

Vagrant Story Plot FAQ

by Michael Jennings

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Vagrant Story Plot FAQ
by Michael Jennings <shinryu@libero.it>
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Contents

1. Disclaimer
2. Introduction
3. Version History
4. Complete Script
 - 4.1 Prologue
 - 4.1.1 The Mission
 - 4.1.2 The Graylands Incident
 - 4.2 Introduction
 - 4.2.1 The Graylands Incident
 - 4.2.2 Bardorba's Schemes
 - 4.2.3 Entrance to Leà Monde
 - 4.3 Towards Leà Monde
 - 4.3.1 Mysteries of Leà Monde-part 1
 - 4.3.2 Mysteries of Leà Monde-part 2
 - 4.3.3 Deception
 - 4.3.4 The Quake/1
 - 4.3.5 Fragments of Memory
 - 4.3.6 Ashley's Past
 - 4.3.7 The Living Dead-part 1
 - 4.3.8 The Living Dead-part 2
 - 4.3.9 The Quake/2
 - 4.3.10 Hardin's Power
 - 4.3.11 Sydney's Game
 - 4.4 Within Leà Monde
 - 4.4.1 The Blades Move-part 1
 - 4.4.2 The Blades Move-part 2
 - 4.4.3 Incomplete Death
 - 4.4.4 Stalker
 - 4.4.5 He Intends To Die...
 - 4.4.6 The Gran Grimoire
 - 4.5 Snowfly Forest
 - 4.5.1 The Wellspring
 - 4.5.2 Follow The Snowflies
 - 4.5.3 The Hunt Begins
 - 4.5.4 The Winds Change
 - 4.5.5 Summoning
 - 4.5.6 Sydney's True Past
 - 4.6 Truth or Lie
 - 4.6.1 Rosencrantz's Double-Crossing
 - 4.6.2 Confrontation
 - 4.6.3 Rosencrantz's True Past
 - 4.6.4 Merlose's Power
 - 4.6.5 Tieger and Neesa
 - 4.6.6 Joined the Cold Ones
 - 4.6.7 The Great Cathedral
 - 4.7 The Final Chapter

- 4.7.1 Hardin's Scar
- 4.7.2 The Blood-Sin
- 4.7.3 The Chosen One
- 4.7.4 Sydney's Motive
- 4.8 Battle For Darkness
 - 4.8.1 Prelude to Darkness
 - 4.8.2 The Truth
 - 4.8.3 Escape from Leà Monde
 - 4.8.4 The Conclusion
- 5 Plot FAQ
- 6 Alternate theories
 - 6.1 On the Duke's Murder and Sydney's survival
 - 6.2 On Ashley's past and the murder of his family
- 7 Acknowledgements

1. Disclaimer

All copyrights belong to their respective owners. Vagrant Story and all its characters' copyrights belong to Squaresoft. This text version of the script belongs to me, and it may not be copied in any way, whether on paper or electronically or by writing it down, going back in time with a time machine and publishing it before me, without my permission. If you want permission to use it on your site, e-mail me at shinryu@libero.it giving me a good reason and proof that you will not, in any way, make money out of this FAQ. In any case, you may not post it if you alter it in any way. At the moment, this FAQ can be found at the following sites:

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- www.psxcodez.com
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- www.gamingplanet.com
- www.rpgclassics.com
- www.cheating.de
- www.cheatcodes.com

2. Introduction

Vagrant Story is unlike any game you've ever played before. You might hate it, but you're very likely to love it - and if you like RPGs, you may have found the game of your life. Apart from boasting a completely innovative battle system and a highly realistic 3D environment, Vagrant Story has a tremendous atmosphere, plot and dramatic feeling. The cinematic sequences are extraordinary, the translation is top-class, the boss design is second only to

Chrono Cross and the special effects are absolutely thumb-licking to look at. The characters are so deeply developed that they actually make you realise how many clichés FFVIII and Metal Gear Solid had (absolute respect for these two earth-shatterers anyway).

Ah, the plot. The plot in Vagrant Story develops through a series of cinematic sequences which use the same engine as the game itself (no flashy FMVs).

The team that made this game is the same one responsible for that little gem called Final Fantasy Tactics, and if you've played FFT you'll probably get somewhat a similar feeling in Vagrant Story (although they are two completely different games; if you hated FFT you might still love VS and vice-versa).

