.

You Might Want to Reconsider the Timing of Your Search

This is a minor, sidetracking encounter that can easily be omitted. If the PCs start making enquiries about ghosts or a mysterious drowning in *Kruiersmuur*, they will come to the attention of *Bella Donna*, a noted medium for the *Remean* community. *Bella* is a con artist and she will attempt to play on the wishful thinking and gullibility of the players in order to make as much money as she can. Nothing she can say will be of any use to the PCs.

The message from *Bella Donna* could be handed over any time the PCs need a hand or if the story needs moving along. It should happen after the PCs have been asking around in *Kruiersmuur* and also after they have realised that the vision was somehow paranormal.

Any local in *Remasweg* will be able to point the PCs towards *Bella Donna's* flat above a butcher's shop on the main road. They will also be able to explain that *Bella* is a very special lady with the power of the third eye. Depending on who they talk to, some will respect her for this, others consider she would have been better off strangled at birth. With little effort, the PCs could learn that over the years *Bella* has made many predictions including the last great flood, the bloody death of a prostitute and a recent rise in certain taxes. If the PCs are expecting a wise woman with a gift beyond their



comprehension then they shouldn't be disappointed.

Bella is a talented Charlatan. She uses a network of unknowing and enthusiastic gossips to collect all the information she needs to come across as a Wise Woman. She has a prodigious memory and a flair for the melodramatic, thus the superstitious housewives of the Tilean community of Marienburg are convinced Bella Donna has the power to see beyond the veil. It did not take long for the PC's investigations to come to her attention and she intends to dupe them into paying for her false sooth.

The steps up to Bella's rooms are reached by a door next to the butcher's shop entrance. There is a wall between the shop and the stairs but the stench of death has, over the years, seeped into every nook of the building. It is most unpleasant. In Bella's sitting room, above the shop, the smell is worst of all but Bella seems oblivious to it.

Bella herself will open the main door to her rooms and welcome the PCs in with an intentionally melodramatic, *'I have been expecting you. The inner eye sees many things that normal eyes cannot.'* She will beckon the PCs to sit down. There are only three chairs in the room and one is obviously Bella's. In addition, the room has a low ceiling and is quite small. A large group of PCs all crammed into this small room should either be made to feel uncomfortable and claustrophobic or mildly silly.

Bella will raise a palm to silence any over eager questioning while she slowly and deliberately prepares tea and cake for everyone present. She will look most hurt if anyone refuses the cake and insist they try at least a small slice, for she made it that very morning, especially for them. The cake is, in fact, very tasty. Only when all this formality has been done will Bella sit back and declare that the PCs must have many questions for her.

Suddenly a sleek black cat will dart out from under a chair, perhaps surprising some PCs. It will leap onto Bella's lap and after a bit of gardening, settle down for a nap, purring loudly. The cat's name is Ranald, but Bella will not let this fact known and if she has to call it in their presence, she will call it Pee Wee.

Before she gives the party any information she will require payment. The PCs will be anxious to learn as much as they can and Bella is a shrewd woman so will fleece the party for as much as she can get, within reason. Like any good Marienburger, Bella knows the more money that is paid for it, the more valuable the merchandise will appear.

Bella has a deck of large, old-fashioned playing cards. She will make a performance of shuffling and preparing the deck and getting the PC asking a question to cut the cards. She will then pick a number of cards from the deck and seem to be interpreting them to find the answer. The act should be convincing enough to fool all but those who really can divine using such cards, and even they might not be sure.

To make herself look more mystical, and because she does not actually know any, Bella will not give the PCs any hard facts. She will accept their questions and consider them carefully before giving an enigmatic answer. Bella is an old pro at this confidence game so will come across as very genuine. If the PCs get suspicious and lean on her a bit too much, they should be ashamed of themselves for picking on a defenceless old lady, but she will not drop the charade; her livelihood and reputation depend on this. Some answers she might give are as follows:

- ◆ 'The one you seek is not far away, but further than you think.'
- ◆ 'There are many ways to arrive at the same place, even if you must swim.'
- ◆ 'Blood runs in red.'
- ◆ And, of course, 'Don't look now'.

Bella Donna Charlatan

"I see... I see in your cards great hope for the future. I see a handsome stranger. He is tall and dark, and he rides a pale horse."

Bella is a middle-aged lady who, though not obese, is certainly over weight. Remarkable jowls hang from her face and she has an exceedingly large and hypnotically captivating hairy mole on one cheek. She is one of those middle aged ladies who never seems to know when to stop applying her make up. With her face over whitened with powder, and her cheeks and lips over reddened with rouge she makes a bizarre spectacle. She looks more like the stereotypical Bretonnian noble in a bawdy play than a wise woman.

Bella makes a handsome living preying on the worst fears and most hopeful aspirations of the most gullible of Kruiersmuur's Remean community. She is well known by all in that Ghetto and well respected by most. Affable and chatty, those that gossip with her do not realise that they are simply adding to the store of knowledge that this charlatan will later use to make her 'predictions' more authentic.

