

# FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

AN ADVENTURE OUTLINE FOR THE  
LIMINAL RPG

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**NOTE THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT A COMPLETE ADVENTURE!**

*Rather it is an outline providing the main plot, core NPCs and the major events for a Game Master to create their own Liminal scenario based on the presented premise. Most of the 'connective tissue' required to turn this outline into a playable adventure is left to you, dear reader, to create.*

## RUNNING THE SCENARIO

**For Whom the Bell Tolls** is a *Liminal RPG* scenario outline focused on investigation and clue finding. The scenario itself will likely be played out over a few short 'in game' days, with the investigation best commenced on a Thursday and the climax occurring just before midnight on the following Sunday.

For Whom the Bell Tolls can be broken down into three main phases.

- **Phase One: Investigation** - The Cabal is approached to investigate a strange death at St Anthony's, an old church in the fictional Essex town of Neardon. During this phase, the characters will learn of the town's history and other strange events that have been occurring on the church's grounds. These discoveries will lead them to surmise that an ongoing supernatural event is occurring at St Anthony's and that forces both ancient and recent, are in play.
- **Phase Two: Confirmation** - Once the Cabal learns of the key individuals involved in the mystery and the presence of a church ghost, they will likely focus their attention on discovering why there is so much interest in the ancient site.
- **Phase Three: Confrontation** - With the true antagonists - modern-day occultists calling themselves the Cult of Lyssa - now uncovered, and a timeline to 'disaster' in place, the characters will need to confront the strangers and stop them before it is too late!

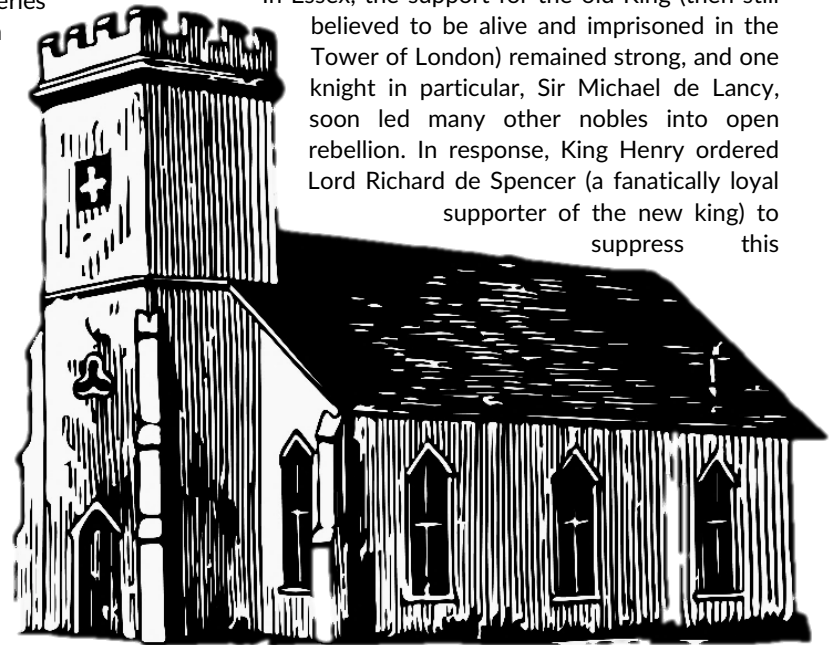
## BACKGROUND

The following provides the backstory to the plot, the details of which can be revealed to the players as they undertake their investigations.

### The Vengeance of King Henry

In 1399 Henry Bolingbroke was crowned the King of England, having deposed the tyrant, King Richard II. This transfer of power was not smooth, however, and almost immediately Henry (crowned Henry the IV) was faced with rebellions and insurrection. In response, Henry angrily ordered the execution of any upstart nobles who had the temerity to question his right to rule, a decision that would later in his regency.

In Essex, the support for the old King (then still believed to be alive and imprisoned in the Tower of London) remained strong, and one knight in particular, Sir Michael de Lancy, soon led many other nobles into open rebellion. In response, King Henry ordered Lord Richard de Spencer (a fanatically loyal supporter of the new king) to suppress this



uprising and insisted that his agent *“teach all those who dare stand against their lord a lesson that will be heard across the country”*.

After months of campaigning, with the two sides clashing violently in many battles, the supporters of Henry finally gained the upper hand, and in a night of blood and violence raided Sir Michael’s home, the small (fictional) village of Neardon. Beaten and abused and with his family killed in front of him, in a final act of insult, the captured Sir Michael was forced to take his own life. This action, of course, intentionally made him a suicide which, as all true believers know, barred him from ever entering heaven.

This horrid death, however, was not to be the end of Sir Michael’s story. With his body having been burnt and then hastily buried among the other suicides and murders in the northern side of his own family’s church (St Anthony’s), Sir Michael’s spirit (along with those of his family and other loyal servants who were murdered) was unable to find peace, and soon began to rise as a spectre night after night.

As the new owner of lands and manor of Neardon, Lord Richard de Spencer, was incensed by the haunting ghosts, and immediately looked to find a way to put the traitorous rebel to ‘rest’. With the traditional acts such as exorcism and prayer failing, Lord de Spencer began searching for a solution of a more ‘magical’ nature. After months of being haunted by the ghosts, he finally discovered a source of magic that would not only ensorcell the spirits but also allow them to be summoned and dismissed at will.

