

THE SAVIOUR OF SOULS

THE SAVIOUR OF SOULS is a *Stormbringer Story Seed* written by John R White (©2009)

Stormbringer Story Seeds are developed to spark a Gamemaster's imagination and help to create an interesting and diverse world in which their players adventure.

A large excited crowd in a poorer part of the city draws the attention of the adventurers. Jostling their way to a place where they can observe the spectacle, they witness a miracle worker exorcising the taint of chaos from a penitent volunteer...

LONZO KANT - A HEALER OF SIN

Lonzo Kant, a healer who terms himself "The Saviour of Souls" is a tall imposing figure, his robes adorned with symbols of Law. As the characters watch, a chained and shuffling cloaked figure is produced from a covered wagon by one of the Kant's jealous henchmen. Using potent charms and exorcisms the holy man proceeds to call out the taint of chaos from the self-proclaimed sinner and put it into 'the foul, damned vessel of abomination, kept chained by the power of Law'.

The cowed individual thrashes with pain, and his cloak is flung off for him, revealing a hell-spawned monstrosity. He has three glaring eyes and shimmering scales over a bestial snout-like mouth; from which strange groans and gibbering spill.

Before the crowds fearful gaze, the finger of one of the hell creature's hands elongates and thrashes like a worm. Revolted, the crowd of onlookers scream or reach for stones to use against the 'sin-eater', but they are quelled by the oratory of Kant. He informs them that he has arrived to save all their souls from the grasp of Chaos, and implores them to be vigilant against the Agents of Hell who seek to end his good work.

Unsurprisingly, the crowd seems to rise as one on Kant's words and the fervour of their convictions at his message seems to flow like wildfire. Even as Kant moves on to spread 'his message' the results of his demonstration can be seen, with any one foreign or 'otherworldly' looking being accosted by the thugs who feel it their obligation to 'rid the city of sin'.

THE JOB OFFER

As the adventurers prepare to escape the increasingly aggressive crowd, they are approached by the agent of a 'gentleman' who wishes to speak with them – none other than Old Hrolmar's Chancellor Helforth. He clearly feels disgust and cynicism towards Kant, and says that scenes like the one they witnessed are becoming more frequent in the city. While not powerless, he wishes to seek to enlist the adventurers aid in foiling the Healer's activities (as that way his involvement is somewhat removed in case anything goes wrong).

Apparently Kant is under the protection of the wealthy Malvolio family: a noble house led by Lord Raladon Malvolio, an elderly and dying man. Although the true purpose of Mavolio's patronage has yet to be identified, many think that he is looking to something 'make-up' for the somewhat sadistic nature of his youth – by enabling Kant to rid the city of the Chaos taint that obviously so affected him in his younger days. As a result, Kant is currently quite at liberty to ply his trade, although he is careful to keep

his performances to the poorer areas of the city. The various official powers of Old Hrolmar, including the city's temples, have so far been careful to leave Kant alone, fearing that they might be denounced as heretics in league with chaos.

Helforth fears that when Duke Avan Astran returns from abroad, he will attempt to put a stop to Kant's ministrations. The Chancellor is worried that this could be the excuse the Inquisition needs to accuse the Duke of heresy and remove him from power.

Helforth seems utterly convinced that Kant is an evil, twisted charlatan and the adventurers are asked if they can be hired to help end Kant's career. Ideally they must try and discredit the man to ensure he can be banished from Old Hrolmar without any adverse repercussions.

DISARMING KANT

The task, for which a small sum is promised, proves to be hard. Not only because Kant has a small band of flagellant followers who are devoted to his service and he can easily sway a superstitious mob into a violent religious fervour. But also whilst residing in the Malvolio estates each night, he has the addition of the noble's armed guard for protection.

Whether or not the group takes Helforth's employ, bad blood and violence soon flares up in parts of the city, most of which is directed at the immigrant community or visiting ships (as who else but foreigners would worship the powers of Chaos!). In response, some of immigrant communities start to form their own groups of watchmen, which in turn leads to yet more violence. Less obviously, the Cult of the Pale Orchid has taken exception to Kant's gospel, ignoring as it does the beauty of Chaos and merely portrays it as a hideous curse.

As for the Inquisition, they have been summoned by their agents in the city and have long awaited a chance to get their hands on Kant.

ABOUT KANT

Kant in fact is an ex-priest of Law who has fallen from grace a long time ago. He stole a grimoire from the Brotherhood of the Brush and, among other matters, learnt from it a spell to bestow the mutation of Chaos into another being.

Initially he made a living using his magic to dupe peasants in rural areas, convincing them that the toads and goats he blighted were vessels for the transference of Chaos from repentant sinners. He later discovered that people feared Chaos more if he provided the evidence of a human damned soul. Over time, his methods change from simple displays of so called 'infections of Chaos' through to most recently burning his victims in public - when he deems their mutations or behaviour as truly dangerous!

So far he has always managed to stay a step or two ahead of the Inquisition, but the chance of make something of himself has lured him from his usual backwaters of the kingdom. He has decided to quit Vilmir as soon as he has collected a generous inheritance from Lord Malvolio - who will most certainly die once he has changed his will in Kant's favour! After which he intends taking ship for Jharkor and assuming a new identity.

THE CHAOS MARKED

Kant's current captive is a poor half-witted peasant, whose tongue has been cut out. He is festooned with chains and apparently potent, protective charms which seem to have burnt parts of his flesh (these are

actually the result of small branding irons). The prisoner is kept chained in an iron cage on a wagon used by Kant.

This peasant is probably the best weapon the group as at refuting Kant and his fervour, as a skilled physician or wizard will soon determine the source of the man's injuries. Rescuing the poor wretched madman, however, should prove interesting, especially given the activities of different parties with an interest in Kant.

Finally, there is always the possibility that between Kant's torture and magic that the captive really has embraced chaos. Have the marks of Chaos and his descent into madness already damned his soul irredeemably to the ruinous powers?

SCENARIO POSSIBILITIES

The following are just suggestions on how to add additional twists to this Story Seed. Gamemasters are encouraged to develop their own.

- The Cult of the Pale Orchid launches an attack at the same time as the adventurers.
- A dabbling sorcerer wants the adventurers to obtain and sell him the mutant. He believes he can use the being as a familiar, which will protect him from the worst effects of dealing with the powers of Chaos.
- The Inquisition blackmails one of the characters into co-operating with them.
- Kant hires the party as protection.
- The madman desperate for revenge sells his soul to a power of Chaos which enjoys having an avatar to wreck havoc within Old Hrolmar.