

Burglary at Raus' House

By Anders Swenson, converted to *Hero Wars* by Gary James.

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Note! The conversion of this scenario to *Hero Wars* is a fan work. The hard-working volunteer has made all interpretations of game stats.

Benchmark: This episode is designed for heroes whose best ability is 5W. It emphasises non-combat thief abilities.

Premise

There aren't too many major burglaries (as opposed to relatively minor thefts and break-ins) in Pavis. There are a few good reasons for this. Pavis is a relatively small town, and the few permanent treasure-troves are well guarded. While the thieves of Pavis are a competent bunch, the local citizenry have had practice in fending them off. For those with really substantial fortunes, the best steps for protection are well known. The Pavis thieves and robbers spend most of their time hijacking loot freshly taken from the Rubble.

Sometimes security slips. For instance, on Clayday of a certain week and season one year, the residual servants at Duke Raus' Pavis townhouse were invited to join their fellow butlers and servants from other closed-down townhouses for a major bash at the Sable Horn Inn. Old Mellowy, the eldest footman, was left to watch things at Raus House, but he was heard to state his intention of indulging in a bit of feasting of his own, and everyone knew that he'd be in a drunken stupor by an hour after sunset.

Duke Raus of Rone pioneered some moderately successful plantations down river from Pavis, beating back the worst of the nomads and generally taming the desert. Raus maintains a fancy residence in the city, as suits his station, but usually lives in his fort to the south, where his considerable fortune and collection of magic items is guarded by a small army of retainers. Raus' fortune in Pavis consists of enough money to pay small bills and cover emergencies, some gems for which he hasn't been bid enough yet, a wardrobe, and some things he needs more in Pavis than down river. When the Duke is away, he reduces his townhouse staff to the minimal number of servants needed to keep each other honest (four or five). Tonight, for a few hours, the number on duty has been reduced to zero and an ambitious cat burglar can make a good night's piece of change.

The objective of the scenario is for one or two players to run thief heroes in a raid on Duke Raus' petty cash box. This is not an adventure for an army: one cat burglar is all that is needed, and an optional street lookout. The idea is to evade the watch, not to fight them. Even under the Lunar restrictions, the night watch is plenty strong and tough.

Scene 1: The Street

Key Points

The raid begins with the hero hearing about Raus House and its temporary lack of guards. This can be done by a successful ability test using an appropriate mental ability. The hero will then need to decide if he is enough of a cat burglar to do the job, or if he wants to bring a friend in on the job.

Action

The mechanics of the raid are simple. No plan of Raus House has been provided, because the main action is initially on the outside of the house as the thief climbs up the street wall, then in the study where the treasure chest lies, and then back down the front wall and into the street. The hero can easily discover that the only possible entry into Raus House is through a front second story window, because the roof is solid, and the sides and rear abut directly onto other buildings (with no doors through). Furthermore, the ground floor of the townhouse is as solidly secured against unauthorized entry as four centuries of Pavis security system development allows. A battering ram could get through the downstairs front, but little else. The second story windows are the likeliest weak spots.

To enter Raus House, the hero will have to climb the front of the building and open a window. An alternate, costlier plan would be to rent a room in the Silk 'N' Plume inn next door, climb to the Silk 'N' Plume's roof, go over onto Raus House' roof, then let oneself down to the window. This would cost the character the price of a night in the Silk 'N' Plume and possible recognition or discovery by others at the inn. For the average scruffy burglar, it is wiser just to climb up the front.

To climb the front of Raus House (15): Climb.

Climbing the face of the building is made more difficult by wearing heavy or restrictive clothing, especially armor. The hero incurs a penalty of -3 for each rank of armor worn or carried.

Victory (Marginal, Minor, Major or Complete): The hero reaches a second storey window.

Marginal Defeat: The hero is stuck half way up the wall.

Minor Defeat: The hero falls and is **hurt** for the rest of the episode.

Major Defeat: The hero falls and is **injured**.

Complete Defeat: The hero falls and hits his head on the paved street.

He is **injured** and **unconscious**.

After each attempt to climb front of the house, check for an encounter on the street. (See "[The Watch](#)" and "[Encounters](#)" below.) If the climber falls, it may attract the attention of a nearby watch trollkin. If the hero fails to reach a second storey window and is not distracted by an encounter or a nosy watch trollkin, he may make another attempt to climb the front of Raus House.

