

Lerin Lopel

You are the mayor of Hound's Teeth. You got into this job by being dumb enough to displease no one in particular. While no one really liked you as a choice for mayor, everyone saw you as a tool that they could manipulate, and as, at worst, a neutral force. The other members of the city council let you leer at the pretty female warriors who walk in, and encourage you to drink and lech at their expense, so long as you don't put up any strong opposition when they have a bill on the table. You are also considered to have a little bit of idiots insight and idiots luck, occasionally throwing out an idea that no one else would have thought of that provides just the answer that was needed. However, mostly, everyone considers you to be too stupid to understand the laws, much less make them, and leaves you alone, so long as you don't drool on the table.

All of which works out very well for you. You long ago learned that the one place no one ever looks for dirt or trouble is on their own nose. You are widely considered an idiot barely capable of managing your own affairs, and so long as people accept this, no one cares what you do. You are, in fact, the leader of a rapidly growing, underground cult to the great and vicious god Morrendol. Morrendol is a god of power, and of the gaining of power through any means. He delights in war, betrayal, lust, and slaughter for its own sake.

When you were young, you always dreamed of power: the power to have what you wanted, do what you wanted and control those around you. You grew up in a small merchant family, with no particular wealth or power in the town. Your family was never at any risk of hunger or homelessness, but you were never well-to-do either. Unlike most children of such families who have such dreams, you were offered an opportunity to attain it.

On your fourteenth birthday, you were alone outside your house when a man walked up to you. He told you to follow him and--finding yourself drawn to him--you did. He took you to a part of town that your parents had always guided you away from. It wasn't the old decrepit part of town where the run of the mill criminals live: it was the part of town with the good brothels and the high stakes gambling emporiums. The places where politicians and nobles are caught, and fortunes are made and lost.

He brought you into a very swank, if slightly sleazy bar, populated by barely clad young servers and well dressed middle aged men. Behind the bar was a door that led into a hallway lined with solid wooden doors. He led you into one of them, then into a sealed room. You had heard about these, but only in rumors and jokes. These sealed rooms are protected from any type of spying magic, and any type of teleportation or mind reading from inside or out. Rooms like that are where very wealthy merchants--or very high-ranking criminals--conduct their business in privacy.

From this room, he opened a hidden panel with a keyword, and brought you down a long dark hallway. The door closed behind you with a slam as soon as you stepped through. The room was very dark, but as your eyes adjusted, you began to see runes and symbols etched in the walls, ceiling and floor. In the center of the room was a high, circular table, surrounded by small charred piles, so burnt that you couldn't tell what they used to be. The man spoke a name that while you can now say it, can never be written.

As he finished speaking that name, the room filled with smoke, and a great and terrible creature arose from the ground. As the smoke cleared, you could see it looking at you. In your head, you heard the most terrifying bellow you could imagine. It offered you the power you had sought, if you gave it what it sought. It offered you a simple choice: a life as a dull son of a small-time merchant, following him into a business in decline, or the leader of a great cult, which would gain more and more power over the city and eventually the world. All you had to do was give it your allegiance and your soul.

The deal was made and the pact was sealed almost before you knew what you were doing. But you were satisfied. This was just what you knew you needed, what you had been seeking your whole short life: a Way In. For the next three years, you never saw your family. You spent all your time learning the ways of the demon and the ways of the leader. It taught you great and powerful

magic, and also simple tricks to deal with humans. It taught you how to make them follow you like sheep or, just as easily, ignore you like dirt.

Eight years ago, the last mayor of Hound's Teeth started making an unbearable nuisance of himself. He had suddenly gotten it into his head to take a little too much interest in the affairs of the leaders of certain guilds in the city. It was explained to him that this was, perhaps, not the best of ideas, but apparently he was too thickheaded to get the hint, and one day found his head quite a bit thinner.

After this, as usual, there was a conundrum amongst the council about who should be the next mayor. Everyone had a pet candidate, and no two people could agree on anyone. Each person suggested was too partisan towards one side, too prejudiced, too nosy, too greedy or, quite simply, had too many ardent beliefs. You had managed to work your way (through appearing dumb, but jovial, charismatic and agreeable) into the council's staff, and someone, half as a joke, suggested you when you walked in to bring ale. Then they started thinking about it: a mayor with nearly no ideas of his own. Such a mayor could be manipulated by . . . well, by anyone. It was perfect. Each council member believed they would be most able to manipulate you, and figured that, at worst, you would be harmless and the balance of the council would stay about the same.

They put nice clothing on you taught you a speech and generally treated you like a well-behaved pet monkey. You were careful to show only the occasional "idiot's insight" that you were known for, and let them lead you around by the hand. They supplied you with whatever you asked for, which was mostly wine, women and the occasional shiny gem or bit of art, and gave you a nice house with some servants (who would of course report back to them). They let you sit in meetings, make suggestions and ogle women. You tend to go for female fighters, mostly because they are very useful on the rare occasions when one will accept figuring they can get something out of someone as stupid and rich as you. No one really notices when a traveling warrior slips away from her group. Plus, they tend to have nice shapes and good tits: plenty to get "distracted" by while the other council members discuss other things that might provide useful information.