Angry at having to deal with rebellious spectres that should just not be, de Spencer imbued the bell at St Anthony’s with this new power. This magic allowed the Lord to ‘torture’ the de Lancy family, declaring that *“each Sunday, at midnight, the bell was to be rung to summon the rebels”*. In what was to become a regular

ritual the ghosts of Sir Michael and his family were repeatedly summoned and put back into the resting place, a torture that ensured the dead could never truly leave this realm and find peace!

## The Last in a Line

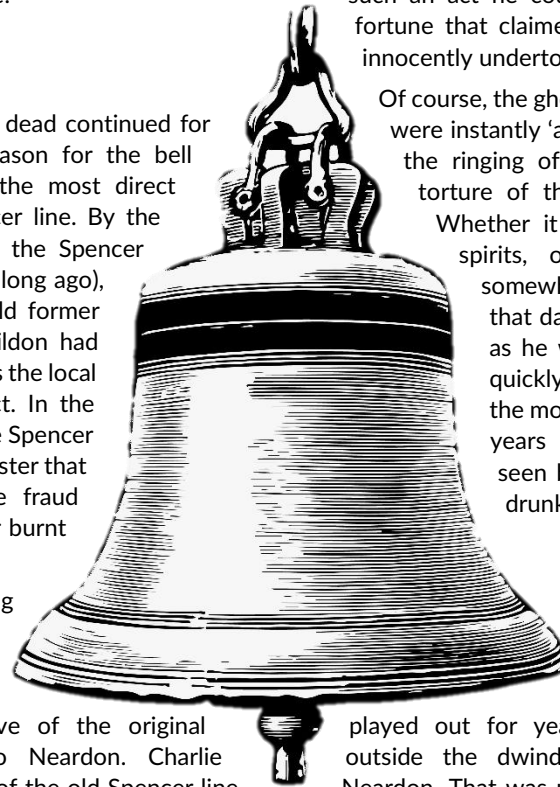
This tradition of torturing the dead continued for generations until the real reason for the bell ringing was lost to all but the most direct descendants of the de Spencer line. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, however, the Spencer family (the De being dropped long ago), held but a shadow of their old former power, and the town of Basildon had long since replaced Neardon as the local centre of trade in the district. In the 1940s the last remnants of the Spencer family passed, when – in a disaster that many suspect was insurance fraud gone wrong - Neardon Manor burnt down.

It wasn’t until 1990, and long after the Spencer land had been claimed by the local council (from defaulted land taxes), that a distant relative of the original Spencer family returned to Neardon. Charlie Spencer was a distant cousin of the old Spencer line and was drawn back after discovering his family’s history in the district. Over a period of months, he learnt of the Spencer legacy and its connection to the lands around the village, and even took residence in the council estate that had since been built on the old manor site.

After much searching, his research eventually led to an archive of lost Spencer history, and it was here he learnt

of the tradition of ringing St Anthony’s bell each Sunday. Driven by the need to restore the ‘honour’ of the family and believing that maybe but undertaking such an act he could rid the Spencer’s of the ill fortune that claimed its wealth and influence, he innocently undertook to ring the church’s bell.

Of course, the ghosts of Sir Michael and his family were instantly ‘awoken’ after many centuries by the ringing of the ensorcelled bell, and the torture of these poor beings began again. Whether it was the appearance of these spirits, or the fact he was already somewhat on the path to insanity, from that day forth, Charlie (or Lord Charlie as he would later call himself) was to quickly descend into madness. Never the most social soul individual, over the years he became more isolated and seen by the locals of the village as a drunkard.



## The Outsiders

This impasse between tortured ghosts and an alcoholic madman might have played out for years without impacting anyone outside the dwindling number of residents of Neardon. That was until the sudden interest of the Cult of Lyssa. Led by shadowy figures, the cult has attempted to harness the power of the ghosts and spirits that haunt England (for purposes beyond the scope of this story), and recently one of their number, Michelle North, heard of the Ghost of St Anthony’s... setting in motion the events of this adventure.

North, in her investigations into Neardon, discovered that Lord Charlie was ‘engaging’ with the ghost of St

Anthony's and so 'hired' Willy Horsfield, a young lad working as a barman at Neardon's White Hart public house, to ingratiate himself with the madman. While Charlie was initially reluctant to let a 'non-Spencer' into his family secret, he also realised that he was getting old and would soon need someone else to ring the bell... and who better than Willy, a seemingly excitable young man who could also supply him with his fill of free alcohol!

Eventually, Charlie allowed Willy to join his Sunday excursion, but little did either of them know that on that first fateful trip, tragedy was to strike! The night's escapade started well enough with the two 'burglars' meeting inside St Anthony's dilapidated rectory, although Lord Charlie was already a little worse the wear with drink. Sneaking into the church itself, through a small, long-forgotten gap in the masonry, the pair made their way up the bell tower. Here, after all due pomp and ceremony Charlie spoke the words to activate the bell and struck a single blow on the imbued artifact. Immediately the spirit of Sir Michael, tormented by years of this curse arose from his 'resting' place, his persecuted family dutifully in tow.

Unprepared for such magic to actually work, Willy started at the arrival of the ghosts, and confined in the small, narrow belfry, accidentally struck Charlie. Already unsteady on his feet, Horsfield's blow was more than enough to knock the old man backwards, and with a stumble plummeted to his death forty feet below!

Realising the gravity of his actions, Willy, terrified and wracked with guilt fled the church.

Of course, the death and the failure to properly complete the 'putting down' ritual means that the ghost of the agitated Sir Michael de Lancy once more haunts St Anthony's, coalescing at night as a vengeful poltergeist!

