The Circle of Reflecting Glory 003



Being the continuing chronicles of the CRG, as written by Helen Drake, Witch!

RULES ISSUES... I just realised that I've been running the **Gilded Dice** incorrectly until half-way through this session. Regardless how many dice you have in the Gilded Action, ONLY ONE of them becomes a Gilded Dice. I have accidentally been counting all the dice from a Gilded Action (SENSE 2 and FOCUS 2 for Helen) as being Gilded.

I also forgot to note Helen's **Illumination Keys** via which she gains Advancement.

ILLUMINATION KEYS

- As I forgot "Arcane Texts", For this Assignment, I'll count the Arcane Investigations via "Extend the Senses".
- She "collected" the Horn.

Consult Arcane Texts Collect Oddities Act Bizzare



For Solo Play - I used the Example Assignment for Briar Green p108 as the initial premise, "Mythic GM Emulator v2" and "The Solo Society" (a small Vaesen Supplement with random tables of Period Horror/Investigation).

The Circle of Reflecting Glory, its Chapter House in Briar Green, close to the Mara Winfield Botanical Conservatory and my Solo PC – Helen Drake, are described in the first issue of this story which can be found at https://aigm.igm4u.com/Circle_of_Reflecting_Glory_solo_001.pdf

At the end of last issue, Helen had confronted the terrifying Predator in the Ladies loo at Briarbank College and wrestled from it a mysterious horn torn from a long-extinct deer with the power to locate Thinnings and "open" them to escape danger!

The creature had fled, emitting an aura of fear that sent all the staff and students running. Helen had not been in time to save the monster's victim, a young girl it had stabbed to death with the horn.



AND NOW...

Assignment One (continued)

Mythic – Chaos Factor 6 – The Expected Scene will be resting in the Chapter House, examining the Horn and meeting the Light-Keeper. **Altered** Scene – "**Make 2 Adjustments**", "**Reduce/Remove An Activity**" + "**Increase An Activity**". I'll go for increasing the Horn examination and only getting a message from the Light-Keeper, not actually meeting them.

Scene Five – At the Chapter House



It was now evening on Wednesday February 4th. After speaking with Mara Winfield, Helen has returned to the Chapter House.

The others still haven't returned, but she'd sent Mara's young assistant with a note for The Light-Keeper asking them to come to the house.

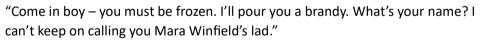
Her hands are still shaking (and not just from the bitter cold) as she sits drinking coffee and staring at the thing on the library table.

The pale yellowed-ivory horn. Perhaps 10 inches long. A few strands of ganglia emerging from the bottom, where the Predator had ripped it from the deer.

It had been soaked in the blood of that poor girl, but Helen had carefully washed it under the kitchen tap, her tears mingling with the blood as it drained away. She had done all she could, but it wasn't enough to save her.

A rap at the door! Peering down from the window she could see Mara Winfield's lad in the doorway below. He was wrapped in a thick scarf and his breath steamed around him. He must have run all the way there and back. He must be about 18, she supposed.

She tapped the window and gestured for him to come in and come upstairs. The door wasn't locked.



He had taken off his cap and unwound the scarf. "Thank you, Miss Drake, that would be so kind. Ah Rowland, Miss Drake. Rowland Campbell. I'm Mrs Winfield's Administrative Assistant Miss Drake.".

Passing Rowland a glass with a generous amount of brandy. Helen tried a reassuring smile and said "Why don't you just call me Helen, Rowland. And is it OK if I just use Rowland or do you prefer Mr Campbell?"

"Oh no Miss... ah Helen. Mr Campbell's me dad. Most call me Roly, if that's acceptable." Then he dissolves into coughing as he swigs half the brandy.

Helen lets him get himself under control and gestures to a chair. "Well? Why are you here Roly?".