Bella is as sharp as a tack and rarely lets anyone get the better of her. She is also not overly greedy and would rather someone leave her premises content with what she has said for a single guilder, than unhappy about it for two. This has more to do with repeat orders and customer satisfaction than any goodwill on her part.

The Guy Whose Grandma Was Knocked Over on The Docks

The party can bump into Tomas van der Windt at anytime. He can easily be omitted, but in this mostly investigative scenario if the PCs are itching for a fight or a pub brawl, Tomas is your man. The reason he did not give chase when some hapless PC knocked over his dear old gran is easy to see; he is a huge, fat man. Tomas is about six feet five inches tall and nearly that wide. He weighs about 350 lbs. He is a foreman on the docks and so doesn't need to move around too fast, just intimidate. His increased wages for his extra



responsibilities go on beer and chicken-fried herring.

The encounter can take place anywhere, but I'm putting it in the Feathered Nest, a seedy bar in Suiddock. The dark and cramped confines there will make it harder for the PCs to avoid violence. Tomas is drinking with three friends, who may look small when compared to him, compared to the average PC they will also be large. The PCs may be already sat down in a cubicle enjoying a quiet drink when suddenly above the din of the tavern comes a commanding shout.

'Oi, you, you're the rascal (he doesn't really say rascal) that knocked over my dear old gran. Seventy-three she is, and not a word of apology.' The bar will go quickly silent as Tomas approaches the PCs, flanked by his sidekicks. A number of the clientele will up and leave almost immediately or move to the far side of the bar. *'You need to be taught some manners'*, Tomas will say a lot more quietly, but just as menacingly.

It is completely up to the PCs how they play this. Tomas is not the wise man of Marienburg, but he doesn't care who he fights so it should not be easy for the PCs to avoid a physical confrontation. Tomas' personality will probably be more susceptible to flattery and subservience and a party willing to grovel will get beaten, but not much. Any attempt at pure intimidation on the PCs' part will fail, as Tomas will not want to lose face in front of his mates and in this bar. A party willing to stand up for itself in a small way, apologise (after all it was their fault) and reach sensible recompense might be able to escape with their pride, if not their finances, intact. 'Beer money' are the watchwords, here.

If the situation does turn into a brawl then the big man and his mates will be satisfied in handing out a thorough but fair beating; weapons, improvised or otherwise, will not be used by them, first. The Black Caps can arrive any time, of course, or not at all.

Visser's Apartment at the Guildhall

Visser has used his influence within the guild to obtain the most desirable apartment in a grand annexe of the guildhall. It occupies the entire top floor and is sumptuously decorated. It had been occupied by an old doctor of many years service to the guild, an expert on warts and blemishes, who died a few months ago. The PCs can look into it, but his death was entirely natural.

The apartment comprises three rooms, the reception, the bedchamber and the study. Not much of Visser's personality has been given to the rooms and only the desk in the study looks well used. Most of the objects in the apartment belong to the guild. There are several curiosities on display that were clearly intended to perform mind boggling functions upon obscure parts of the human anatomy.

The desk contains a number of papers and epistles connected with the legitimate business of the guild. Looking through the letters it seems that Visser was trying to befriend and

charm as many members as he could with a politician's grace. There are also sketches of equipment intended for a silver smith, as well as bills and receipts for their manufacture. The equipment can be found in the laboratory under the guildhall, most of it connected in some manner to Ana's body.

Some items of direct interest to the PCs include a scroll in Visser's own hand detailing instructions in the Necromantic spell, Hand of Dust. As well as being a good PC introduction to the decadent world of Necromancy, it might also serve as evidence of Visser's guilt should the PCs be facing some sort of trial after the adventure goes horribly wrong.

Another paper is one that Visser has dug up from the guild records. It details the minutes of a disciplinary procedure against the guild member Jens Labreuk in 2402. The minutes detail the expulsion of a young physician for several counts of purchasing very recently deceased cadavers, against guild regulations. The players might be able to guess that Visser is in fact Labreuk. He has a copy of the procedure mostly to mull over and feel sorry for himself. He also has used it to tell if any relatives of those who were involved in his expulsion are now guild members, so he can deal with them when he seizes power. The two names Flemisch and Unterhooven are ringed in the article. Of course, a doctor Gunther Flemisch and a doctor Felix Unterhooven are both members of the guild at this time and those mentioned in the minutes are long dead relatives.

The Guild of Physicians

The guild is a venerable and respected institution. The large carved stone guildhall sits proudly among similar buildings in Paleisbuurt. Normally, like any elite organisation, they are careful about who they admit to their premises, but the public theatre is special and raises a good amount of money for the individual surgeons and the guild itself.

News of the strange vision and the sudden evacuation of the theatre will spread quickly through the city. Some opportunists will claim to have been there and working for drinks or self-aggrandisement will exaggerate or completely fabricate accounts of what actually happened. Over the next few days many of the stories will become ludicrous and help the more reasonable to conclude that perhaps nothing happened at all.

The guild will be consistent with their own cover story. They will insist some prankster student spiked everyone's coffee with surgical alcohol and things got carried away, and go into no further detail.

If the adventure is not wrapped up shortly after the vision then the PCs might wish to interview Flemisch or Gruybaar.