## THE HOOK

The characters are engaged by Reverend Thomas Shawl, Rector of St Anthony's, to investigate the strange events that have occurred at the church since - what the police are calling - "a vagrant's body" was found at the base of the church's bell tower. Since last Monday, there have been 'disturbances' within the church grounds, including the manifestation of a terrifying ghostly presence being reported by Jill Dunham, the church's Verger. Shawl says that while the police are investigating, little progress has been made to date, and his connections within the church (those with links to the Order of St. Bede), believed that 'other, more specialist' individuals should be contacted to assist with the mystery (hence is call on the player's Cabal).

### Meeting Reverend Shawl

Thomas Shawl is a young preacher who is enthusiastic about his calling. While officially the Vicar of St Anthony's, he is based at the parish church of St Cuthbert (in Basildon), where most of the local services are held. If asked why he wants to investigate - he says that he knows enough about the hidden world to realise something is not right at St Anthony's. He genuinely wants to solve the mystery of why a man was found dead on his church grounds.

Reverend Shawl can provide information about the contacts, who might be able to assist with their investigation.

- **Terrance Skelton** (lives in Basildon), journalist and amateur historian. It was Skelton who discovered the body on Monday.
- **Detective Inspector Owens** (based in Basildon) is looking after the case. He is hard-pressed with his

workload, but Shawl is sure he will be happy to talk to the characters if they make polite enquiries.

- **Jill Dunhill** is the honorary Verger of St Anthony's and volunteers her time to look after the church, arranging what few ceremonies and events still take place there. Shawl says that she is currently in hospital recovering from a suspected heart attack; the result of her 'encounter' with the presence!
- **Bill Ogilvy** (office is in Basildon) is the Sexton, employed by the Basildon Borough Council. If the group aren't aware, Shawl mentions that while St Anthony's is a Grade 1 protected building, its graveyard and building outside of the chapel are the responsibility of the local authorities.

## RESEARCHING NEARDON

Before undertaking the trip to Neardon, the characters might discover the following about the village and its church from Reverend Shawl, or other sources.

### Location: Neardon

A small rural village located 2 miles north of (real world town of) Basildon, this (fictional) community is likely only a decade away from being devoured by its larger neighbour (via new suburbs and urban growth). Settled in 1386, Originally a noble estate and market hub for other local rural communities, its importance has shrunk over the decades as Basildon's grew.

Today it boasts a population of only two hundred residents, with most of its commercial businesses having departed the village in the 80s. The White Hart and an Iceland (a small supermarket not much bigger

than a convenience store) are the only real stores remaining.

Sitting within Basildon Borough's Council boundaries, most of the occupied land is managed by the council authorities, including St Anthony's cemetery and the 'DeSpencer Housing Estate'.

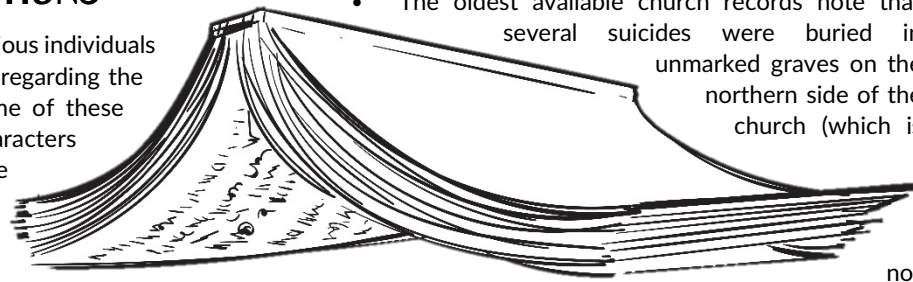
## Location: St Anthony's

About 600 years old, the chapel is a historic building (a Grade 1 protected building) dating back to the reign of Henry IV. It has a large surrounding cemetery, but most of the gravestones are very old and all but illegible. While maintained, the main congregation of the parish met at St Cuthbert's – a large, modern church about 3 miles away in Basildon (where Rev Shawl has his rectory). The only building of note on the property is the long-abandoned Rectory, a much more modern structure built in the 1970s.

St Anthony's is closed most days (and opened only under the supervision of Jill Dunhill, the Verger) but given the status of the church and its size, the only real events held there are weddings and the occasional funeral service (although no bodies are buried on site anymore).

## INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS

The following details the various individuals the group will likely talk to regarding the death at St Anthony's. Some of these leads are provided to the characters by Reverend Shawl, while others will be revealed as the story progresses.



## Terrance Skelton: Inquisitive Journalist

Terrance works as a freelance journalist and has a growing reputation as a church historian with his latest project being a book on the history of St Anthony's. Although a little reserved and 'bookish' in personality, he is very happy to discuss his work.

Regarding the discovery of the 'vagrant', he says hadn't even intended to be at the church last Monday morning but found himself thinking about getting some early morning photographs on the grounds all through the prior weekend. As such he couldn't stop himself, hoping to just pop out to do a quick shoot and be back home before breakfast.

### SKELTON'S RESEARCH

Skelton has only really begun researching the church; however, he already has some interesting facts he can share with the investigators:

- He believes that the church was the site of several secret executions in the first years of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. While the facts are scant this early into his research, he has found reference to letters from King Henry the Fourth ordering the execution of any noble who opposed his rule in this part of Essex. (*Note: Terrance can also provide further details on Henry, his rise to power and the struggles he faced during his reign if required.*)
- The oldest available church records note that several suicides were buried in unmarked graves on the northern side of the church (which is

uncommon). However, little detail and no names of these poor individuals have yet been uncovered. (*Note: Terrance can inform the group on the practice of reserving the north/north-western section of a graveyard for suicides and murderers, etc.*)

- He has copies of photos taken from the site and had only this morning realised that the body was captured on these (by pure luck, as it can be seen on the ground in the background). He was just about to contact Inspector Owens with this new information just prior to the characters' arrival!

