

January, 2017

2CGazette

A Dungeon Master's Periodical

5e Compatible

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Produced by 2CGaming



Nolan '15

Billund & Lazarus

The 2CGazette—January, 2017

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Created for 2CGaming's Patreon - the 2CGazette: www.patreon.com/2cggaming

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Billund & Lazarus

Tyrant—Gnome Alchemist and Wizard

Summary

Billund and Lazarus are two minds in the same body. Billund is the original identity of the poor gnome, and Lazarus arose though a tragic accident with one of Billund's inventions.

While the former is a kind alchemist, a brewer of potions for both adventurers and the commonfolk, and a font of helpful information, the latter is a scheming tyrant who uses addictive concoctions to manipulate his victims into doing his bidding. In essence, the duo functions as both friend and foe.

Introducing the Villain

To play him most effectively, introduce Billund first, many play sessions before Lazarus makes an appearance. Read up on Billund's personality traits and quirks, but keep him as one NPC among many. If your players like him, they'll keep coming back and you won't need to force it. If they don't like him, he'll need to keep coming back into their lives and being a lovable annoyance. We'll cover a few tricks you can use to make your players like him in a bit. Regardless, have other NPCs mirror your players reactions to him. If the party hates Billund, other NPCs will agree and groan whenever his name comes up. Then you can start introducing Lazarus.

Lazarus should appear by name long before your players meet him face to face. Having numerous minor villains claim they're "just doing what Lazarus says" or "Lazarus doesn't take no for an answer" should put your players on edge, especially if the villains are otherwise unrelated. Review Lazarus' goals and motivations, but remember that he shares none of this with his minions. He gets them under his thumb via his alchemical concoctions and then orders them to do his bidding with no explanation, only threats. You can foreshadow his methods by having your players discover discarded potion bottles, or indications of chemical dependency in their fallen or surrendered foes.

Who is this Villain?

Let's cover Billund first. The amicable owner of the potion store, *Billund's Alchemy Supplies for Homes and Heroes!*, he is often eager to provide as much assistance as he can to all sorts of adventurers. Though he makes most of his money selling simple potions to commoners, he wants to move up in the world, and he'll latch on to adventurers as his way to do that. A great way to get him on their good side is to have him cut deals for discounted rates or even give them free healing potions. You can even have him offer a few side-quests to gather rare ingredients, providing the players with powerful potions as a reward. You should play him as honestly as possible, he's not a deceptive sort, and should be candid with the party about his desire to make it big in the world of potions! This honesty and slight self-centeredness will encourage the players to believe in his character without looking for ulterior, hidden motive. Billund has a lot of energy, and is eternally optimistic, always assuming the best in any situation. When he gets sad, such as if the players don't want him around, it never lasts for long, and he believes he can convince them he's worth hanging out with if he just does them another favor.

Now let's talk about the flip side to this coin; Lazarus uses his alchemy skills to empower and enslave his minions in equal measure. He insists on compartmentalizing information, refusing to tell anyone more than they need to know. He frequently communicates with those who oppose him, but never in person, relying on spells such as *sending* as well as nonmagical communiques like simple letters to get his point across. He has gained quite a bit of magical power through the use of dangerous potions that boost his mental abilities and accelerate the pace of his thoughts. This has enabled the creation of *The Eye of Chronos*, an incredibly potent magical item that has foiled every single assassination attempt on Lazarus by allowing him to make a small jump in time, acting before even the fastest opponent.

Finally, let's go over the relationship between the two of them. Billund and Lazarus are not aware of each other. Each one gets hints of missed time, and may have a hunch that there is something wrong, but neither one knows the truth of the situation. The magical split between them actively prohibits them learning about each other, and it will take more than evidence and persuasion to convince either Billund or Lazarus

that they are sharing a body. See “the Split Curse” sidebar for details. Billund has a tendency to direct adventurers in ways that interfere with Lazarus’ schemes. Billund has no idea that he’s doing this—he’ll say things like “I heard there’s a heist planned at the docks district tonight!” or “Can you go to this ruin and get me some moss from the statue in the middle? It does wonders for wrinkles!” Lazarus is furious that some, in his own words, “unseen and brilliant adversary” keeps outmaneuvering him.

Goals & Motivations

Billund’s motivations are simple. He wants to earn money, run a successful business, and be famous. He’s uncomplicated.