"Sorry M.. Helen, there was nobody in at the house – except the cook who said she'd pass on to her employer as soon as they got back, but no idea when that would be. Sorry."

His eyes kept flicking to the thing on the table across the room – the Horn. "Is that... from the dead deer? It looks a bit like its other horn, but a lot shorter and less dark."

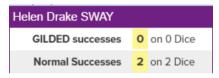
"Yes Roly. It is from that poor creature and the person who killed the deer used it to kill a girl at the College. And now I expect they are going to want to get it back."

His eyes went wide, and he took another sip. A smaller sip this time. I don't know why I said so much, but I needed to speak to someone, and Roly already knew there was something strange about me and the others who came to this house. This house his employer let us use rent-free. I think I wanted to alert him to the danger. Didn't want him thinking he was too safe.

"I saw all the fuss around the College on my way back. Lots of people. Periphery Carriages. Killed a girl with it? Won't that be ... like evidence or something?"

"Yes Roly. Yes it will. It's evidence alright." She cackles **bizarrely**. "But it isn't safe to touch and wouldn't be safe to hand over to anyone else, not even the Periphery. I don't think they are equipped to handle it, or to handle the ... killer ... when he comes for it." She leans close to the boy, her eyes bulging **bizarrely** wide "You must never tell anyone about this."

I'll try a SWAY Action to see how much he likes/trusts me and gauge his reaction. I've only got 1 box. **Stakes:** Low. **Expectations:** He will keep this secret and be alert for danger. Partial: Keep it secret but



think I'm dotty. Fail: Will tell somebody AND think I'm dotty. I'll grant an extra dice for the brandy and treating him like an adult and an equal. Critical: maybe recruit him into the Circle.

Partial Success: Keep it secret but think I'm dotty.

He nods vigorously. "Mums the word, Helen. But I'd best be off". He stands, backs away with a slight look of alarm, stuffing his cap back on.

I sigh and nod and watch him go. "Take good care, Roly. Take good care."

There's no way (as far as I can see) of recovering from Marks during an assignment other than the Doctor's "Patch-up" ability (which costs them Intuition Drive points).

Let's have a good look at this Horn. See if I can work out what it does and whether it's safe to use (as a weapon or as bait) or whether I should hand it over to Candela Obscura for safekeeping straightaway.



I'll try another SENSE (to attune/reveal) although I no longer have any Intuition Resistance left so my "Extend the Senses" is exhausted.

I'll spend my last two Intuition Drives so I get 2 more normal dice. Hopefully I'll get a decent Gilded result and recover one of them.

Stakes: Normal, **Expectations:** Learn that the Horn can be used as a **one-charge** banishment effect on a creature from beyond the Flare. It needs the Death-agony of an innocent to re-charge. Partial: and

take 1 Bleed or 1 Brain. Fail: Take 1 Bleed & 1 Brain and learn nothing. Critical: Learn it has a secondary power too.

Helen Drake SENSE		
GILDED successes	1	on 1 Dice
Normal Successes	3	on 3 Dice

The best possible result! A 6 on the Gilded Dice AND at least one 6 on the Normal, so CRITICAL SUCCESS and recover one of my Intuition Drives.

Projecting her senses into the Horn, Helen shudders as more of its nature is revealed. The thing can be used to banish a creature struck to Beyond The Flare. Or it can be used to open a Thinning from either side and allow a named/summoned creature to cross.

In either case, it is a one-time thing until the item is re-charged through a grisly process with the death-agony of an innocent.

"Oh Bethany! I <u>might</u> be able to summon Bethany back from the Beyond. If she isn't dead... if she's still trapped over there... I could get her back!" Almost overwhelmed by the possibility, she slumps over the table. "But this **MIGHT** be my only weapon against the Predator!"

Helen uses a Ritual to invoke a Circle of Protection she had previously woven into the fabric of the Chapter House. This will protect any within until she leaves.