The second storey windows are shuttered and locked. Opening the window requires another simple contest.

To open a second storey window (14): Open Locks, Strong (-10).

Victory (Marginal, Minor, Major or Complete): The hero opens the window.

Defeat (Marginal or Minor): The hero is unable to open the window.

Major Defeat: The hero slips and falls to the street below. He is **hurt** for the rest of the episode.

Complete Defeat: The hero slips and falls to the street below. He is **injured**.

After each attempt to open the window, check for an encounter on the street. (See ["The Watch"](#) and ["Encounters"](#) below.)

If the burglar falls, it may attract the attention of a nearby watch trollkin. If the hero fails to open the window and he doesn't fall, he may make another attempt to open the window.

The Watch

Scaling Raus House is made complex by the existence of the Pavis night watch, a force of trolls and trollkin who can get along perfectly well in the dark. The ascent into Raus House will take time, and if a watch trollkin comes along, the hero must try to conceal himself against the side of the building.

To hide from the watch (17): Hide.

Victory (Marginal, Minor, Major or Complete): The watch trollkin does not notice the hero.

Defeat (Marginal, Minor, Major or Complete): The watch trollkin spots the hero.

If the watch trollkin spots the burglar, he will blow his whistle and attempt to Befuddle the hero.

If the burglar falls, or otherwise makes noise, the Narrator should check to see if a nearby watch trollkin heard the noise. On a roll of 17-20, a watch trollkin is near enough to have heard the noise. The watch trollkin will need to make a successful ability test with his Listen ability at a penalty of -10.

If a watch trollkin blows his whistle, a heavy patrol will come around the corner in little more than a minute. It will consist of five typical watch trollkin and a single dark troll sergeant from the central watch station. They will approach in a group and, as tactics, will attempt to Befuddle followed by possible attack with weapons. They will round up everybody in sight and take them back to the guard post for questioning. Even the sounds of battle in the streets will not move the Lunar guards at the nearby gate, who have other duties. If the heroes, however, have organized a particularly strong fighting party, the dark troll sergeant may sound his alert horn and bring a Lunar squad on the double from the barracks less than 60 yards away.

A burglar, or his lookout, should not think of fighting the watch. The best plan is to run as fast and as evasively as possible. If the thief is inside the house when his lookout is pursued, his best plan is probably to climb to the roof, which requires only a successful ability test. He can stay on the roofs until the street is empty, and might avoid all detection while up there.

The trolls, of course, know about this trick, and, if they are alerted to the presence of a burglar within the building or upon its roof, may roust out the entire night watch to guard the streets around the block.

Encounters

Climbing the front of the house and opening the window will take time, and while time passes, so do people on the street. There is a good chance that various foot traffic may happen by. The high number of passers-by is explained by the fact that the Silk 'N' Plume is next door to Raus House, and Erigio's is right around the corner. The trollkin come by so frequently because Jorjar the Quick's residence (Jorjar is the Constable of Pavis) is on the other side of Raus House!

Foot Traffic Encounters

Die roll	result
1-10	no traffic
11-16	one or more drunks
17-20	trollkin night watch

Roll for an encounter after each attempt to climb the wall or open the window.

If the hero was farsighted enough to arrange a lookout, the lookout can tell the nature of a coming encounter before it arrives on the scene.

The Lookout

If the lookout wishes, he may try some private enterprise, and roll some drunks.

If there is more than a single drunkard, this will be difficult, as at least one of them will be able to stagger off to Jorjar's house or the Silk 'N' Plume, and shout for aid. If there is but one drunk, he can be subdued easily. He will carry 1D100L (this is the rich quarter of town, remember) and will be knocked out with a successful ability test. Rolling drunks makes it impossible to do any looking-out. It also takes time. The Narrator should roll for another encounter and if a watch trollkin comes onto the scene, he will blow his whistle for help and try to arrest the assaulting party. This may, of course, have interesting consequences for the cat burglar.

The Narrator should remember that hiding in mere shadows is worthless against a Darkensing trollkin, and there is precious little cover on Parade Way. If a watch trollkin shows up, the lookout will have to explain his presence on Parade Street at an inauspicious hour. This requires an ability test. The lookout must come up with a plausible story to back up his ability. If the story isn't too likely, then the Narrator should apply an appropriate penalty. If the trollkin isn't satisfied with the explanation, he will blow his whistle or attempt to Befuddle the hero. If the lookout is rolling a drunk, the watch trollkin will blow his whistle, try a Befuddle and, if that fails, attack with the club.

