

Castles & Crusades - Level One - Mini-Adventure



La Rançon Impossible

Keith Hackwood

Cover Image by Brendan Mally

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Keith Hackwood - November 2008

(Castles & Crusades mini-adventure for 1-3 level 1 characters)

The adventure is set in early winter, in and around the village of Sancerre En Fils, a manorial steading of 80-100 souls, ruled over by the Sancerre family.

The adventure is a L1-2 challenge for one strong fighter and hirelings, but can be scaled as necessary. Sancerre En Fils comprises 30 or so buildings set in rural countryside alongside the Fils River, a broad waterway gently snaking to the coast, some fifty or so miles to the west. Here the Sancerre family have ruled as feudal masters for three centuries, providing knights for the Barony of Schwabe, whilst overseeing estates that boast renowned vineyards, fine cheeses and poultry of superb repute, and sheep providing wool for the making of flax and cloth. On this basis of abundance and beneficent rule, life has continued with more or less unbroken continuity and steadiness for one and all (barring the plague of 90 years ago, and the occasional flood from the Fils). Until now, that is.

Currently there is trouble in Sancerre the like of which has not been known before. The Lord of the Manor, Leland Sancerre, himself has vanished, along with his son Melchior, leaving his wife Parity as the de facto head of the community. She balances her distress and fears with her clear duty, looking to solve the mystery of this double disappearance, whilst running things as close to normal as possible. The villagers meanwhile, speak of many distressing and unnatural things - of arcane magics in the margins of their fields, of benighted mercenaries glimpsed beyond the graveyard, and of a creeping menace like a mist rising from the grey river.

Into this context the adventurer arrives, sent by his own Lord to the aid of the distressed Lady Parity.

“Anton du Laq, fine aspirant swordsman and blade-wielder in the noblest line of true warriors, holder of the wise cause and sometime student of mine, Blade-Master Rouen Ural, you, Sir, are hereby summoned from your sojourns and drawn with clarion haste at the express wish of your mentor.

The village of Sancerre En Fils appears to be in grave jeopardy. Lady Parity Sancerre reports the recent and mysterious disappearance of her husband, the Marquis of Sancerre Lord Leland, and their son, Lord Melchior. They disappeared a week hence whilst at the hunt, and no knowledge of their whereabouts or condition has been forthcoming. Local efforts to establish the series of events remain fruitless, and the Lady Parity has turned in her hour of need, to I, Master Ural, her husband's oldest friend and ally, for help. In turn, and being already engaged elsewhere, I, Master Ural have placed this heavy responsibility upon you - that you make haste to Sancerre En Fils forthwith, that you meet with Lady Parity and offer her your services on behalf of your Master, and that you set about at once uncovering the events and their causes, exposing perpetrators and bringing about a just resolution. Keep me informed by hawk-flown missive, at your convenience.

My stable and armoury is at your disposal - arm well and travel with haste, Sir. Use what local force may be, though they seem loose and leaderless, as you deem it meet (alack that Leland grew soft in his middle-years, all lost is the iron of his stripling youth and the edge of battle-hardened steel! But he must be found and reinstated, his son too - more depends upon it than you can know, du Laq; suffice it to say that myheart tells me our less-than-human foes may have a hand in this business).

Godspeed you, du Laq, and may your interventions be swift and true, that all good people be served and all evil-doers repent them of their sins, or else die like dogs, no further harm to bring. And, may I add, in the nature of this task, it needs no repeating, that I, Master Ural, take personally and most deeply the wellbeing of my good friend Leland and his family. For this reason, I choose to place this task upon your capable shoulders. Do well by them, du Laq, and you shall cover yourself in glory not only in the eyes of your petitioners and peers, but shall also rise most highly in my esteem. Go, lad, go swiftly, and be victorious!"

