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## Session 0-5: Jeudi, 13 Harvest 882 (Nones)

The Hungry Barrel Tavern, with its amusing signage featuring a toothy maw on a wooden cask, stands outside Triskellian's walls on the north road. When the winds are right and the shipyards are busy, you can just hear the sounds of lumber being sawn in the west while you enjoy your drink. Today, though, the air is still and cold, prompting many of the patrons to break their denarii on hot buttered rum and warm cider.

"Hah! Jean-Matthieu! Just the wolf I'm lookin' for." Gammon the goat grins, displaying not-so-straight teeth, and nearly sloshes his own rum out gesturing as he comes close. "How are ya?"

Jean-Matthieu strolls in with an odd confidence considering he isn't one to start casual fights, but perhaps some of that is just his imposing frame. "I'll be better once I get some of that rum and butter cake in me! How about yourself?" He grins, but just a bit.

He throws an arm over your shoulder, which between his smaller frame and apparent tipsiness, makes it look like you're about to carry him home rather than the evening's drinking just getting started. A hush comes into Gammon's voice. "Good, good... bit scared but excited, these are tense times, ya know? Could go either way. You superstitious at all, Jean-M'? All up to date on yer prayers?"

"Prayer?" His face exposes the slightly cringe of insult before it returns to a comfortable smile. "You should know better than that. Scared? no. Tense? always." He glances about, "Are we in trouble here?" His shiny white eyes darts about, a stark contrast to the sleek dark brown fur that adorns his face.

"Nah, nah, not here. But I got a ghost story what might have the two of us in it, before long. Get yer orders up and come sit wit me, I think you'll find this interestin'."

Jean lets out a hearty laugh, the kind that one might expect from his size, and the sound deafens the crowd around him for a moment but passes like a crashing wave back into the sounds of glasses, plates and the drowning of sorrows. "Very well, I'll be right there." He heads over to the bar with some haste.

Once the drinks and food are settled (with the assistance of a tabby barmaid whose laughter at Gammon's occasional antics sounds... forced, but he doesn't notice), Gammon leans in with an exaggerated air of conspiracy. "So the Don bein' dead and all. Nasty business. Ya know aught 'bout his wife?"

Jean leans in, puts an hand on Gammon's shoulder and nods conspiratorily, as if to say, 'do go on' without words.

"Them Jakobas, they got bad magics ya don't see here in Calabria. Spirits, demons, circlin' round 'em like urchins in Old Town. If ya saw her in that parade, if you saw her eyes at all, ya'd believe me fer sure."

Jean whispers just loud enough for Gammon to hear, "So you think she's the culprit?"

"Ya, easy, she done it and gone, back home or out into the swamps, S'Allumer bless 'er. But thing is, she mighta done folks like us a favor. Kill the rich old fox, and with that reputation, nobody wants ta

set foot in that manor no more." Another snaggly grin. "Nobody, get me?"

"I get you." He thinks. "Could be quite lucrative." He grins very, very wide at the thought. Also, where are his butter cakes!?

"Ya yah. 'Course, I don't know any exorcists. If the princess did leave any nastiness behind... well, that's why I asked about yer blessings 'n all." The belated cakes arrive via tabby-maid courier as Gammon leans back and fusses with his mug. It's clear he is legitimately worried about facing these rumored Jakoba sorceries, excited though he is about the potential payoff.

"So magic... I'm not savvy with it. Maybe we need a crew for this one?" He muses and swallows an impossibly large slice of cake, washing it down with half a glass of buttered rum.

The goat takes a long draught of his own and nods. "Sometimes it's worth havin' to split a take..."

"Right, I don't like it either, but sometimes, you just have too." He sounds like he is trying to convince himself.

A jackal gal takes over for the tabby, who is apparently headed out or taking a break. She gives Jean a curious look, just long enough to be noticeable, before continuing her rounds of the tables.

"What about them others you sometimes run with?" asks Gammon. "That... albatross, and..." He trails off, apparently thinking twice about the suggestion of mixing bad luck birds with black magic.

Jean scratches his ear and scowls a bit, not unusual for him when he is thinking, "Well it isn't like I have a huge list of individuals with the right talents except those few." He finishes his butter cake and wipes the remains from around his mouth with a practiced rhythm. He isn't sure how this job is squaring up, but doesn't want to admit that to Gammon.

Gammon finds something to bring his cheer back, in that. "Aw. Surprised ya haven't an army of friends an' allies ready to jump off any bridge, handsome likeable pup as you are!"

"Hah, right." He says mockingly. "I'll have to see if I can scare up the crew. And really, probably should be on the hurry too, or someone might make the same realization and we'll miss our shot." With another large gulp of hot rum, his smile returns.

"Hyah, yah. Jus' don't forget yer buddy Gammon in the rush!"

Jean nods to Gammon in agreement and waves over the jackal gal for another helping of rum.

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Last update: **2020/03/13 14:08**