Lazarus, however, has quite an agenda. He seeks power, both personal and political, so that he can pursue his goals. He wants to get as many people as he can addicted to his products, so that he can control them and create, as he calls it, a “more mentally free” society. Lazarus is convinced that his alchemy can do in a few moments what normally takes a lifetime of spiritual study, provide peace of mind and enlightenment. Of course, he’s hoping to gain wealth and power along the way, because once he controls everything, no one will ever get hurt again. Like most interesting villains, he sees himself as a hero. He doesn’t value personal freedom the way most modern cultures do, and believes that if the average person is left in charge of their own happiness, they won’t make the right choices.

Schemes

A villain’s schemes are what the players will be actively fighting against and interacting with, though most of them begin without the players knowledge and may run in the background for some time before being discovered. Each scheme has an Encounter Level (EL) listed, this is the recommended level the players should be when they confront this scheme. This is a guideline for how to introduce a villain over the course of a campaign—getting your players used to the idea of who they are and what their motivations are before actually meeting them. Each scheme includes complications—things that can go wrong, rumors—how the players get information about the villain responsible, and rewards—what they get when they successfully stop the scheme. This is a

simplified structure, meant to inspire you and help aid your creative process, not provide a fully formed questline.

Spiking the Water (EL 5)

Lazarus adds a bit of his chemicals to a small town’s water supply, essentially turning it into a, for lack of a better term, “super chilled out paradise”—his words. This is wonderful for all the residents, but when even the guards refuse to take up weapons in their own defense, it makes the town easy pickings for criminals, raiders, or worse.

Complications

- A group of orcs and goblins is preparing to raid the town, or attacks suddenly while the players are

The Split Curse

Billund is the original gnome, son of a happy family of gnome wizards, he found himself eager to leave the family business and venture just a little bit away from the beaten path. Alchemy seemed like the perfect career. But Billund always had a bit of a dark side. He didn’t take failure well, and was prone to aggressive mood swings. He lost touch with his family after one of them spoke poorly of his business and Billund tackled his Uncle Orillus, breaking the poor man’s nose. Billund ran away from home that night, and set up his shop, determined to get rich and become a famous alchemist. While his business did well, Billund never could find happiness in his work, and one day, he created a potent brew that he believed would bring eternal happiness. Without the ingredients to make a second brew, he tested the potion on himself. Like most wishes, it didn’t go exactly the way he wanted. The potion split his personality into two sections. Billund kept his happy side, and the dark side, Lazarus, was born.

The curse that split them can only be ended by *wish* or similar magic, and the nature of the *wish* will determine what happens. It could destroy Lazarus or Billund, leaving only one of them in the body, or it could fuse the two once again, restoring Billund to his original self. It also might create a new body for Lazarus, giving each personality their own form and allowing to meet each other for the first time. Given the relatively low-level the party will be when they meet Billund/Lazarus, they will likely kill him rather than find a way to help him, but players are full of surprises.

investigating. If the raiders are aware of the town's condition, they may simply walk in, expecting to take things without a fight. Players aware of the town's state can use this to their advantage to stage an ambush.

- A visiting noble, on the way to meet with an important ruler, stopped in this town and fell victim to the tainted water. They are now lounging, naked, in the sun, refusing to even consider meeting with the ruler, potentially damaging relations between the two factions.

- Members of the town are refusing to eat or drink, presenting a serious risk of death. The players will need to act fast to help save these people from themselves.

Rumors

The town well was poisoned, and a traveling alchemist by the name of Lazarus stopped by shortly after the troubles began. He offered to clean the well, for free, and the people graciously accepted. Soon after that, they felt much better about everything.

Lazarus

Small Humanoid (Gnome), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 19 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d6 + 56)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	19 (+4)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saves Str +9, Dex +9, Con +9, Int +10, Wis +8

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, incapacitated

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Gnomish, Elvish, Dwarvish, Halfling

Challenge 14 (11,500xp)

Traits

Alchemical Infusion. Whenever Lazarus rolls for initiative, a special alchemical device—his Alchemical Infuser—injects him with serum of his own design, giving him the following benefits: his Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores become 19 and he gains proficiency in the associated saving throws; his Armor Class is 15 + his Dexterity modifier; and he regenerates 10 hit points at the start of each of his turns. These benefits are included in his statistics, and are unaffected by *dispel magic*, *antimagic field*, or similar spells. The infuser's effects last for 8 hours. Lazarus can recharge his infuser when he finishes a long rest.

Split Personality. Lazarus is immune to being charmed, frightened, or incapacitated, and any effects which attempt to read his thoughts return a jumbled mess of emotions and images. A successful Insight or Arcana check against DC 20 will reveal the reason for the confusion, that Lazarus is one of two personalities cohabiting a mind, but won't reveal any additional information about his thoughts or intentions.

Spellcasting. Lazarus is a 14th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks).