Plot

Unbeknownst to Lady Parity or anyone else in the village, an evil party of adventurers has infiltrated the area, working for a nefarious alliance of humanoids and corrupt power hungry lordlings. Currently they are holding Leland and Melchior captive (they took them while hunting one week prior to this moment) and will shortly offer Melchior for ransom (having tortured Leland to death first). The party consists of Henis Cro-Futt, an embittered half-elf magic user, Thorstein Zeal a dark dwarven cleric, Julius Kainu, a thief-assassin and Banjax Kalka, a half-orc bounty hunter hired for the tracking of prey. Also present are two Orc agents, Fender and Gibson (L2 Fighters, 10 HP and 13 HP respectively, AC 14, armed with long swords, attributes are Physical, save as P). These latter two are there to negotiate on behalf of Rickenbacker, the local Orc warlord chief and servant of Les Paul, the Uber-Orc of this continent, who remains set upon domination and destruction of all human settlement. The gang and their visitors are currently hiding out below Area 20 (Chapel) in the tunnel complex beneath the village graveyard. Here their prisoners are also kept, bound and gagged.

Meanwhile, Lady Parity is desperate for news of her husband and son and is privately inconsolable. She is attended by her cleric Pityus Blandine, a visiting magician Venkat Telios, and the village militia chief Odilon Ra Miso. They too are still in some shock over recent events, and eager to resolve the situation as quickly as possible. They look to the arrival of the character(s) as a sign of hope that something can be done, and quickly - before the villagers begin to panic.

In the village itself the citizens have been used to a sheltered life, a well-to-do sort of rural way of being. So the sudden sense of fear, disappearance, murder (two locals have been found murdered in recent days - one, the miller's boy Laxlo Buffon was found hanging from an oak tree, lynched (Area H on map) the other, Butros Mellar the butcher was found with his throat cut in a ditch (Area G) by the Fils River) has engendered a near hysteria in the population - a swing into chaos and terror.

Rumours

- 1-10 : The goblins of Pitcairn Rise are on a war footing once again (False, they are too weak, although there is a goblin clan at Pitcairn)
- 11-25 : Rickenbacker the Orc lord is seeking advantages and allies for a war on the humans in Stoaria (True)
- 26-35 : The ghosts of the lost Sancerre Legion haunt the crypt of the graveyard (False)
- 36-40 : A party of adventurers was seen entering the old Chapel about a week ago (True)
- 41-50 : Lord Leland and his son Melchior have been brutally murdered (Partially True, Leland is dead, Melchior is for ransom)
- 51-65: Lady Parity has been sleeping with Venkat Telios (False; actually they are cousins)
- 66-80 : Pityus Blandine is an evil cleric who praises Suda the Bloodthirsty (False)
- 81-90: Militia Chief Odilon Ra Miso is a terrible coward (True, Miso will shy away from any physical conflict, though his boast is very strong)
- 91-00: Laxlo Buffon & Butros Mellar were gay lovers (True)

Random Encounter Table (Sancerre)

1-10 : Esmee Fee the baker (LG, human, 0 level, 1 HP, AC 10, 40yrs old, a widow) taking flour to the bakehouse (12)
 11-20 : Dendrus Coot the Vintner (LG, human, 0 level, 2 HP, AC10, 60 yrs, the local winemaker) on his way to the winestores (16)
 21-30 : Master Henno, freeman farmer (NG, 0 level, 2HP, AC10, 35yrs, farmer) taking his pigs for slaughter (28 or 10)
 31-40 : Iffley Quack, apothecary (N, 0 level, human, 2HP, 45yrs) gathering herbs by his shop (17)
 41-50: Jack Biscuit, stevedore (CG, 0 level, human, 3HP, 28yrs) riverman by the dock (29); Jack found the body of Butros Mellar
 51-60: Lillian Vasper, goodwife (NG, 0 level, human, 1HP, 32yrs) runs Shamla, the local farmshop (11)
 61-70: Semtex Peep, blacksmith, (LN, 0 level, half-orc, 6 HP, 50yrs) hauling a sack of weapons for re-edging (15)
 71-80: 2 Militia Guards (Otis and Piers, 1 level F, AC13, longswords, Primes S, D, Con, save F1, HP 8, 9, human, LG) on patrol
 81-90: Milo & Fiona Goulter (both N, husband & wife, shipping owner types, human, 0 level) out for a walk (6)
 91-99 : Simba Reek, (CG, Elf, 1 level F, AC15, longbow and shortsword, Primes P, D, HP 9) just arrived by boat (news of orcs) (29)
 00 : violently barking pack of dogs