As I said, the plot in VS is EXTREMELY good and the dialogues are

superlative, so that's why I came out with this FAQ. Here you'll find every single dialogue in the game, to understand the story better (it IS a bit confusing) or get favorite quotes, or whatever...

This is my 4th game through Vagrant Story. After a record 3h58m ;) on third play, I'm taking my time to carefully jot down all the dialogues and events.

There are, however, a few cinematic sequences where basically nothing major happens, and I won't put those in. I'm talking of the ones where Ashley is attacked by bosses, or by the Dragon Lizards for the first time, etc. I will only include sequences with dialogues or that are relevant to the plot.

If you've got any questions, comments, etc. e-mail me at shinryu@libero.it. Please note that I will NOT accept the following kinds of e-mails:

- 1-questions about stuff that can be found in here
- 2-unconstructive criticism
- 3-pointing out irrelevant mistakes (like "cardinal" instead of "Cardinal")

The following kinds of e-mails, on the contrary, will be appreciated, and by all means do feel free to send one in:

- 1-constructive criticism
- 2-major mistakes
- 3-questions about the plot which are not included in this FAQ
- 4-comments
- 5-anything else.

One word about the structure of this FAQ: everything you need to know is listed in the Contents summary above. A text search through the document will bring you to whichever section you need to consult. Plus, I have included details about the rooms where the events take place and some of the monsters you see - so if you search for a room's name, you're very likely to find the event that happens there, if there is one.

One last thing: maybe I don't need to say this, but this FAQ contains EVERY POSSIBLE SPOILER. Vagrant Story has a beautiful plot and I suggest you play it through before reading the script, because it's really worth it.

3. Version History

V2.1

9/2/2001

A few minor updates.

V2.0

4/30/2001

Yep, I'm still alive...

New entry in "Alternate theories": discussion about Ashley's family

This will probably be the final version of this FAQ, unless I get some new interesting theories to add.

V1.4

"Acknowledgements" section added

"Alternate theories" section added

Script completed

OK, now the FAQ has the complete script. If you wanna see new updates, send me questions and theories or comments (see section 6). Thanks to

everyone for your support!

V1.3

1/7/2001

Script up to section 4.6.4

Phew! Just back from my Christmas holidays and a SERIOUS Final Fantasy IX addiction. BTW, I'm on my 7th VS game. Happy New Year everyone!

V1.2

12/1/00

Script up to section 4.5.1.

V1.1

11/7/00

Script up to section 4.3.2.

Completed Script index.

V1.0

11/1/00

Basic info.

Script up to section 4.2.3.

4. Complete Script

I have tried hard to make this script as similar as possible to the original dialogues. However, a few mistakes are a possibility - but nothing more than a missed capital, or a few exclamation marks too much. If you find any serious mistakes, feel free to email me about them (shinryu@libero.it). Any comments are appreciated. In any case, please don't get mental about "duke" instead of "Duke" or the like. Such mistakes have no relevance whatsoever in a script.

Note: the first two sequences (Introduction-The Mission and Introduction-The Graylands Incident) aren't in the game itself; you see them by leaving the pad idle after you load the game. The first one is the most interesting, and I recommend you see it, because it gives all the background. The second one is a sort of trailer (it starts with the Squaresoft logo and ends with a credits screen) and it's made up of various snippets from the game's actual intro (the one you get when you start a new game). There are a few text passages which talk about stuff that happens AFTER the end of the game and therefore might contain a few spoilers (not really, but still, just to be sure). The sequence is quite cool too, but anyway you should see this after you finish the game and you'll understand it all.

Abbreviations:

Ash: Ashley Riot

Syd: Sydney Losstarot

Gui: Romeo Guildenstern

Mer: Callo Merlose

Har: John Hardin

Ros: Jan Rosencrantz

Duk: Duke Aldous Byron Bardorba

Dua: Commander Duane

Gri: Commander Grissom

Jos: Joshua Corrinne Bardorba

Tie: Commander Tieger

Nee: Commander Neesa

Sam: Commander Samantha

Tia: Tia Riot

Mar: Marco Riot
C#: Mullenkamp Cultist
B#: Crimson Blades soldier
S#: Duke Bardorba's servant
V#: VKP officers
(xxx): Short description of cinematic events/location
[yyy]: Short description of interactive events (eg fights)
<jjj>: Text display
-zzz-aaa-bbb-: -Indoors/Outdoors-Location-Time of day- of event
@ccc: The event is triggered when Ashley is in this room

=====
4.1 Prologue
=====

4.1.1 The Mission

-OUTDOORS-VKP HEADQUARTERS-NIGHT-
<VKP Headquarters
Valnain, 0:24 A.M.>

-INDOORS-VKP HEADQUARTERS-NIGHT-
(A dimly lit room, with a long table. Ashley Riot stands at one end, and three VKP officers sit at the other)

V1: ...Six hours have passed since the occupation of the manor by one Sydney Losstarot, founder and leader of the Mullenkamp sect. He and his allies have taken the Duke's family and servants hostage. They hold the manor as we speak.

