Prologue

The Assassination in Avignonet

Where blood is revenged with blood and the tragedy begins.

—— May 1242 ——

A messenger arrived at Montsegur with a letter from Avignonet, a small town nearby. The local bailiff served the French king but was also secretly a faithful believer. In the letter he informed that the hated inquisitor Guillaume-Arnaud was on his way to Avignonet, where he would stay for a few days. The bailiff was willing to let his guards look the other way if somebody would attempt to harm the inquisitor.

- *Play the scene where Pierre Roger leads a group of armed men in an assault on the inquisitor. Does Guillaume taste the blood of revenge? Does the inquisitor recognize his assassin? Do all of the Cathars support the idea of the assassination?*
- *The scene is set by the player with the cross.*
- *After playing the prologue, you are ready to choose your main characters. Read the playing tips and continue to play out Act One.*

Act One

The Siege Begins

Where Montsegur and the Cathars are introduced

—— May 1243 ——

The sun was shining from a clear sky when the war came to Montsegur. From the mountain top the enemy could be seen clearly. They were many. 5,000? Perhaps 10,000? Without haste the crusaders gathered around the foot of the mountain.

Montsegur was closed off from the outside. The siege had begun.

- *Raimond's player introduces Montsegur.*

During the summer, spirits are high among the besieged. Life goes on. There is plenty of food and water for drinking and reinforcements easily penetrate enemy lines. A celebration is held with singing and dancing. The perfects teach the faithful about the path to salvation.

- *Each player sets a scene that introduces the character, they choose for their main character.*
- *Remember to draw a scene card before setting a scene and a story card after ending a scene.*

Act Two

Winter Hardship

Where we learn that the situation is worse than first expected

—— November 1243 ——

The crusading army realized that capturing Montsegur was more difficult than first expected. The siege would be prolonged into the winter. Reinforcements and new supplies were needed. Determined to the cause, the enemy prepared to endure the winter in the inhospitable scenery.

This was not a decision that the people in Montsegur was happy about.

- *Bertrand's player introduces the faith.*

Up until January 1244, battles are fought with no decisive outcome. Winter solstice passes. Children are born. The old and the weak get ill and dies.

- *Each player sets a scene that brings complications into the lives of the main characters.*
- *Use the story cards to bring new elements into the story.*
- *Remember that you can use a saved scene card to take over a scene from another play.*
- *Take a 15 minutes break after Act Two.*

Note: In a **three player game**, set an extra scene in Act Two, Act Three and Act Four. In a **six player game**, three players set a scene in Act Two and the other three set a scene in Act Three.

Act Three
A Decisive Battle

Where all hopes are lost one by one

—— January 1244 ——

The continuing bombardment of the east end of the crest had made Pierre Roger withdraw his men to the main fortress. Only a few sentries stayed to hold the watchtower at Roc de la Tour. A sensible decision, given that the east side was well protected by the almost vertical cliff walls.

But it should turn out to be fatal.

A group of soldiers from Gascony volunteered to climb the steep cliff side. An ice-cold night in January with only starlight illuminating the dangerous path, they climbed the rock wall. After several hours of perilous climbing they made it to the top. Without hesitation the surprised guards were killed before they could sound the alarm.

The east tower had fallen.

- *Cecille's player tells about the perfects.*

During the next two months, the crusading army conquers the area on the crest yard by yard. Powerful war machines are set up and the bombardment of Montsegur begins. Death and destruction forces itself on the besieged. They cling on to more and more desperate hopes for rescue. A last, desperate sortie is attempted.

- *Each player set a scene that is played out during this time.*

Act Four
Surrender

Where the Cathars acknowledge the defeat and prepare to meet their destiny.

—— 2 March 1244 ——

It was clear that Montsegur would fall. Pierre Roger took the heavy path down the mountain to negotiate with the enemy. Nobody had any interest in prolonging the siege unnecessarily. The only thing left to do was to agree on the terms of surrender.

Pierre Roger was received with kindness. He returned with easy terms: A 14 day truce during which nobody could leave Montsegur, after which full amnesty was offered for all which renounced their heretic beliefs.

Hostages were exchanged on both sides to guarantee the treaty.

- *Phillipa's player selects a hostage among the supporting characters.*

During the truce, the perfects perform a ceremony. A dozen believers receive consolamentum and thereby choose to follow the perfects into death. Those, who have chosen death, take leave with friends and family and give away their earthly belongings. The vanquished prepare to meet their destiny.

- *Each player sets a scene that is played out during the truce.*
- *Players no longer draw story cards.*

Epilogue
Burning for your Beliefs

Where the believers burn at the stake

—— 16 March 1244 ——

At first dawn the gates of Montsegur open. The crusader army is gathered and looks at the long line of people, who slowly move down the mountain. Young, old. Children, adults. Men and women.

A big fire has been built during the night at the foot of the mountain, ready to be ignited.

Next to the fire, two inquisitors are sitting, ready to write down the accounts of the survivors and take their confessions. Again and again the question sounds: Do you renounce your heretic beliefs and do you wish to receive the forgiveness of the merciful father?

- *Each player in turn tells an epilogue for his or her main character. The epilogue must reveal the fate of the character: To burn at the stake, to repent before the inquisition, or to escape into the night.*
- *At least one main character must burn at the stake. At most one main character can escape into the night.*
- *Players no longer draw scene cards and players cannot play scene cards to take over the epilogue of another player.*

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