Random Encounter Table (Surroundings)

0-09 : no encounter
 10-20: wild boar (1d4)
 21-30: deer (1d6)
 31-50: solitary rooting bear
 51-60: many bats/crows (night/day)
 61-65: glimpse 2 orc like figures in the bushes (Fender & Gibson)
 66-75: glimpse dark cleric Y behind a tree
 76-80: wolf tracks (1d4 wolves)
 81-90: dark human figures moving in the mist (evil party)
 90-00: shooting stars (1d4)

Sancerre Village - Key

1. Sancerre Manor

The manor is the largest building in the village, with some twenty rooms, including guest chambers. Here lives Lady Parity Sancerre (human, 0 level, age 33, AC10, HP 1, NG) a woman of breeding and substance and fiend of the adventurer's own lord. She is grand, but vulnerable - being very upset and afraid of recent developments, and desperate to see her husband and her son again. She will be in a meeting when the adventurer arrives, consulting with her friend and visitor Venkat Telios (MU L2, half-elf, LG, HP 9, AC 10 Str 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Dex 12, Con 9, Cha 14; spells: Hold Person, Continual Light, Sleep, Hallucinatory Sound, Acid Arrow) recently summoned from the Corpus Forests to Lady Parity's aid. He has tales of humanoid activity abroad, and will speak of Les Paul and his Orc chief Rickenbacker.

Also present will be Odilon Ra Miso (human, 1st level fighter, AC 15, HP 10, Str 16, Int 12, Wis 9, Dex 12, Con 14, Cha 7; wears superior chain mail and helmet with shield, carries a longsword; LG) who will be grumpy, covering up his own cowardice and shame with bluster and boast, and aggrieved that strangers have been called in to do *his* job.

The adventurer can gain information here about the village and environs, the militia strength (8 men in total, 2 on duty each watch, all L1 F, AC 13, longswords and/or spears, HP 1d8) and conditions herein. Food can be served, a room made available and the guest made aware that speed is of the essence here. Venkat

Telios may well try to work with the adventurer to solve the case. (A successful CHA check will see the militia follow him - roll 1d8+1 to see how many come)

2. Guardhouse

This single story building contains the armoury for the village militia and is the base for the Watch. At any one time there is one of the militia on duty here while two others patrol. It is a single story stone building with racks of spears, swords and bows (unused) and a holding cell for petty criminals awaiting lordly justice (empty).

3. Steward's House

Here the Sancerre's steward lives in a simple cottage. He is an old (70s) man by the name of Gilles Proxen (LG, 1 HP, AC 10, 0 level servant) wiry but waning in strength and showing early signs of dementia. He will talk for hours of the good old days and of Lord Leland's youth, forgetting his disappearance. Unwittingly, Gilles provided the evil party with information for their ambush (Julius Kainu won his confidence and extracted details of the hunt so they could plan their snatch) - but can Gilles remember these events of one week ago? (1d100, 23% chance he can remember perfectly, 25% he can't remember anything, 35% he misremembers and accuses an innocent party, 17% chance he becomes distressed, confused and aggressive).

4. Barn

Containing grain sacks, hay store and winter feed for the herds

5. River Watch

This wooden watch tower guards the approach to the dock and Sancerre's waterfront. These days it is usually deserted, unless the Watch is on alert.