If the lookout isn't busy committing a crime, he can signal to the burglar when the watch trollkin appears. This can be done by a bird-call, popgun, bullroarer, a light signal, or whatever the heroes devise. In any case, the watch trollkin needs to make a successful ability test using Listen or Darksense Scan to notice the signal.

The lookout might move away. If he walks off to the Lunar troop barracks, for example, where there is always someone in the street, he will miss whatever is happening in front of Duke Raus' house for at least one encounter.

Scene 2: The Almost Empty House

Setting

The Duke's study is sparsely furnished with a desk and chair. There is little to interest the burglar apart from the chest against the far wall.

Duke Raus' Treasure Chest

The treasure chest is large and heavy. It is over three feet wide and eighteen inches tall and deep. A rectangular prism with a deep top hinged a few inches from the top. The exterior of the chest is lead sheeting riveted to an interior frame.

The hinges of the lid are concealed inside the chest, so the lock must be picked.

This requires a successful Open Locks ability test with a penalty of -3 due to the difficulty of the lock.

If the lock is too much for the thief, brute force is possible.

To bash open the chest (8w): Close Combat.

The hero may use an ability like Strong to augment his Close Combat ability.

Bashing open the chest requires a weapon such as an axe, pick, hammer or mace. If the hero chooses to use a less appropriate weapon, such as a sword, the Narrator should apply an appropriate penalty.

Victory (Marginal, Minor, Major or Complete): The hero bashes a hole in the chest large enough to reach in with his hand.

Defeat (Marginal or Minor): The hero bashes the chest to no real effect.

Major Defeat: The hero bashes the chest and triggers the trap in the secret compartment. (See below.)

Complete Defeat: The hero breaks the weapon he is using to open the chest.

After every third attempt to bash open the chest, check for an encounter on the street. If a watch trollkin happens by while the chest is being pounded open, he will definitely investigate. He won't leave without satisfying himself about the situation.

If an attempt to bash open the chest results in a Major Defeat for the hero, he will spring the trap in the secret compartment at the back of the chest. He must make an ability test not to breathe the poison gas that will quickly fill the room.

If he fails, he must then win a simple contest to avoid dying. The gas has a Potency of 20 and is both Instant and Lethal.

Once the chest is opened, the contents are available for the taking. There are two big moneybags, each holding 1,000L and a smaller moneybag with 50 wheels.

There is a small gem pouch with some uncut diamonds. If the character succeeds with an ability test after getting the diamonds safely home, he will discover that they are worth 1,000L total. If he fails, he will get but 500L for them.

Hidden Spots

A successful ability test when the chest is opened will reveal cracks leading to the proverbial secret compartment in the chest's back. Another successful ability test will reveal little holes in the compartment lid. A third successful ability test will both open the compartment and disarm the trap. If the hero fails this third test, the trap will be set off.

The trap consists of poison gas (this could also have been set off by pounding the chest open--if it was, then it will not act again here). The gas will billow forth and fill the room. If the hero succeeds in an ability test, he can hold his breath, grab the treasure and run. If he fails, he must win a simple contest to avoid dying.

The gas has a Potency of 20 and is both Instant and Lethal.

If the compartment is opened, the hero will find the Wand of the Seven Phases of the Moon.

The Drunk

Remember Mellowy, the servant left behind because someone had to watch the house?

The guy who decided to have a little party of his own? Well, he could interfere in the scenario's action. If the scenario has had enough happening, the Narrator can let Mellowy snore on in his easy chair, to come to a rude awakening long after the damage is done. However, if Parade Way has been empty for hours, the climb up the wall was a breeze and the treasure chest fell apart under the thief's nose, then perhaps Mellowy can be used to increase the pace of the episode. In any case, the Narrator may think that it is a good time to bring on good old Mellowy, who may have thought he heard something, or may have just gotten up for a little old walk to the latrine.

Mellowy will blunder into the treasure room just when the treasure is spread out on the floor ready to be packed into a knapsack. As can be seen by his statistics, he is stone drunk. He will be as annoying and impertinent as the Narrator can make him, and he will cause trouble, though he won't be exactly sure what is going on. "Are you the new cleaning man?" Mellowy may ask loud questions, he may sing; insist on cleaning up the mess; or engage in other similarly annoying projects. These acts may have no effect on the detection of the burglar, but may worry him all the same.