Ash: To what purpose?

V1: The scum make two demands: the release of their imprisoned comrades and the abdication of Cardinal Batista.

Ash: Yet their religious freedom, within limits, is protected. On what pretext shall we apprehend them?

V2: We need no pretext! Mullenkamp is a pack of rogues, hiding behind a priest's frock. We believe them responsible for the attempt on our sovereign's life this Yuletide past.

Ash: And the VKP will not free their comrades?

V1: Certainly not! Do you know how many agents gave their lives -

V3: All because of this religious freedom! Too much freedom, too many gods! Let those cultist cur-dogs run loose and they will bite you! Gods! While our Parliament cowers -

V1: ...Strike that outburst from the record.

Voice: Yes, M'Lord.

Ash: Are cults not the Templars' concern? Why must we be involved?

V1:

Voices: Our Inquisitors have found that Mullenkamp's coin comes from the captive duke himself. Indeed, Valendia might still be at war with itself, were it not for the duke's heroism, yet he wields much of his power from the shadows. Even after his retirement, his grip on Parliament is unrelenting.

(Lightning and thunder. Some dark figures can be seen standing behind the table, next to the windows)

Voices: We have watched him long enough. Now it is time to act.

V1: Futhermore, we must find out why the Cardinal sent his blades to deal with this incident without our approval. Inquisitor Heldricht will explain.

V2: You will go to the Graylands immediately. A map of the manor grounds is in your carriage. I have sent one of my agents ahead. She will fill you in

when you arrive.

Ash: ...She?

V2: Agent Merlose.

-OUTDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR OUTSIDE WALLS-NIGHT-

<Duke Bardorba's Manor

Graylands, 1:58 A.M.>

Mer: Agent Riot, I presume. I'm your partner, Callo Merlose. But, please, call me Cal. How was your journey?

Ash: How many are there?

Mer: Our scouts report a dozen men. Of course, we have yet to spot Sydney, and there may be more inside the manor.

Ash: Hostages?

Mer: Including the duke's family and servants, thirty-four. Thankfully, the duke himself was away at the time.

Ash: The duke was not taken captive?

Mer: Nay.

Ash: How fare the blades?

Mer: We will have to wait and see. With the hostages inside, direct action is perilous. We must negotiate with Sydney while we collect information to aid our final -

(Some of the manor's rooms catch fire)

Mer: What is this?

Ash: It seems the siege has begun. The cardinal's blades have made their move.

Mer: We've given no such order! Their actions are in direct defiance of our authority!

Ash: ...Perhaps their hand was forced?

(Ashley walks towards the manor)

Mer: Wait! Where are you going?

Ash: The blades provided the perfect distraction.

Mer: It's far too dangerous! We must wait for reinforcements!

Ash: Reinforcements?

(Ashley walks on towards the manor)

Ash: I am the reinforcements.

4.1.2 The Graylands Incident

<Squaresoft>

-OUTDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR GATE-NIGHT-

(Ashley runs through the open gate)

<We have received a report from the Valendia Knight of the Peace regarding an unsolved felony that may affect state security.

<It reads: Ashley Riot, an agent of the Riskbreaker militia, has murdered a senoir member of Parliament, duke Bardorba, and is still at large.>

-OUTDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR FRONT-NIGHT-

(Hardin speaks to some cultists)

Har: ...Show them who they're dealing with! Torch the chambers and kill the hostages!

(The cultist nods. Hardin goes into the manor. Ashley is hiding)

C1: Let's finish this 'fore the blades arrive!

(A brick falls next to Ashley)

C1: Who goes there!?

(Ashley draws his sword)

<The incident began with the occupation of the duke's manor a week ago.>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR-NIGHT-

(Guildenstern kills a cultist, picks up the sword and sees a blade)

Gui: Have you found Sydney?

B: Not yet, sir.