6. The Goulter's House

This house is rather showy and affluent, and is home to Milo and Fiona Goulter, local shipping owners and merchants. They are thoroughly neutral in all matters except business, and will bad-mouth the Sancerre's for being too conservative and backward in their approach. They seek to gain at every opportunity and care for nothing else. They have heard rumours of the humanoid risings to the east and south, but so long as it doesn't interfere with their business they do not care. Actually the evil party arrived via the Goulter's trade barge, as foot passengers a week ago, but they have kept these associations quiet (1d100 20% chance they will remember something (eg a half-orc or ugly moody dwarf being present, or the curved demi-scimitar of Julius Kainu, and mention it under questioning if it serves them). Actually, the Goulters recently entered into a deal with Julius Kainu (in disguise) to offload one 'special' barrel per barge and leave it stashed and hidden by the riverside. The barrels contain weapons for caching underground in readiness for the orc attack. So far 6 barrel loads have been offloaded. Kainu killed Butros Mellor for discovering the latest barrel as it awaited collection and stowing, then killed his lover Laxlo Buffon for sadistic sport. Kainu will return to eliminate the Goulters if the operation is discovered or betrayed, and if he escapes the tunnels alive.

7. Woodstore

8. Clerical House

This is the home of the village priest, Pityus Blandine, a LG human woman, 45 years old, devotee of the god Paratan and family cleric to the Sancerre's. She is a L1 cleric with 2xCLW and 1x Hold Person; AC 14 (in her mail shirt) HP 7, she wields a holy hammer (1d6 + 2 damage). Str 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Dex 15, Con 11, Cha 15

Pityus is attractive, experienced in the ways of rural life and a dedicatedly good shepherdess of her flock. She preaches daily at the Chapel by the graveyard, and recently oversaw the burials of Laxlo Buffon and Butros Mellar. She has no information directly, but can piece together events deductively in conversation ('wait a minute, I just remembered - Butros's body was cut up with a curved sword - no-one in Sancerre would wield a heathen blade like that'). She will take the adventurer to the Chapel if asked, and talk about the supposed ghosts of the Sancerre Legion (the ghosts of the human force that 300 years ago fought a battle at this spot against orcs and goblins, and cleared the land for the founding of Sancerre itself - they were led by the first Lord Sancerre, Fabregas, and it is his spectre that is said to walk the crypts at night). Pityus also carries a potion of cure serious wounds (2d8 healing) and a potion of haste.

9. The Quacked Egg Inn

This inn is run by two halflings, Sybil and Basil Henge (L0, 1HP & 2HP, AC 10) and is the only licensed tavern in Sancerre. They sell all manner of ale, beer, lager, cider and wines, as well as serving fine local fare with minimal food miles and very reasonable prices. They offer four guest rooms, 2 of which are currently empty. The Inn is the centre of village social life and activity, and employs 3 barmaids (Verucca, Hilda and Zeta), two cooks (Igor and Presley) and a washer-upper (Jean-Marie). The bar can hold up to fifty people comfortably, but currently the village mood sees the place quiet and all the staff somewhat concerned about the future. Regulars to be found there include:

Detox Malbranque - local farm labourer (L0 human AC 11, HP 4, CG) a hugely strong hulk of a man in his forties, with many tall tales and some true ones (like the weird 'black lights' he has seen recently in his fields near the graveyard, by day and by night - actually the evil party signalling one another)

Florian Moqtada - local weaver, a dwarf (L1 F retired, AC 12, HP8, CG) who trades his bales of wool and woven cloths by river using the Goulter's (of whom he has nothing good to say). He has heard rumours of orc activity upriver and sees the disappearance of the Lord as a clear warning sign that things could get very bad very quickly in Sancerre (to which end, he has just bought a brand new axe)

Cristiano Noggin - the village idiot, a slight lad employed to litter pick and muck out the various stables locally (human, L0, AC 10, HP2, LG) - no-one takes him seriously, but he has seen Banjax Kalka around the stables more than once ('me seed this big one, ugly dark fellah, me speak him but he run - not good man) during the week (first he was checking on the lordly horses prior to the hunt, then returning to spy on the villagers' responses to the kidnappings)

10. Slaughterhouse

11. 'Shamla' - local farmshop

Run by Lillian Vasper this shop sells everything local, from meat to cheese to wine, olives, bread, vineleaves - everything for the rural deli.