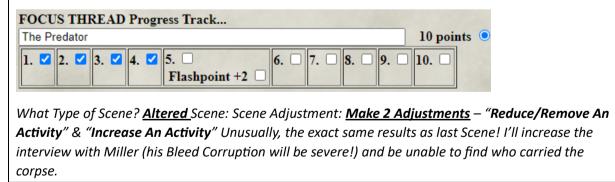


It gives her a third Bleed Mark, but will soak 1 Body damage, so should help her if the Predator comes calling with its razor claws.

With the Ritual complete, there's nothing more she can do tonight, so she slides the Horn beneath her pillow, locks her bedroom door and tries to sleep.

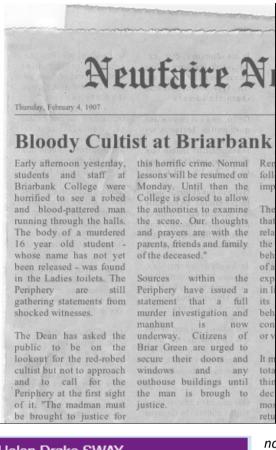
Mythic – Chaos Factor down to 5, she feels more in control. Expecting the next scene to be an interview with the student – Miller to check him for Bleed and find out who carried the deer corpse from the College to the Botanical Gardens. I'll be claiming as Gear a Bleed Detector and a Bleed Containment Vessel.

I'll take another tick on the Focus Thread for "The Predator" as I now have a way to banish it. 4/10 The next tick will invoke a "Flashpoint".



Scene Six – Miller

I used an on-line generator to make the clipping below. <u>https://www.fodey.com/generators/newspaper/snippet.asp</u>



Helen Drake SWAYGILDED successesOon 0 DiceNormal Successes2on 3 Dice

That morning's Newfaire News covered the story of the College murder. It seems the Periphery think it was a "natural" event. The monster's Fear aura must have panicked witnesses sufficiently that they saw what they expected to see – a man in a robe. That being far more acceptable to the frail mind of mortal men than the horrifying truth.

The College is closed, with a bored-looking Periphery Constable guarding the door. Helen wants to get in to find an address for Miller and maybe to find out who carried the deer corpse across to the Botanical Gardens.

A mop, a bucket and some overalls should do the trick, then just look as if you belong!

"Get the door young fella. Dean wants the floors mopping, can't have you lovely Periphery chaps slipping over in all the sludge you've traipsed in."

A SWAY attempt to convince the guy. I'll grant myself an extra dice for the disguise and flattery and use a Cunning Drive so I'm on a total of 3 normal dice. **Stakes:** Low **Expectations:** Get Let in, Partial: have to do some actual cleaning! Fail: Turned

away, Critical: He's extra helpful/chatty

Partial Success.

Much to Helen's annoyance, the officer follows her in, sits on a stool inside and watches her for a full hour as she cleans and rinses and dries the long hall floor.

When she finishes, the Periphery officer heads back outside, finally leaving her with the place to herself.

She heads to the Administration Office to look for Miller's home address and finds it easily. They have the ideal mixture of negligible security and good record-keeping. John Miller seems like a bright enough student but of a nervous disposition and a severe lack of sporting aptitude.

She stops herself from looking for the name of the murdered girl.

There are 13 Districts of Newfaire with their own chapter headings in the Core Rulebook so random selection gives me – The Shriveline – the Ascendancy-owned area. Elevated walkways, monuments and churches.



The Millers live in the Shriveline, on the other side of the city. John's father works as a Custodian for the Church of the Mother.

After heading home to change, she takes a Hansom Cab across the river and over to the house. She asks the cabbie to wait (with the promise of silver) and heads up to the door. Helen's story will be that she is a counsellor appointed by the College to check on the welfare of all the students who might have been affected by the incident yesterday. By this means, she hopes to get John on his own for a chat. As it turns out, it's John who answers the door. She'll try out her story on him.