If the image of Charlie's body is enhanced (easily enough with the right tools as Skelton uses a professional high-resolution Canon camera), the following can be seen.

- **Green Fabric.** Charlie has a large piece of green fabric gripped tightly in his right hand (this was ripped from Willy's jacket as he fell, a fact that won't be revealed until later in the adventure).
- **The Book.** On the ground beside the body is a book (*Note: this is Charles' Journal, see below, the real history of St Anthony's and record of the magic imbued into the ringing of the bell.*)

### REVIEWING TERRANCE'S OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS

If Terrence's other photos from Monday morning are reviewed, the character will note that they are all professionally taken 'snaps' of various aspects of the church's exterior. In one, however, a figure can be seen skulking in the tree line beyond the cemetery. No details can be made out about the figure. (*Note: This is Willy Horsfield who returned to the site on Michelle North's orders to retrieve the Charlie's Journal. While collecting the book he noticed the torn fabric from his jacket, and terrified that this would link him to the death he also took it from the dead man's hand.*)

## Inspector Owens: Put-upon Detective

The young, always stressed-looking Inspector Griffin Owens will meet with the party if so requested. He will state they haven't identified the body... as yet... but his investigations are continuing. Unfortunately, the reality of the situation is, given the pressures on the local police, he really hasn't even started to investigate the circumstance around Charlie's death, let alone his identity. That said, Owens is a good cop and wants to do right by the dead man, so will happily accept any assistance from the Cabal, as long as it is legal and doesn't interfere with the Police's own investigation.

If contacted later in the scenario, Owens will quickly respond to the characters if they report a crime or anything else directly related to the death of Charlie but does not believe in the supernatural and will not stand for any 'mumbo-jumbo'.

## THE CORONER REPORT

Owens won't allow the party to see the body (unless they have some specific right to do so). However, he will show them the coroner's photos and report:

- The dead man is in his early sixties but looks much older.
- The coroner's record notes that he had a blood alcohol content of 200 mg/dL (Milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood) or nearly three times the legal driving limit at the time of his death and showed signs of severe cirrhosis of his liver (indicating long-term alcohol abuse).
- The coroner's report also confirms that the victim died from injuries sustained from the fall from the church bell tower and would have fallen at around midnight.
- Although his death was not immediate, the man's broken spine, neck and skull would suggest that he

was very likely unconscious until he expired and would not have been able to move.

- Given all other indicators – based on the man's health and clothing – all indications were that he was probably a rough sleeper looking for a place to rest at the time of the accidental fall.

## REPORTS FROM THE SITE

If the characters can get Owen's inside, he will say that the Police have no idea how the man got into the locked church, as there is no sign of a break-in. The detective will allow the group to look over the things brought in with Charlie's body, although none of the items seen in Terrence's photos (i.e. either the piece of fabric or the book) were found with him when he was brought to the morgue. However:

- He was dressed in serviceable but well-worn clothes.
- His small rucksack has a few tins of beans and a dozen empty cans of Heineken. These are all past their 'best before date' even though they have only recently been drunk.

## ONCE CHARLIE IS IDENTIFIED

If Inspector Owen is alerted to the identity of Charlie, he will swing into action and begin to reveal all the known facts about the man.

## COMMUNING WITH CHARLIE'S BODY

If the party gets access to the body and can commune with the dead, Charlie isn't the most forthcoming. His only interest is ensuring that the bells are rung each Sunday at midnight, and as such his insane and driven spirit focuses on little else.

## Jill Dunham: St Anthony's Verger

In her late sixties, she is currently in Basildon University Hospital, recovering from what the doctors believe was 'a large shock and a mild heart attack'. She is with her son (in his 40s) who says that she should be resting, although Jill herself is more than happy to chat with the characters.

Jill lives close to the church and is the volunteer Verger (caretaker) of St Anthony's. She says that it's an easy job as the church is mostly quiet.

If asked about ghosts or other weird activities, she will say that she never has had any trouble in the past, except for the vagrants (there are a lot of them about these days) and – of course – the phantom bell ringer who rings the bell every Sunday at midnight (she laughs at this saying it is not true, simply a joke that has been doing the rounds for years in the village). However, in the last few days:

- The church has seemed darker and a lot more foreboding, not a place she wanted to stay long.
- On Tuesday evening, just after dark, she was alerted to a lot of sound coming from the church grounds, and so visited the chapel to see if it was still secure. All was quiet, but she thought she should have a look inside anyway.
- It was pitch black and extremely cold in the church, so after a quick glance about, she went to leave. However, as she started to close the main doors, she heard rattling from inside. Upon opening the doors again, she came face to face with a bloody-faced knight menacing her with a sword.
- Suffice to say she ran the fastest she had in years but felt faint and had chest pains as she reached her home. It was then that she called an ambulance.

She can also inform the party of the following, but only if they enquire directly.

- If asked about Charlie, she says that she knows of 'Lord Charlie' and has shooed him off the church grounds a few times. He is a local tramp, who seems harmless enough, and she suspects that he was using the abandoned Rectory as a place to sleep.
- Regarding the old Rectory she agrees with Bill (see below) wishing the council would demolish what is left of it.