(Guildenstern walks to the window)

Gui: Put out the fires, or we'll lose the manor and all will be for naught! Split the knights into two groups, one to douse the blaze, the other to exterminate the traitors!

B: Right away, sir.

(The Blade walks away)

Gui: ...Where are you, Sydney?

<Sydney, leader of the occupying cult group Mullenkamp, took hostages demanding the resignation of the cardinal and the release of prisoners>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR WYVERN ROOM-NIGHT-

Syd: Curse the duke! Where's he hidden it?

Har: You sure the duke really has it? Does the damn thing even exist?

(Sydney stares into Hardin's eyes)

Syd: You doubt me, Hardin? You doubt my power?

<What was the felon Sydney's true objective? And where on earth are those who escaped?>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR CORRIDOR-NIGHT-

(Ashely leans onto a door)

Har: F-Forgive me! I did not intend...B-But Sydney, any longer, and there will be no escape for us.

Syd: Stop your whimpering! You'd come this far only to leave empty-handed? Now, search!

(Ashely hides behind a statue as cultists come out of the room)

<Only Agent Riot, once our dear comrade, can answer these questions. Spare no effort finding him!>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR WYVERN ROOM-NIGHT-

(Sydney is about to pick up a knife)

Ash: Don't move, Sydney! I've got a bowgun aimed at your heart!

Syd: ...You're no knight, are you?

Ash: Now turn 'round slowly!

Syd: This is an unfortunate turn of events...

Har: Sydney!!

(Sydney picks up the knife and attacks Ashley)

Ash: Hold it!!

(Ashley shoots a dart through Sydney's heart. Sydney looks unharmed)

Ash: What's going on? You were most certainly dead!

Syd: ...So...still think the dead...only rise...in faerie...tales.

(A Wyvern falls from above)

<Also, there is a peculiar rumour that many there saw a...Dragon as the duke's residence burned.>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA WYVERN ROOM-NIGHT-

Syd: My...apologies...I've no time...to toy...with you.

(Rapid sequence of images of the Wyvern, Sydney, Hardin, Ashley, and finally the "VAGRANT STORY" Logo and a credits screen.)

<Good luck and Godspeed.>

=====
4.2 Introduction
=====

4.2.1 The Graylands Incident

-OUTDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR-NIGHT-

(The Duke's manor is in flames. In the bottom-left corner of the screen the location and time appear)

<Duke Bardorba's Manor
Graylands 2:32 A.M.>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR-NIGHT-

(Guildenstern kills a cultist, pulls the rapier out of his body and is approached by a blade. He sheaths his sword.)

Gui: Have you found Sydney?

B: Not yet, sir.

(Guildenstern walks to the window)

Gui: Put out the fires, or we'll lose the manor and all will be for naught! Split the knights into two groups, one to douse the blaze, the other to exterminate the traitors!

B: Right away, sir.

(The Blade walks away)

Gui: ...Where are you, Sydney?

<Art Direction
HIROSHI MINAGAWA
Character Design
AKIHIKO YOSHIDA>

-OUTDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR GATE-NIGHT-

(Ashley runs through the open gate and shuts it by breaking the stopper with his sword)

<Background Supervisors
AKIHIKO YOSHIDA
AKIYOSHI MASUDA>

(Hardin is speaking to a few cultists while Ashely hides behind a stack of crates)

Har: Show them who they're dealing with! Torch the chambers and kill the hostages!

C1: Aye!

(Hardin walks into the manor)

<Background Creators
YOSHINORI HIRATA
AKIKO HONNE
TAKAFUMI HORI
TSUMOTU MOURI>

C2: We've no time! Let's finish this 'fore the blades arrive!

C1: Right, let's do it quickly and get out of here.

(a brick falls from the stack of crates behind which Ashley is hiding)

C1: Who goes there?!

<Background Creators
HIROYUKI SANO
RENA SASAKI
YUKIKO SASAKI>

(The cultists approach the stack of crates, weapons at hand. Ashley draw his sword)

Ash: Here we go...

[short fight, Ashley kills the cultists]

(Ashley enters the manor)

<Visual Effects Supervisor

JIRO MIFUNE

Visual Effects Creator

NORIKO IKEDA>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR CORRIDOR-NIGHT-

(Ashley leans onto a door to listen)

Syd: ...Well? Have you found it?

C3: It's no use. There's nothing like that here - anywhere.

Syd: Keep looking, damn you!

C3: I'm telling you, Sydney! The knights are nearly upon us!