- Cantrips (at-will): *mage hand*, *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *friends*
- 1st level (4 slots): *alarm*, *unseen servant*, *hideous laughter*, *disguise self*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *alter self*, *blindness/deafness*, *detect thoughts*, *rope trick*, *suggestion*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *clairvoyance*, *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *major image*, *nondetection*, *tongues*
- 4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye*, *banishment*, *confusion*, *private sanctum*
- 5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*, *planar binding*
- 6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion*
- 7th level (1 slot): *forcecage*

Actions

Drink a Potion. Lazarus drinks a potion, the effects of which function even in the area of an *antimagic field*, giving him one of the following effects (his choice):

- *Superior Healing* - Regain 40 (8d4 + 40) hit points.
- *Invisibility* - Become invisible for 1 minute, as the spell *invisibility*.
- *Stoneskin* - Gain resistance to piercing, slashing, and bludgeoning damage for 1 minute.
- *Limited Flight* - Gain a fly speed of 30 ft. for 10 minutes.
- *False Death* - Become paralyzed for 3d6 hours, appearing to be dead during that time (a DC 22 Medicine check reveals that he is catatonic but alive).

Rewards

The players may be able to salvage some of the alchemical reagents from the well, shedding some light on his methods and revealing the location of where he harvested them. The players could use this to set an ambush for his minions if they return to the site to gather more.

Crime Wave (EL 7)

Testing the withdrawal symptoms of his latest batch, Lazarus retracts it from a city where he had been testing it. Riots break out as aggressive tendencies return tenfold.

Complications

- Mercenaries take advantage of the rioting to charge exorbitant prices for 'protection', robbing many of the nobles who were unaffected by the alchemical addiction.
- A small cult seizes power in the town, replacing the leadership and imposing strict codes of conduct, preaching that the riots are caused by the gods' disfavor.
- The town has a powerful spellcaster who grows tired of the noise and chaos—smothering to town in a massive *silence* spell, muting everyone.

Rumors

- The guards report detaining a number of lethargic, seemingly blissful individuals who say they got their drugs from a man named Lazarus.
- A few guards may reveal they were paid a handsome sum by Lazarus to look the other way when the riots started, and make sure they got out of hand.

Rewards

This event is likely to upset a lot of powerful people, making them more likely to lend support to the players when they ask for help dealing with Lazarus.

Infusing the Air (EL 9)

Lazarus has found a way to make his concoctions airborne, and is building a magical wind generator to spread them far and wide.

Complications

- If the wind generator starts up, the players will be at serious risk of inhaling some of the potions. Each minute they spend in the area requires a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 1 to resist the effects. Each time they make this saving throw, the DC increases by 1.
- Lazarus employs constructs that are immune to his substances to protect the wind generator, good options include: helmed horrors, a shield guardian, a clay golem, or a stone golem. Don't use them all at once.
- If the players defeat his servants and threaten the generator, Lazarus himself will intervene, arriving with an additional set of constructs.

Rumors

- One of the players' merchant connections contacts them, indicating that someone has been collecting expensive and potentially dangerous components—the players may recognize a description of the minions collecting the materials as those under Lazarus' thumb.
- A recent construction project in town expands rapidly, as Lazarus' machine pushes through the roof of its enclosure in preparation for its activation.

Rewards

Victory over Lazarus! The players may be able to recover *The Eye of Chronos* and use it for their own purposes.

The Eye of Chronos

Legendary Wondrous Item (Requires Attunement)

This amulet bears the image of a stylized eye with a wide pupil full of stars. While attuned to this item, you can't be surprised, and you gain advantage on all initiative checks. In addition, when you roll initiative, you can activate this item to immediately take a single turn before anyone else can act, and treat the result of your initiative check as if you had rolled a 20. If this causes you to be first in initiative order, you effectively take two turns in a row. Once activated, this power can't be used again until the next dawn.

Tactics

While Lazarus is a Tyrant, and his primary asset is his alchemy and his minions, he is an experienced spellcaster. Most of his spells are chosen to disable enemies and allow him to make his escape, rather than to outright kill them. He relies on suggestion, banishment, and confusion, for most challenges, only using his powerful *forcecage* spell if the situation is truly dire. He is also wearing *The Eye of Chronos* at all times, a powerful magical amulet detailed below. He uses that any time he feels his life is truly threatened, and will always try to lay low until it recharges. A ninth level party is going to have some trouble pinning him down, but if they wear him out and keep him from escaping, he can't put up much of a fight. Lazarus always tries to flee, but if escape is truly impossible, he will drink his *Potion of False Death*, appearing to take his own life.