12. Bakehouse

Esme Fee's bakery and bakehouse for all manner of bready delights

13. Cottage

14. Cottage

15. Blacksmith's

Semtex Peep runs this smithy - a tumbledown affair belying the half-orc's natural skills in his trade. He edges tools and weapons, shoes horses and other livestock, and fashions armour for the militia. He's lived here all his life since Leland Sancerre brought him here as an orphaned half-orc child from the Gombit Hills campaigns thirty odd years ago. He is deeply loyal to Sancerre, though the victim of much racism and suspicion, especially now. He's huge, strong, and in his prime (LN, 6HP, L0). If questioned sympathetically he will admit to having *thought* he heard the black tongue of orcs being whispered two nights ago - but having checked around his smithy, he'd dismissed it as nothing but the wind (he did hear it, as Gibson and Fender sneaked through Sancerre to rendezvous with the evil party that night).

16. Winery

Dendrus Coot's winery and cellarage area

17. Apothecary

Iffley Quack's apothecary - he's often out, being a bit vague. A one-time druid acolyte (failed) Quack now peddles herbs to remedy every malady. He can sell poultices of healing (1d4 HP) for 10Gps each. No information.

18. Weaving Sheds

19. Cottage

20. Chapel of Paratan de Sancerre

The chapel is locked up if not in use, but a careful check can detect signs of entry by more than one person (CL1). Inside it is a simple affair of pews and benches, a choir screen of carved wood depicting Sancerre heroes of yore, various tombs and memorials, and a lighter of candles kept burning in hope of the safe return of the missing men. Flowers also linger here from the recent funerals of Laxlo and Butros.

Behind the central altar is a stone font, underneath which lies a hinged trapdoor opening onto the crypt below. Only Pityus Blandine knows of this. To find it would be very hard (CL9) without her help.

Graveyard

Behind the chapel is the graveyard, holding several hundred graves some of many hundreds of years age. In the centre is a vaulted family tomb of the Sancerre's, which careful tracking (CL5) shows has been opened recently. There are tracks of several men leading inside and the door can be opened with a successful Strength check. It opens into Area A.

21. Cottage

22. Brewery

23. Tithe Barn

24. Main Road

25. Cottage

26. Meeting House (village assembly)

27. Cottage

28. Goole Farm

Here Master Henno and his two sons, Trev and Sid, work on their freeholding, raising pigs and goats as well as cereals and vegetables. Well-to-do by Sancerre standards, their lives are weirded by the absence of Mrs Tilly, who ran away with a tinker tradesman ten years back. None of the three men speak of her, though her things remain in her room untouched.

29. Sancerre Dock

Here a pair of jetties allow for the tying up of river launches and barges. The workplace of Jack Biscuit, and the murder scene of Butros. Jack discovered the body and noted the scimitar like cuts. He also happened to see a very bitter looking character disembark here about a week ago (in fact it was a poorly disguised Henis Cro-Futt) - 'a tall almost elfy looking bloke, but grumpy as hell, not like them other elves I've met - probbly nothing, some folks just get snooty when they see hard work and honest sweat'). Jack is good hearted and keen to volunteer to help with any detecting or fighting (though he has no apparent skills in this area beyond his natural strength) Stats Str 18, Int 10, Wis 9, Dex 16, Con 16, Cha 13, AC 9, HP6.

30. Hunting Platform

Lord Sancerre's archery roost, a wooden platform and palisade big enough for two men to sit and shoot at aerial prey, or game. If inspected closely, several arrows with black goose fletchings will be found embedded in the wood, since it was near here that the ambush which led to the kidnap of Lords Leland and Melchior took place.

31. Lynching Tree (H)

This tree is where Julius Kainu murdered Laxlo Buffon, stringing him up from the branches to choke to death slowly overnight. The tree, if searched closely (CL5) reveals various fibres of leather and rope and blood (Julius had rope burn when he committed this crime)

32. Murder Scene (G)

Here in the riverside rushes is where Julius Kainu sliced to death Butros Mellor. The scene shows violent struggle, dried blood, rutted muddy areas of struggle, and the depression left in the earth by Mellor's corpse.