Syd: Stop your whimpering! You'd come this far only to leave empty-

handed? Now, search!

(Footsteps. Ashley hides behind a statue as the cultists come out of the room, walk through the corridor, and exit)

<Character Model Supervisor

HIROSHI MINAGAWA

Character Model Creators

TOMOMI FUJINO

EIICHIRO NAKATSU

TSUYOSHI NAMIKI>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR WYVERN ROOM-NIGHT-

Syd: Curse the Duke! Where's he hidden it?

Har: You sure the Duke really has it? Does the damned thing even exist?

(Sydney abruptly turns around and stares into Hardin's eyes)

Syd: You doubt me, Hardin? You doubt my power?

Har: F-Forgive me! I did not intend...but Sydney, any longer, and there will be no escape for us!

Syd: Fine, then! Bring the boy and come with me!

(Hardin nods and exits the room)

<Character Motion Creators

YASUhide HINO

TADASHI SOEDA

KASUHIRO TAKAHASHI

TSUNATARO YOSHIDA>

(Sydney is about to pick up a knife)

Ash: Don't move, Sydney!

(Sydney stops)

Ash: I've a bowgun aimed at your heart!

(Sydney raises his hands)

Ash: (approaching him) Now turn 'round slowly!

(Sydney faces him)

Syd: ...You're no knight, are you?

Ash: (drops a rope) Bind your legs with that rope.

Syd: Ah, a Riskbreaker...a royal guard dog!

Ash: Did you not hear me? Bind yourself, now!

Syd: This is an unfortunate turn of events...

(He turns around, picks the knife up and attacks Ashley.)

Ash: Hold it!

(He shoots a dart through Sydney's heart)

<Main Programmer
TAKU MURATA>

(Ashley feels Sydney's pulse. Hardin enters the room carrying an unconscious boy in his right arm)

Har: Sydney!!

(Ashley turns around and is knocked over by Sydney)

Syd: I...I'm the one you want. Hardin...go quickly...go...to Leà Monde.

(Hardin exits the room)

Ash: You! Stop!

(Sydney tries to stab him, Ashley gets up and draws his sword)

Ash: What's going on? You were most certainly dead! Leave the back-from-the-grave stuff to faerie tales...

<Programmers
YOSHIKI KADITARI
SATOSHI OGATA
YOSHINORI TSUCHIDA
TADASHI TSUSHIMA
KUNIO YAMAGUCHI
MITSUO YOSHIOKA>

(Sydney pulls the dart out and kneels down in pain)

Syd: You've...given me...quite...a scratch...Show...a little more respect...for faerie tales, Riskbreaker...

(He looks above)

Syd: D'tok!!!

(A Wyvern falls from above)

<Planners
JUN AKIYAMA
KAZUTOYO MAEHIRO
TAKAYUKI SUGURO
HIDEHITO TANBA
TAI YASUE>

Syd: My...apologies...I've no time...to toy...with you.

(He jumps out of a window)

<Music & Original Score by
HITOSHI SAKIMOTO
Sound Programmer
MINORU AKAO
Sound Engineer
TOMOHIRO YAHIMA>

[Ashley fights the Wyvern and kills it]

(The Wyvern dissolves)

<Executive Producer
HIRONOBU SAKAGUCHI
HISASHI SUZUKI
TOMOYUKI TAKECHI>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA MANOR WYVERN ROOM-DAWN

(Ashley walks to the broken window)

<Produced and Directed by
YASUMI MATSUNO>

(Birds fly past the manor)

Ash: Leà Monde...?

(The title appears)

< V A G R A N T S T O R Y >

<The body is but a vessel for the soul, a puppet which bends to the soul's tyranny. And lo, the body is not eternal, for it must feed on the flesh of others, lest it return to the dust from whence it came. Therefore must the soul deceive, despise and murder men.

A.J. Durai>

4.2.2 Bardorba's Schemes

-INDOORS-DUKE'S BEDROOM-MORNING-

Duk: So, the knights who came were not the king's men, but the Cardinal's?

Ros: Knights of the Cross led by Guildenstern, my lord.

(The location and time appear)

Duke Bardorba's Secondary Residence

Graylands 5:38 A.M.

S1: "The Crimson Blades" - In direct service to the Cardinal.

Ros: Guildenstern led his men toward Leà Monde in pursuit of Sydney.

Duk: ...I see. ...Send one of your men in the armor of these "Holy Knights"...set fire to the manor.