## Bill Ogilvy: Borough Council Sexton

Bill has been working for the Borough Council for nearly 30 years and thought he'd seen it all – well that was before a man fell to his death in St Anthonys! He will explain that most church grounds are now managed by Councils, and these are maintained in the same way they do any public grounds (the church having long ago lost the right to manage burials etc.)

If questioned about St Anthony's and the incident on Sunday, he can provide the following:

- The land around St Anthony's is well managed and maintained although he wishes he had the budget to do more. For example, the old rectory building on the grounds is a fire risk and an eyesore, and more than once he's had *"to call the cops to get rid of kids using the place for god knows what"*. If he had his way, they would knock the whole thing down *"the Rectory, of course, not the church"* he says with a smile.
- The cemetery is closed to new burials with all interments now done in Basildon.
- He has no idea how the Intruder got into the church, but thankfully they didn't cause any damage – at least as far as he's been able to

ascertain. Nevertheless, the bell tower is now closed off to everyone and the door to it is securely locked (he has the key for this).

If asked about Charlie Spencer, Ogilvy doesn't recognise the name, but, if prompted will look up his details in the Council's system. Here he will learn that Spencer rents one of the Council's flats in Neardon (see below).

## THE LINK TO MICHELLE NORTH

If asked if anything else strange might have taken place recently – especially regarding the church - he will say that a woman came around asking questions about St Anthony's and its land, about a fortnight ago. He has her card somewhere in one of his drawers and will fish this out from among the mess (this is Michelle North's card – see below).

## Brian Hastie: Proprietor of The White Hart

The White Hart is Neardon's only public house. It is a small, cramped building with traditional low ceilings and exposed beams. It doesn't get a lot of business most days, so the hale and hearty proprietor - Brian Hastie – is happy to chat with anyone willing to buy a pint and a pie.

- Of course Hastie knows of Lord Charlie, but while he knows he's a local, he doesn't exactly know where he lives. He can tell the group that he's not rich and wouldn't be surprised if he is a rough sleeper as he often comes around looking for cheap drinks.
- He thinks Charlie's whole family once lived in the town, but that he is the last of the line.

- He knows that Charlie was hanging around with young Willy Horsfield, Brian's young barkeep and dogsbody.
- If asked, he states that Willy is a recent arrival – a down-on-his-luck London boy who is a hard worker. Willy works in the pub (and has a room upstairs) but is currently away. If pressed on this, Hastie says that Willy got a phone call from his Mother saying that he needed to be back in London for a bit. The barman also mentions that he was the one to take the initial call, and the boy's Mother sounded *"like a real stuck-up, posh witch... excuse me language"*, and had none of Willy's Eastend accent. This caller was, of course, Michelle North.

## Willy Horsfield: Cult Stooge & Fool

As a young man who had fallen on hard times in London, Willy is simply a guy trying to make a new start for himself in Neardon.

- Couch hopping various mates' places in Basildon for over a year, he found himself at the White Hart about 3 months ago trying to scab a drink. Feeling sorry for the lad, Brian Hastie asked him his life story and over a drink and a meal, Willy explained his past and that he really wasn't looking for any charity. Nevertheless, Brian offered him a job as a cleaner and occasional bartender, and more importantly, his own room in which he could stay.
- Since starting his job, Willy had begun to buckle down and make something of himself. However, about three weeks before the start of the adventure, he was approached by Michelle North who asked him if he knew anything about 'the old vagrant' living at the Neardon church. While Willy wasn't certain, he was pretty sure that it must be

'Lord Charlie'. Michelle asked Willy – in return for £3000 in cash – to get to know Charlie and report back what the old man did.

- After Charlie's fall (on Sunday night), Willy panicked and fled the scene. Realising that the police might be able to connect him to the scene, he returned soon afterwards and when he saw Terrance leave the grounds in a hurry (to get help having discovered Charlie's body) he took the opportunity to grab the book and the material ripped from his jacket.
- Returning to his rooms at the White Hart, the terrified youth didn't know what to do, and so contacted Michelle North. The cultist soon picked up Willy and the boy is currently in the custody of the Cult of Lyssa.

### WILLY'S ROOM

This small unassuming room holds only a single bed, a narrow wardrobe, and a single-draw desk.

- A ripped army surplus jacket is hanging in the wardrobe. The rip matches (in colour and size) the cloth seen in Terrence's photograph. Found in the top pocket of the jacket is a wad of cash totalling £472 in small notes along with a few loose coins.
- On Willy's bed is a pile of packaging from purchases made with his recent windfall, this includes a book for a brand-new Samsung phone ed), tags and plastic from clothes and a couple of unused Google Play cards.
- Found in the desk is another of Michelle North's business cards.

### The Cult of Lyssa

The Cult of Lyssa (a Greek spirit of madness and frenzy) is a group of rich, influential individuals determined to

use the supernatural to advance their own ambitions. The group's true motives and goals aren't important during this adventure, but if the party investigates the cult, they will discover the following:

- The Lyssians want to 'tap' into the power of Hidden World, utilising the 'energy' that keeps entities such as ghosts tethered to our reality for their own (nefarious) ends.
- It seems to have no affiliations with any of the other Hidden World groups.
- They operate out of an office in London's Docklands (near the London City Airport).