SWAY **Stakes:** Low, **Expectations:** Will get to check him out and de-Bleed him if needed. Partial, but be interrupted by his mother and need to convince her too. Fail: He'll recognise her and not believe her story and threaten to call his mother. Critical: He'll also know who carried the dead deer.

Helen Drake SWAY		
GILDED successes	0	on 0 Dice
Normal Successes	1	on 2 Dice

I'll use my last Cunning Drive so I get 2 Dice.

Partial Success

The Bleed Detector confirms John is uncontaminated. However, Mrs Miller comes to see who had called and finds them in the kitchen. She demands to know what's going on.

SWAY **Stakes:** Normal, **Expectations:** Convincing. Partial: Convincing but wastes time as Mrs Miller berates her and talks endlessly about her son and then her Cabbie has given up and she has to walk back to Briar Green. Fail: Mrs Miller will decide to follow this up and report her (by description) to the College and the Periphery. Critical: She'll get John to reveal who carried the dead deer.

Helen Drake SWAY	
GILDED successes	on 0 Dice
Normal Successes	1 on 1 Dice

I only have 1 dice for this.

Full Success

Mythic: Chaos Factor **should** reduce to 4 as I'm having some more success, but I feel the excitement and uncertainty about whether to risk using the Horn to rescue her friend Bethany will have shaken her up even more, **so I'll raise it to 6 instead**.

I'll count checking on John Miller as progress on the "Predator" Focus Thread, taking me to 5/10 and triggering a Flashpoint (the next scene will include the Predator in a DRAMATIC way!).

Expected Scene would be "Returning to the Chapter House and meeting the Light Keeper". OK.

I'll make a few rolls on Mythic's Random Tables to work out who the Light-Keeper is, so far, I've avoided any names or even gender.

Character Descriptor 1: **Defiant**, Character Descriptor 2: **Wild**, Character Actions: **Tactics**, Character Appearance: **Scar**, Character Background: **Control**, Character Identity: **Law**, Character Motivation: **Fight**, Character Personality: **Nervous**, Character Skills: **Lie**, Character Traits/Flaws: **Weak**, Other Traits: **Female**, **Exceptionally Old!** "**Cornelia Gellis**"

Scene Seven – The Light-Keeper

By the time I returned to the Chapter House, a familiar carriage was parked outside. The driver (a dependable chap called Ted Hare) was sitting inside and I could see the foul tobacco he smoked leaking through the slightly opened window.

I nodded to him and muttered "Ted" as I went past. With a cough he grunted back "Missus".

"She won't be happy if the carriage smells like a cheap whore house, Ted, and well you know it."

"Too cold to wait up top Missus. Not at my age and not in this weather. She can sack me any time and see if she can find another mug to run around after her night and day"

"I'll bring you out a brandy Ted." Chuckling, she hurried inside to meet the Light-Keeper.



The Honourable Justice Cornelia Gellis (retired), looked about 70, but was really twenty years older than that, at least. Looked younger than me, if I was being honest, but then I couldn't afford the makeup she plastered on – her war paint, she called it. Or had she taken that special treatment at the Eternal Heart Health spa?

Small and frail in the sturdy leather chair, but her eyes told you that the "frailty" was purely physical. She had taken off her thick gloves and the vivid scars that ran along her left hand and forearm, were showing, almost visibly throbbing. Even after all these years, when she caught me looking, she nervously twitched the arm out of sight inside her voluminous, brown-furred coat.

Cornelia had been Light-Keeper for our Circle since Bethany... since Bethany "passed" through the Mirror, that final time three years ago, just after the end of the War. She had been a member of the Circle for many years before then, much longer than I had. Retired as a Judge twenty years ago and retired from active duty in the Circle when she became Light-Keeper.

We both spoke at once and both said exactly the same thing. "Where the hell have YOU been!".