33. Secret Tunnel Entrances (J & K)

The riverside entrances to the tunnel complex under Sancerre En Fils. Very hidden (CL10 to find from above).

Sancerre - Crypt & Tunnel Complex

- A Crypt entrance: down a dark stone staircase some forty feet or so, the passageway open out into a vestibule with tombs all around bearing the Sancerre crest. Marks can be seen in the dusty floor (CL2) showing footprints and drag marks. The chamber narrows into a long natural tunnel, 6' high by 6' wide roughly - single file; up ahead is a faint glow as if from a lamp. As the group begins to move up the tunnel two scuttling half-skeletons pursue them (AC 14 (they are quick and dextrous) HP 4 and 6, collections of disarticulated bones, knees with hands, femurs with skulls, punching, bashing and kicking for 1d4 HP damage; they automatically surprise in the first instance and attack the rear of the party first. Slashing weapons do half damage.
- B Niche: cut into the wall is a niche big enough to hold two or three people. Here the strung up body of Leland Sancerre is to be found - naked, tied by ankles and wrists. He has been mutilated, tortured horribly, and is missing his eyes, fingernails, toes and genitals. His body seems unnaturally cold and grey and is marked by a glowing black rune on the chest. Further on, slight sounds can be heard... but from behind the corpse comes a cold breath, and emerging therefrom two shuffling zombies (HP 12, 14, AC 12, 1d8 damage by slam attack). A successful 'read Magic' on the rune shows it to be a rune of lineage binding, the first stage in reanimating Leland *and his ancestral line*, as undead.

- C The passageway meets a crossroads - to the right, stone steps lead up (actually they come out in the Chapel itself, by the font behind the altar. From this side a successful Strength check at -1 is required to heave open the door 40ft above. To the left the passage continues, as it does straight ahead. At the top of the stairs is a forgotten and cobwebby vial containing two perfectly usable draughts of Neutralize Poison (labelled as such).
- D Another niche: this time the niche contains nothing but dirty rags and discarded cloaks (checking will turn up 3 GPs, a brooch (Sancerre crest, in brass) and a token (a love note addressed to Melchior Sancerre from a certain Jocasta Grape))
- E Natural cavern: this odd shaped area is where the evil party have headquartered themselves. Here will be Thorstein Zeal the evil dwarven cleric (LE, L2, AC15, HP 10, armed with a +1 mace; he has the following spells: curse, command, desecrate and sound burst, as well as CLW) in a foul temper and eager for blood. Here also will be Banjax Kalka (half-orc bounty hunter, CN, L1, AC 14, HP 9, armed with a spear and an axe - Str 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Dex 13, Con 16, Cha 9), who will also fight if challenged (and flee towards G if in trouble). Kalka and Zeal are arguing about something and suffer a -1 to their surprise/initiative checks. Once involved, Banjax Kalka will challenge the lead fighter to a one-on-one duel with taunts, goads, boasts, insults and threats. Zeal will try to get to Melchior Sancerre in Area F, to use him as a human shield, or to kill him.

In the cavern is a fire, various pieces of kit, several notes and scrolls (communications with orc bands, draft ransom notes, a rough sketch map of Sancerre en Fils, an estimation of orc positions locally and readiness for battle). Thorstein wears a ring of protection +1 and carries a purse of 30 GPs. Banjax wears a particularly fine leather armour jerkin, embossed with knotwork designs. The ransom notes read:

*We have your son - cough up 20,000 GP by moonrise tomorrow or he dies
Put the money in a bag in a canoe and float it from the dock. Come alone.
Do as we say and you get him back alive.*

The map of orc positions and strengths indicates at least 150 orcs within a day's march of the village, with twice that number in war bands in the hinterlands maybe 2-3 days off. The letters suggest a series of raids over the winter and full scale invasion and take over by spring.