By the end of the first day, you had used the demons powers to brainwash all of your servants so that they would report to the council exactly what it expected to see. Meanwhile, this gave you the perfect opportunity. Over the past few year, you had been slowly gathering followers, and growing your cult in the background. You knew that, however powerful your patron might be, if you were caught too early on, you and the other mortal followers would be wiped out, so you had to keep things to a manageable level.

Now, however, you could keep an eye on the council, and subtly direct their attention away from any inconvenient directions. You began establishing your group more firmly in the city. You encouraged your followers to get into positions of power, gathered more as quickly as possible, and began acquiring land in the names of various church members (partially using the money that the council fed you to keep you happy). At this point, the leader of the engravers guild, the leader of the blacksmith's guild, the third most powerful wizard in the city, and several important merchants are all members of your little group. It's been pretty easy for you to "take a liking to" someone and get the council to funnel money and aid their way, or grant them whatever they want. Because you rarely ask for things, the other council members are generally willing to give you whatever it takes to keep you happy.

Finally, your lord will be able to take his deserved place in the power structure of this city (with, of course, you at his side). You have a few more people poised to take important positions (if anything should happen to those currently in them). You hope within the next month to take out a few remaining blocks and then summon your patron and gain control of the city. You expect a few of your people to come in to today's meetings asking for money or permission to build, or similar things. You need to make sure that these people get what they need. Other than that, it's especially important right now to make sure everyone else continues to think you're an idiot until the absolute last minute. You have plenty of powerful magic granted you by your patron, but you've found it less useful than you would like in dealing with the council. The guildmage Koric has a field around the meeting room that suppresses all magic in a way you haven't yet figured out how to circumvent.

People You Know:

The Council:

Koric Maltin: The leader of the mages' guild, and probably the most powerful person in the city. Koric maintains wards on the council that prevent anyone from using magic to alter activities therein, which is quite unhelpful. In Koric's mind, the ideal structure of the city is how it was 150 years ago, when he was a child. Before the Empire took over, this city was ruled by a hereditary king, who kept a very firm control over actions in the city. Koric is the council member who is least happy about your presence as mayor, he would much prefer a strong mayor who would use his power to its fullest.

Serian Winter: Serian seems to be almost as much of a dullard as you play, which means that you have every reason to keep an eye on him. He is the token noble from the hereditary kings, who must sit on the council. He plays to his nobles, which is very convenient, since many of them are in your cult. Mostly, however, he just seems to care about maintaining his lands and getting his hands on any pretty women who happen to be around. He must be hiding something. If he were really that stupid he would be dead by now.

Stani Bowin: An obnoxious, know-it-all, holier-than-thou do-gooder with an eye to everyone else's failings. He is the high priest of Poral, the official god of the city, who is just as obnoxious as Stani as far as you can tell. What makes Stani worse is that he doesn't seem to be corrupt in any fashion. In fact, he genuinely seems to practice every thing he preaches and have every virtue in abundance but modesty. Luckily, he doesn't seem to suspect you of anything but drunken lechery, which he already hates quite enough. The one chink in his armor (which is depressingly gold and shining, and you wouldn't be surprised if he wears it to bed) is his ex-wife. She will come in and scream at him in the middle of closed council meetings.

Mortak Vonis: The head of the guards. Mortak is easy if you're looking for chinks in someone's armor. His armor is perhaps a bit sturdier than Stani's in battle, but nowhere near as shiny or imposing. He is good at his job in general, but he is a gambler and can be played very easily. It especially helps that half the bookies in this town are under your sway, either directly through your cult or indirectly through your connections. Unfortunately, his willingness to take bribes has limits. As soon as someone is clearly being hurt, his ethics outweigh his debts. However, you have had no trouble having your lackies convince him that your cult is harmless. He certainly has no idea you are involved. If you could figure out some way to get him into your group, that would be ideal, but he seems far too principled.

Tofen Sarish: The leader of the merchant guild. Now this is someone you understand. She is highly intelligent, charismatic and manipulative and has one goal: to make as much money as she can. She will do anything that she thinks will help this goal. However, she is not stupid or money grubbing: she is perfectly happy to donate to a worthy charity if she thinks it will gain her enough new customers to increase her investment. You have often "influenced" her vote on things that were of no significant import to her by covert "donations" through one of your underlings. She does not know that they were from you: she has the sense not to pry into the affairs of the senders of anonymous bribes. She always delivers, because she is quite aware that not delivering would end them. The bribes have to be pretty high: someone like her is not easily bought, but they can be well worth it.

Abilities:

Demon Gifts: If you are not in the council room, you can supply many magical effects. You warp the fabric of the universe and people's minds. You don't have the power to, say, stop time, or destroy the city instantly, but you could certainly erase someone's memories of a time, convince them that they are seeing something that isn't there, or cause a small hut to be consumed by a fireball. (See a GM if you want to activate).