S1: Fire...my liege?

Duk: The fool Sydney used his wyvern. We can't have witnesses telling the world, can we?

S1: But the hostages...your family!

Duk: Irrelevant! Burn it. Burn it to the ground!!

(Lightning. Thunder)

(The servant exits)

Duk: ...What of Parliament?

Ros: The VKP (Valendia Knights of the Peace) have formed a squad to deal with the felons.

Duk: The Riskbreakers...those meddling fools!

Ros: Your will, my lord?

Duk: ...Leà Monde is yours. Let no one out of the town! You can deal with Sydney and the blades there.

Ros: And Parliament?

Duk: I'll deal with those watchdogs...they won't trouble you further.

Ros: And the young lord Joshua?

(Lightning. Thunder)

Duk: He is my light...my soul. If aught should befall him...

Ros: As you wish, my lord.

(Rosencrantz walks away. Close-up of a picture of the Duke, his wife, and a boy that looks like Joshua)

Duk: Am I fated to rot and wither...even as I breathe?

4.2.3 Entrance to Leà Monde

<11:42 A.M.>

-INDOORS-LEA' MONDE SENTINEL POST-DAY-

(Merlose sees the corpses of the sentinels. Apparently, they were killed by blades)

<Leà Monde is an old town with a history of over 2000 years. Its walls have seen many battles. They are stronger than the mightiest forts of Valendia and as the sun wheels through the sky, the beauty of their shifting colors surpasses that of any palace.>

<The Grand Cathedral that towers over the town center is a symbol of Leà Monde's indomitable spirit, and the holy ground of the devout Iocus priesthood.

At its height, Leà Monde was a thriving community more than 5000 people strong. 25 years ago, a great earthquake brought that chapter in Leà Monde's history to a close.>

<LEA' MONDE>

-OUTDOORS-ENTRANCE TO LEA' MONDE-DAY-

(Ashley comes out of a mineshaft. Merlose is facing him)

Ash: ...Well?

Mer: The two sentinels are dead...murdered.

Ash: Hmm...This the only way in?

Mer: Tere's a great crevasse preventing entry from above ground.

Ash: And from the sea?

Mer: Nay, sunken reefs that rose during the earthquake form a gauntlet of whirlpools...too dangerous. You do know we sent agents in, thinking those ruins were the Mullenkamp base. Not one returned.

Ash: Not on account of the whirlpools, I'd wager...

Mer: Surely, it was men who killed them. How was it down there?

Ash: Come down and see for yourself...

(They descend into the mineshaft)

<...According to the survivors, our comrade agent Riot headed out for Leà Monde before noon. Of course, the reports are vague and we cannot deny the possibility of inaccuracies, yet given that there is only one path to infiltrate Leà Monde, this office believes the report to be valid.>

-INDOORS-MINESHAFT-DAY-

(Ashley and Merlose examine some dead corpses; it appears they were from the Crimson Blades)

Mer: ...What's this?

Ash: That's what I'm here to find out. It does seem well fortified for a wine cellar...

Mer: Oh? Leà Monde's wineries once vied with the best of Valendia. Since they went out of production, the remaining sell for a premium.

(Ashley opens the gate to the wine cellar)

Ash: If I find any, consider them yours.

Mer: You plan to go alone?

Ash: An agent with no combat experience would just be a liability.

Mer:

Ash: Tell me what you know about this Sydney fellow.

Mer: ...Sydney Losstarot. Leader of the religious cult Mullenkamp. His real name and age are unknown. One of many self-styled prophets of the apocalypse.

Ash: So why would a cult missionary commit such a crime?

Mer: I do not know what the cardinal thinks, but the VKP believes he is no prophet - indeed, he is in dark alliance with duke Bardorba, who controls Parliament from behind the scenes. That the cult is but a front. Perhaps this incident is a sign of some falling-out between the two?

Ash: ...Or merely another of the Cardinal's witch-hunts?

Mer: There are many would-be prophets in the land these days, but Sydney

is...different. His prophecies ring true, and those enraptured by the way he hums revelations - as though they were simple ballads! - all say the same: "He is a miracle."

Ash:

Mer: ...In any case, he has a strange power. He can guess the past of those he meets. He can even read hearts...They say his charisma is such that his

followers offer both body and soul to him.

Ash: ...Sounds like you're quite taken with him yourself.

(Ashley walks into the cellar)

Mer: Agent Riot!!