Getting Rid of Mellowy

Getting rid of this pest is tricky. Except for the wand, the treasure chest is a minute part of the Duke's fortune, and he would prosecute the thief with only the normal vigor. If, however, an intruder murdered one of his servants, his wrath would be unbounded. Tact and diplomacy are called for. The hero needs to think up good lines to encourage Mellowy to go away. A successful ability test should accompany these lines.

Finally, a gentle cosh on the head could settle the problem, once Mellowy has obligingly turned to leave - this also only requires an ability test.

Escape

Once he has grabbed the loot and dealt with Mellowy, the burglar only needs to climb out the window and either jump or climb down to the street. This requires an ability test, not a simple contest. The Narrator should make one last encounter check.

If all goes well, the thief escapes with his loot.

Denouement

Duke Raus is harsh in his treatment of thieves. If it is possible for the Duke to make a connection between the break-in at his Pavis townhouse and the hero, the Narrator should decide whether the Duke learns of the hero's actions and becomes an adversary of the hero.

Aversaries

Chooga, a Dark Troll Nightwatch Sergeant

Significant Abilities: Maul fighting 2w, Sling shooting 13, Darksense Scan 20, Darksense Scrutinise 17, Great Strength 18, Intimidate Trollkin 17, Listen 18, Very Large 19.

Weapons: Maul ^5, Sling ^3.

Armor: Composite armor and thick skin ^3.

Fetish: Befuddle 13; 1/day

Fetish: Heal 13; 1/day

Fetish: Move Silently 13; 1/day

Fetish: Run Fast 13; 1/day

Fetish: Wall of Darkness 13; 1/day

Notes: Carries whistle and alarm horn.

Nightwatch Trollkin

Significant Abilities: Club fighting 17, Thrown Object 5w, Darksense Scan 17, Listen 5w, Resist Bribe 5w.

Weapons: Club ^1, Thrown Rock ^1.

Armor: Leather and tough skin ^2.

Fetish: Befuddle 9; 3/day

Fetish: Heal 9; 1/day

Notes: Carries loud whistle for summoning help.

Mellowy, Drunken servant

Significant Abilities: Swing Wine Bottle 7, Annoy 13, First Aid 12, Listen 8, Stagger 13.

Weapons: Wine Bottle ^1.

Armor: None.

Notes: Mellowy's abilities reflect his extreme drunkenness.

Treasure

The Wand of the Seven Phases of the Moon

DESCRIPTION: A wand ten inches long and half an inch in diameter made of a single huge ruby engraved down its length in a spiral band with a series of pictoglyphs of the seven phases of the Red Moon. These glyphs are repeated seven times through the length of the wand, and the spiral bends around the rod seven times, so that the glyphs for each phase are aligned all down the wand's length.

KNOWLEDGE: Famous to Lunars. It is one of a kind.

HISTORY: The item was found in the fabulous Machine Ruins, but its origin is unknown. Possibly, it was mistakenly manufactured by the pragmatic sorcerer smiths of the city, but proved of little use to them. Perhaps some forgotten moon worshipper took it there in the early days of the empire. The rod has been little studied, so the truth is unknown. Knowledge of the wand's use is limited to Lunar priests and a few scholars of magic. Duke Raus has it as part of his heritage.

Because the Duke is not a Lunar cultist, he has no personal use for the rod. He holds it in trust for such time as a Rone heir can trade it to the empire in return for a suitable return gift.

POWERS: Only a Devotee of Natha or Rufelza may attune the wand. Attuning the wand costs three hero points and takes 49 weeks, as each of the 49 moon symbols must be attuned individually and in order. When the rod has been attuned, it will act as a Glowspot for the wielder. Every day will be treated as if it were the full moon when judging availability and effectiveness of Feats. In addition, the owner gains a new Feat, Holy Fire, at 12. The new feat enables the hero to use the wand as a weapon. He can cause the wand to emit a pulse of holy red plasma to incinerate an opponent. The wand has a range of ninety yards and a weapon rank of 10. *VALUE:* This item is so specialized and unique that it is priceless.

Reputable magic merchants usually have heard of it, and won't buy it. Anyone stealing it may hope at best to ransom it back to the Duke, who is notoriously intolerant of thieves.