I raised a hand for her to wait and poured two brandies. One I took a sip from and then turned with the other one to head back down the stairs. "This one's for Ted. Why you won't let him in on a day like this, I don't know!". As I left the room, she answered. "He's not Circle, for all he's loyal, he's not Circle and the rules... the rules are the rules."

When I returned, she gestured irritably towards the drinks cabinet, and I topped up her glass of Cream Sherry before stripping off my scarf and coat and warming myself before the fire.

"No word yet from the others?" I asked. The rest of my Circle have been away on an expedition for almost a month, with no word from them.

She shook her head. "Nothing yet, and you know I can't tell you where they've gone. Need to Know basis and ... I'm sorry Helen, you simply don't NEED to know." Her face softened a little. "So, tell me, what's going on at the College. Circle business? Your note was ... less than thorough. I heard you called in the clean-up crew to the Botanical Gardens. I assume that's all part of it?"

I filled her in on recent events.

Time for the Flashpoint, the dramatic arrival of The Predator!

She was examining the Horn, turning over and over in her wrinkled hands when we heard the horse outside whinny and stamp. Then an angry shout from Ted. Dashing to the window I saw he was clambering out of the carriage, drawing his swordstick from the cane and making his way towards the front door.

The cold wind sweeping in from below told me the door was open and the creak of the stairs gave me warning of what was about to happen. We were both struck by a wave of fear and panic that preceded the thing into the room.

There isn't really an equivalent of a Fear Saving Throw in Candela Obscura, but I'll factor it into the Stakes and Expectations as an automatic Brain Mark for a Success or Partial and 2 Brain Marks for a Fail, nothing for a Critical Success.

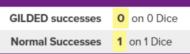
Cornelia tosses the Horn to me and draws a revolver.

A Mythic Fate Check about whether she would have a useful weapon (Very Likely) returned an EXCEPTIONAL Yes, so enchanted silver bullets seem like the right call. Another Fate Check to see if she resists the wave of fear (Likely, based bonuses for her Defiant and Fight traits and a penalty for Nervous) Yes. But gets the equivalent of a Brain Mark (not tracking them for NPCs)

I'll try to catch the Horn. I know what's coming through the door. I don't know if that makes it more or less frightening! At least there is a Circle of Protection affecting the House, so we are all at least slightly protected from its physical attacks.

A CONTROL check seems right for this. Only got Control 1 and no relevant Drive. Stakes: Normal, Expectation: Catch it but 1 Brain Mark from the fear. Partial: Catch it and 1 Brain Mark and lose an Active Action scrabbling under a table for it. Fail: 2 Brain Marks and it rolls out of reach under a table. Critical Success: catch it and no brain mark.

Helen Drake CONTROL



Partial success. 1 *Brain Mark and Catch the Horn but lose an Active Action scrabbling under a table for it.*

The thing bursts into the Library, scattering books and tables and chairs. It started towards Cornelia, but turned its eyeless head to follow the path of the Horn and charged towards me, scrabbling about to snatch up the thing from where Cornelia's feeble throw had sent it.

As Helen can't do an Active Action, she'll attempt to Dodge/Parry with her Dodge 0. I'll give her a single dice for the Horn and another dice for Cornelia blasting at it with enchanted ammunition. **Stakes:** High, **Expectations:** dodge, Partial Dodge but 1 Body (absorbed by Circle of Protection), Fail: 2 Body (1 absorbed), Critical Success: Dodge and weaken the monster (as further progress on the

Helen Drake MOVE	Mythic Focus Thread – the Flashpoint causes 2 ticks, so this is
GILDED successes 0 on 0 Dice	already at 7/10). FOCUS THREAD Progress Track
Normal Successes 1 on 2 Dice	The Predator 10 points 1. 2. 3. 2 4. 5. 2 6. 7. 2 8. 9. 10.
A Full Success – Helen Dodges.	1. 0 2. 0 5. 0 4. 0 5. 0 1

The table and the Circle of Protection absorb the monster's slashing claws as Helen scoops up the Horn to keep the thing at bay. Cornelia blasts away with her pistol and the bullets pierce the robe of flesh, splattering corrupted blood over the carpet.