### MICHELLE NORTH

Michelle North is a middle-aged woman, who maintains a rigorous health regime. She acts as the face of the Cult and liaises with the other shadowy members. Publicly she is the Managing Director of 'Dockwards Investments', a nebulous financial organisation 'investing in major capital projects in Eastern Europe'.

During this adventure, her goal is to discover the truth behind the ghost of St Anthony's and undertake a ritual to 'capture' its energy (for undefined purposes), see below.

### THUGS & GUARDS

Dockwards Investments has employed several private security guards and other 'muscle' to protect their interests. While these employee's knowledge of the supernatural varies, none of them are that dedicated to the cult to put their

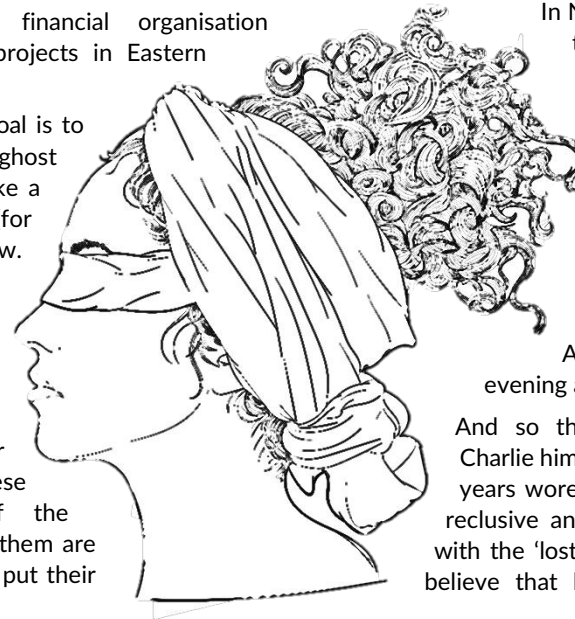
lives on the line, and most won't break the law (unless they think they can get away with it).

### Lord Charlie: Last of the Spencer Line

Charlie Spencer always had a chip on his shoulder, growing up knowing that his family once owned all the lands around Neardon, and the destruction of the family estate in the 40s had been the end of their fortunes. Never really expecting to inherit anything from the past, he joined the Royal Navy at a young age and travelled the world until the mid-90s. On his discharge, he was at a loose end and with little else to do started to arrange what little documentation remained of his grandfather's letters and journals. It was here that he discovered the Spencer 'promise' and, driven by his urge to do something meaningful, travelled to Neardon to see if he could fulfil his family legacy.

In Neardon he was angered to find that the lands of his family had been sold to the local council, and in the place of the grand family home stood an aging row of council flats (all of which had been built in the 60s). Eventually securing the lease of one of these two-bedroom, semidetached homes, he set about ringing St Anthony's Bell each Sunday evening at midnight.

And so this may have continued until Charlie himself passed on. However, as the years wore on Charlie became ever more reclusive and with it a growing obsession with the 'lost' family legacy even coming to believe that he was the rightful 'Lord' of



Neardon. Eventually, he started to live rough and became an alcoholic, returning to his flat only when the ever-fleeting moments of clarity returned.

A few weeks back he befriended Willy Horsefield – the bar hand at the White Hart – mainly to try and score free booze. He soon noted, however, the young man's interest in his whispered theories of his noble blood and honourable tasks, and eventually (after plenty of beer and spirits was offered), allowed the boy to join him on his sacred duty.

Last Sunday, as Charlie began the ritual to summon and torture the spirit of Sir Michael, Willy became spooked and accidentally knocked the last of the Spencer line off the belfry.

## KEY EVENTS, DISCOVERIES & LOCATIONS

The following details a few of the key locations and events the characters will likely encounter during their investigations.

### Location: Inside St Anthony's

There is little left inside St Anthony's, its rendered walls have seen better days, while still being maintained in line with its building's Grade 1 heritage.

- The pews have been removed long ago (with seating only brought in for specific events) and while the covered altar remains in the chancel, the altarpiece is in storage at St Cuthbert.
- The stairs to the bell tower are accessed from beside the narthex (entrance to the church) and are blocked by a locked door (which also has some police tape strung across it). Beyond, the stairs

lead up to a small balcony overlooking the Nave (the main seating area of the church) from which the bellringer would have once rung St Anthony's bell via a long rope (which is long gone). From this vantage point a smaller, narrower stairway leads up to the top of the bell tower.

- The Belfry is an open-air space with arched windows. With St Anthony's bell still in place, there is only enough room to pass single-file around the room, and it is easy to see how a drunk man might slip and fall.
- A small vestry is located on the eastern side of the chancel and later additions (likely in the Victorian period), have made this into an enclosed room of its own. Behind the unlocked door is a small chamber, empty of anything of interest except where one portion of the outside facing wall has been damaged. If closely examined the mortar holding some of the smaller stones in place looks as if it has long crumbled or scrapped away. It was here that Charlie - with a bit of a squeeze - gained access to St Anthony's each Sunday to complete his ritual.

### Location: The Rectory Building

This is the newest building on the property (at about 50 years old) but is in worse repair than the church (as it isn't a protected building). All the windows are broken, and most of the interior walls have been smashed by vandals over the years. The once lush gardens of the rectory are now overgrown with weeds.

Inside, in the old lounge, it seems as if someone has been using the rectory as a place to stay out of the cold. This was Charlie's 'home away from home'. Among the detritus is found:

- A well-worn sleeping bag, along with a small camping stove and a pile of old clothes (which look as if they've been stolen from a charity bin).
- A dozen of the empty Heineken cans (all of which are past their expiry date but have only recently been opened and drunk). These were given to Charlie by Willy as a sort of bribe, stolen from stock that was to be thrown out).
- A few empty 'reheatable' meals and several cheap baked beans cans can be seen scattered about the floor.
- A scrap of paper lies on the ground, this is a portion of the lost deed to the de Spencer estate (see the Torn Deed below).