- F At the end of the passageway leading down from E is a niche into which is trussed the lashed up body of Melchior Sancerre. He is alive (1HP) but in a bad state, seemingly malnourished, deeply traumatised and badly bruised and cut. He is unaware of his father's fate.
- G Here the tunnels widen out into a natural cave system running under Sancerre and to the river Fils. Within G are found Henis Cro-Futt (half-elf MU, L2, AC 10, HP 7, unarmed but with the following spells: shield, shocking grasp, read magic, feather fall and charm person) along with the orcs Fender and Gibson (L2 Fighters, 10 HP and 13 HP respectively, AC 14, armed with long swords, attributes are Physical, save as P) - all will fight initially, but retreat towards the river entrances if in trouble. The orcs are carrying papers proving the involvement of their clans in the Sancerre plot and warning of coming war with the humans. Henis carries a wand of control undead (2 charges) which allows him to animate the bones in Area H into 2 barely functioning basic skeletons. He also has a purse containing 20GPs, plus his spell book.
- H The tunnels split to north and south leading to secret exits on the riverfront - here the beginnings of a weapons cache is being stored up (bundles of spears, arrows, bows, longswords and crossbows) presumably for a future attack on Sancerre 'from

within'. Also, several heaps of bones, partial human(oid) skeletons, litter the floor. If animated, 2 complete skeletons can be formed that will attack as directed (HP 8, 10, AC13, wielding femurs as weapons for 1d6 damage - slashing weapons do half damage to them)

- I A final cavern, here Julius Kainu is hiding, waiting for the melee to end so he can sneak away. He is LE human L2 Assassin, AC 12, HP 9, Str 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Cha 15 He has a shortsword +1 and has readied an oil canister with a lighted fuse to throw at any pursuer (+2 to hit, 1d8 flame damage). He carries a pouch of poisons with needle sharp darts he will throw as a last resort (12 darts, each does 1-2 HP damage but with poison effective in 2 turns - paralysis and eventually death ensue unless treated; Kainu throws them at -1 to hit since if he needs these he is close to actions of last resort), a pair of ruby gems (100GP each), a receipt for his services (contracted to kill the Sancerre Lord and ransom his son, to sow fear and unrest in the village, to undermine morale with murder and corruption by any means - under the orders of one Yngling Perp (a lordling from two counties west, who is in league with Rickenbacker of the orcs). He will try bribery and cajoling to escape if his physical resistance fails.

J&K Cave openings onto the main river channel of the Fils (hidden from the outside, to find from that side = CL10)

Conclusion

If the plotters are discovered and dispatched (or arrested), and Melchior returned to the Sancerre household, he makes a full recovery and is able to organise and inspire the villagers, as well as draw on external support from allies, to counter the humanoid threat, counter-raiding the orc warbands and harrying them over winter. In spring Melchior becomes engaged to Jocasta Grape, heiress of the Piat D'or fortune, and a renowned regional beauty!

Leland Sancerre is given a heroic funeral in the Chapel of Paratan (once it is blessed and re-consecrated) as befits a Lord, and Lady Parity begins her mourning, but now with a calm dignity. She honours the adventurers with gold (1000GP each) and title (Defender of Sancerre, Knight of Paratan). The villagers offer free hospitality and support, glory is proclaimed and honour satisfied. Sancerre remains indebted and open to the adventurer's basing themselves here, assured as they are of great goodwill and support.

Pre-generated PC - Anton Du Laq

Anton du Laq

S 16 (+1) P
I 12
W 9
D 15 (+1) P
Con 12
Cha 13 (+1) P

Bladesman (Fighter)

AL: LG

HP: 8

Age: 24

Human Male

L1 - dirtied aristocrat, existential mercenary

Long sword (heirloom, masterwork)
2 Daggers

Armour: studded leather

Shield: small buckler

AC: 18

Starting Gold: 35gp

Possessions: 1 week's dry rations, 1 bedroll, 1 torch, tinder and flint, 1 whetstone, small cameo portrait of a blonde girl in an oval brooch, winter boots, heavy travelling cape, tricorne hat

Magical items: potion of cure light wounds (two draughts); a glowstone (fist sized pebble upon which 'continual light' has been cast; usually kept wrapped in an oilcloth unless needed)

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