Ted, gasping and pale with fear, runs through the door, his polished swordstick gleaming.

A Mythic Fate Check whether his loyalty to Cornelia overcomes his Fear gets an EXCEPTIONAL Yes (so let's imagine he's secretly in love with his employer).

"Oh no you don't... by the Mother... what IS this thing?"

Helen will try to use the Horn to banish it, using her SENSE Action (Attune) and getting 1 dice from Cornelia and another from faithful Ted. I'll spend her last Intuition Drive for another Dice as this is the best chance we'll get.

Stakes: High, Expectations: Banish it and 1 Bleed for the experience. Partial, Banish it but 2 Body (1 absorbed by Circle of Protection) and 1 Bleed, Fail, 2 Body (1 absorbed) and 1 Bleed. Critical: Banish, no damage.

Helen Drake SENSE		
GILDED successes	0	on 1 Dice

Normal Successes

1

on 3 Dice

A Full Success.

As her mind fuses with the Horn, there is a moment of transcendence. Perfect clarity. It touches the monster in the chest and there is a sucking noise, a sensation of a great wind and a wet splash as The Flare snaps closed between them.

In the clarity it dawns on her. She has used the charge on the Horn. She can't use it now to rescue Bethany!

Helen collapses to her knees sobbing. The dull and now lifeless Horn drops to the bloody carpet.

"Well. I SAY Missus. That was well done. You alright Corn... Your Honour... that is to say?"

Cornelia is still in her chair, the pistol smoking in her tiny hand. She nods. "Thank you Ted. We'll overlook your intrusion into the Chapter House this one time. You'll find cream sherry in that cupboard". She waves the pistol. Notices it, and slips it back into her coat.

"Well done indeed Helen. For a moment when you fumbled that catch, I thought we were done for."



The damage, 2 Body (1 absorbed) and 1 Bleed for using the Magic Item, gives Helen a Scar and clears her Bleed.

Green, red & yellow veins are visible in the whites of her eyes.

I've added 1 Brain Mark too with the realisation that she can't now save Bethany unless she is willing to cause the Death-Agony of an Innocent! She'll claim that the Horn is now harmless and she'll keep it as a souvenir.

Over the next few days...

- Helen tracks down the two men who carried the dead deer. One of them was infected by the Bleed but it can be cleansed and contained.
- She scrubs the carpet of the Library clean of corrupted blood

That concludes the first Solo Assignment for the Circle of Reflecting Glory.

Did Helen fulfil her Illumination Keys...

- Consult Arcane Texts I decided to give this as I had plenty of chance to, but had forgotten this aspect of the game
- Collect Oddities the Horn
- Act Bizarre I decided to give this for the occasional cackling and bulging eyes

Did Helen fulfil the Circle's Illumination Questions...

- Did you contain or destroy a source of bleed? YES
- Did you provide comfort or support for those affected by a phenomenon? YES (tracking them down and checking/cleansing)
- Did you bring something of importance back for Candela Obscura to protect and study? YES the Horn and information about the Horn (except withholding that it can be re-charged!)

Total Tally is 7 Illumination. 4 for Every Player fulfilled at least one and 3 for the Circle. 7 Takes me to the first Milestone. I don't actually have anything that resets with a Milestone, but for the purpose of a One-PC Solo game, I'm going to advance EITHER the Circle or the PC when I hit a Milestone.

I'll probably take either the Ghostblade ability from Occultist, or the Commune ability from the Medium. I'll decide when I start Assignment Two.



<u>Mythic</u>

Chaos Factor will drop back to 5 for the next Assignment.

I'll add Ted and Cornelia to the NPCs list and remove The Predator.