### Location: Charlie's Flat

Located on the old de Spencer Estate just south of Neardon proper is Charlie's Council flat. Developed in the 1960s, the 'estate' now consists of a dozen aging, narrow, two-storey flats. Originally built to home a generation of older urbanising retirees (in a semi-rural setting), they have since become somewhat more of a temporary housing solution for Basildon Council.

The only non-transient occupier for the flats is Charlie Spencer, who - prior to his death - was spending less and less time at his home. Between his absences and the frequent change of neighbours, no one on the estate knows who he is.

If Charlie's flat is searched, there isn't really too much to be found beyond a few documents hinting at his past in the Royal Navy, and a couple of items linking him to the de Spencer family.



## Location: Cult of Lyssa Headquarters

The Dockwards Investments offices are in the Docklands district of London, with the cult's base of operations a refurbished warehouse situated near the ExCel centre. This building is divided into two distinct spaces, with the public offices being well-appointed and reflecting the company's official business of 'international investments', while the private warehouse (located at the back of the building) maintains its original post-World War 2 aesthetic. Here the cult holds its meetings (and rituals) and in carefully camouflaged spaces keeps the various artifacts and tools of its 'trade'.

As could be expected, the offices are secured with state-of-the-art alarms and security cameras and, at night, are regularly patrolled by a local security service. During the day the offices are generally empty with only Michelle and a couple of 'guards' present.

For most of the scenario, Willy Horsfield is kept restrained in the warehouse, unknowingly waiting for the ceremony to take place on the following Sunday night. Charlie Spencer's journal is also here, although it is locked in a safe within North's office.

## Event: The Church at Night

If the party visits St Anthony's in the evening they will likely be visited by the ghosts of Sir Michael de Lancy and his cursed family.

### THE FORCED SUICIDE

Around 10pm, anyone in the church will hear and then see the following apparitions. These are 'echoes' of past events, rather than manifestations of real ghosts, and as such the characters are only able to see and hear the proceedings, but not interact with them.

- There is the sound of horses and a wagon drawing up to the church (although no animals can be seen).
- Minutes later, the shadowy shapes of two knights in armour can be seen (these are more like mirages than ghosts) dragging a third figure (a man dressed in his nightshirt and little else) to the chancel. This is Sir Michael, bloody and bruised.
- Flung to the ground in front of where the altar stands, the image of Sir Michael seems to be silently pleading with someone standing unseen in front of him.
- After a few moments a disembodied hand appears in front of Sir Michael, holding a thin blade. The knights beside Sir Michael grab his arms forcing him to take the dagger, and slowly but surely the blade is pressed into his chest, piercing his heart.
- The vision fades but the watchers are inundated with the sounds of women and children crying out as if they are being attacked and slaughtered.

### THE LOST WITHIN THE GRAVEYARD

Just before midnight, the ghosts of the de Lancy family (all except Sir Michael) will rise from their place in the section of the cemetery reserved for suicides and wander the grounds. These spirits are only shadows of their past selves, flickering in and out of sight and seeming to move randomly about the graveyard.

These 'ghosts' (they are more shades of memory tortured for hundreds of years by the de Spencers) cannot be communicated or interacted with in any way. Watching these poor souls, an observer will be able to make out that they act as if they don't quite exist in this plane of reality and are lost amongst the gravestones.

### THE VENGEFUL SIR MICHAEL

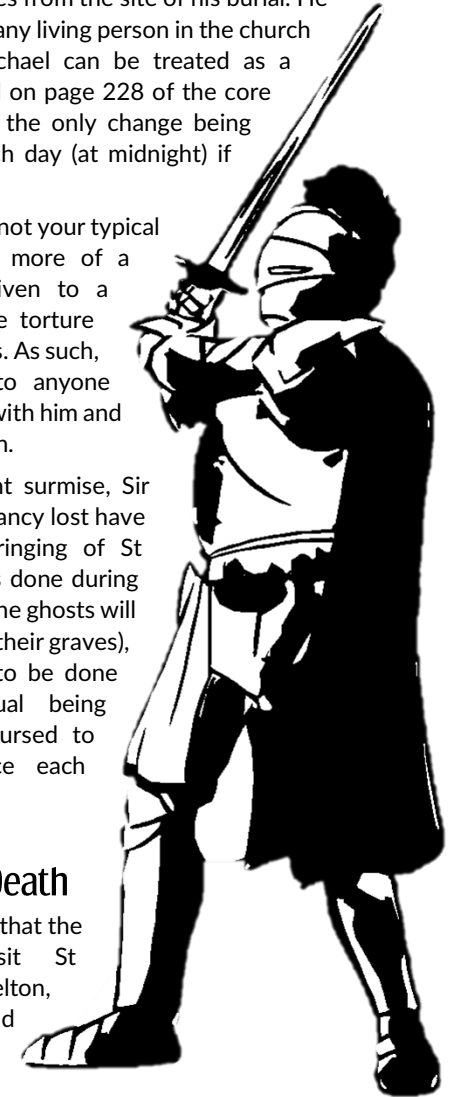
At the stroke of midnight, the bloody chested ghost of Sir Michael de Lancy rises from the site of his burial. He will actively hunt down any living person in the church or its grounds. Sir Michael can be treated as a **Material Spirit** (as noted on page 228 of the core Liminal rulebook), with the only change being that he can reform each day (at midnight) if defeated.

Note that Sir Michael is not your typical recurring spirit and is more of a vengeful phantasm driven to a unique madness by the torture done by the de Spencers. As such, he will not respond to anyone trying to communicate with him and cannot be reasoned with.

As the characters might surmise, Sir Michael and all the de Lancy lost have one weakness - the ringing of St Anthony's bell. If this is done during the 'hauntings' then all the ghosts will fade away (sent back to their graves), but as this is unlikely to be done without the full ritual being completed, they are cursed to repeat the appearance each night.

### Event: Skelton's Death

On one of the evenings that the characters don't visit St Anthony's, Terrance Skelton, the journalist and historian, will arrive on site to take some night-



time photographs. Unless somehow rescued, he will encounter the angry shade of Sir Michael.

How and when Terrance's body is discovered depends on the characters' actions and activities, but the second death will see the local Essex police force become a lot more active in their investigations. Inspector Owens will likely look to link the characters to this second death, and his presence will likely complicate their own efforts.

### Discovery: The Torn Deed

The Torn Deed is found in the old Church rectory, among a pile of debris and junk, dropped there by Charlie just before his last trip to the St Anthony's bell tower.

The document is a torn and damaged deed of legal ownership for Nearham Manor (and all its lands). It is written in old English and the text is so faded and smudged from years of handling, as to make it barely readable. Unfortunately, the bottom quarter of the document, which once held the signatories of the deed has long ago been ripped off.

### Discovery: The Business Card

Michelle North's business card can be acquired from Bill Ogilvy (Basildon Borough Council's Sexton) or found in Willy Horsfield's room at the White Hart. Professionally designed, it is printed on high-quality linen card, The text on the card reads:

**MICHELLE NORTH**  
**DOCKWARD INVESTMENTS**  
**Western Gate Road, London E16 2RD, United**  
**Kingdom**

### Discovery: Charlie's Journal

This journal is currently in the possession of Michelle North and is unlikely to be discovered until the final confrontation on Sunday night.

- A faded, well-used red leather book, the entries in the journal, dating back almost 100 years, having been made by many different hands.
- The book also holds dozens of documents and papers, all wedged haphazardly in between its pages. These all relate to the history of Nearham and the de Spencer family with some being very old and barely held together with Sellotape, while others are more recent printed pages from a variety of online sources.
- The main theme of all these notes seem to indicate that generations of the de Spencer family have taken an oath to never let the 'traitors' of the King ever rest in peace. It also indicates that these rebels were all killed in the year 1400 and buried among the suicides and murderers, their names to be forgotten and lands taken.
- It also clearly calls on the sons, grandsons, and all male descendants of the de Spencer family to 'punish the traitor De Lancy' with St Anthony's listed as the site at which Sir Michael de Lancy (and his family, friends, and servants) were killed, burnt, and buried.
- To complete this punishment the book purports to hold a ritual which must be intoned while ringing the church's bell. It states that this will 'awaken' the 'traitors' from their 'graves' and 'after much pain and deserved agony' return them to their state of torpor. The author implores the reader to do this each Sunday at midnight, with failure to do so 'risking the spirits' vengeance against the King'.

- The text also hints that the spirits should never be blessed by a priest for 'fear that the traitors will be let free from their bonds'.

## WRAPPING UP THE ADVENTURE

The scenario will likely conclude when Michelle North arrives at St Anthony's to trap the ghost of Sir Michael (and any of his family). The events leading into this final scene will dictate how these unfold in play.

### The Ceremony

Unless the characters have somehow interfered with her plans, Michelle North (along with a restrained Willy Horsfield and two thugs armed with tasers and batons) will arrive around 10pm on Sunday evening to complete the cult's ritual. She will also bring Charlie's journal and a crystal box.

- If not stopped, North will complete the ritual around midnight. This involves a long but unglamorous ceremony with whispered words and magical incantations that aren't that interesting to observe. At the climax of the ritual, North calls out Sir Michael's name and as he materialises his spirit is sucked into a crystal box laying at her feet.
- The thugs will patrol the outside of the church and will use force to ensure that no one disturbs North's ceremony. While they are happy to restrain any intruder, they will not put themselves in any danger to protect their boss (i.e. they'll back off if threatened by a firearm etc.)
- Willy is bound and is left lying in the Nave. He's not been physically harmed by the cult, but he's most definitely shaken up by his experience. If

released, he will happily blurt out all he knows to his rescuers (which isn't really all that much).

## Letting the Spirits Rest

Once the characters have Charlie's old journal, they will learn that the spirits of de Lancy and his family have been tortured for centuries by the de Spencers. However, unless the ground around Sir Michael's burial site is blessed, his ghost will continue to haunt St Anthony's for years to come.

If the blessing is done, there is little physical change in the church to tell whether it is successful or not, however, Sir Michael and his family never again bother the living.

## AUTHOR'S THANKS

To my players, Luke, Sam & Emma. And to Dr Paul Mitchener for creating such a fun game.

*This scenario was originally written as a convention style story, for an event that was cancelled due to a Covid lockdown. As such it was designed for three specific pre-generated characters – a private detective (a Tough), a necromancer (a Magician) and a Determined. This approach allowed for a quick entry into the game, while also ensuring the Cabal had a good selection of skills/abilities to meet the threats they'd be encountering.*