Ash: If I do not return by the morrow's eve, inform HQ, will you?

(The gate falls shut)

Mer: Godspeed...

(Merlose walks out of the mineshaft. As she looks up, she is faced by Sydney himself)

<...We sent men to monitor the abandoned mineshaft that leads to Leà Monde. All were found dead. At the entrance, other bodies were found, two knights of the Cardinal's Crimson blades.>

<Our men were murdered with swords, but the knight's wounds show they died by their own hands. At present, we have taken the bodies into our custody, and our specialists are continuing the examination.

Excerpt

from Graylands Incident Investigation

Report

(Section 3.14)>

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-ENTRANCE TO DARKNESS-DAY-

(Ashley sees some crates of wine)

Ash: Ah, vintage wine -

(The ground shakes)

Ash: ...No live burials today, thanks.

(A loud moaning noise can be heard from beyond the passageway)

Ash: "A strange power", indeed...

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4.3 Towards Leà Monde

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4.3.1 Mysteries of Leà Monde-part 1

@Wine Cellar-Smokebarrel Stair

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-SMOKEBARREL STAIR-DAY-

(Ashley sees two Crimson Blades and hides)

(B2 touches a door and is hit by a small electric bolt)

B1: Well? Got 'er open?

B2: It's no good. No' even a budge.

B1: What's this? It weren't lock'd a moment ago, eh?

B1: No key holds this door...It be a Grimoire what's doing this!

B1: Well, who lock'd it then? ...Someone inside?

B2: Bugged if I know! Look...we'll be cut off from the others!

B1: And where are those scouts, man?

B2: They've not return'd.

B1: This be no time for loafin' around!

B2: Keep yer cap on, brother! ...Now come up 'ere and take a look at THIS!

(They walk towards the next room)

B1: What's that?

Ash: ...A "Grimoire"?

4.3.2 Mysteries of Leà Monde-part 2

@Wine Cellar-Wine Guild Hall

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-WINE GUILD HALL-DAY-

(Ashley listens to the two Blades he spied in the previous room)

B2: This, too, be a Grimoire's doing?

B1: By the gods! I'd oft heard o'it...but this!

(A cloudstone hovers above their heads)

B2: An' a wurm-a DRAGON-was sighted at the Duke's manor.

B1: Well, if there's magick about, dragons won't be far behind...

B2: I worry about Guildenstern and the others.

B1: Ach, they'll be fine.

B2: Think of it! If we've witnessed miracles such as these on Leà Monde's doorstep, what then lies within!?

B1: Ye wear naiveté like a crest, brother! Surely the maesters know of this "Grimoire". Mayhaps we've just been in the dark, eh?

B2: yet our charge is to drub these Mullenkamp scoundrels an' -

B1: And procure the miracles of Leà Monde! 'Tis just a rumour, but I've heard that Guildenstern's lot works them magicks as well...

B2: Rubbish! We're servants of the Lord! No true Knight of the Cross would dabble in the black arts!

B1: It's only a rumour, brother...But is Sydney is truly the worker of diablerie they claim he is, I say fight fire with fire!

B2: I say let the Lord be our shield!

B1: Ever the choirboy! The only shield I see is the one coverin' yer eyes. Heretic or no, I believe what I see, and right now...I see sorcery.

B2:

...Swine'll take wing 'fore the likes of us use magick, my friend.

B1: Aye, but with a Grimoire, your fattest sow could outfly my swiftest falcon - if ye believe the chroniclers.

B2: With a Grimoire, you say?

B1: Ye could even make cobblestones float like clouds...

(Ashley suddenly sees somebody. He turns and sees a grey shadow of a boy. He makes a noise, the two Blades find him)

[Ashley kills the Blades]

4.3.3 Deception

@Wine Cellar-Fine Vintage Vault

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-CHAMBER OF FEAR-DAY-

(Guildenstern speaks to two soldiers of the Crimson Blades)

Gui: Here comes one of Parliament's watchdogs. You, go back and silence his yapping.

B1: Parliament's...watchdogs?

Gui: An agent of the VKP. You can follow orders, can you not? The VKP is your enemy. Now, go!

B1 & B2: Sir!

(They go)

(Guildenstern reveals himself to be Sydney)

4.3.4 The Quake/1

@Wine Cellar-Chamber of Fear

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-CHAMBER OF FEAR-DAY

(As Ashley walks through the room, the earth starts moving)

Ash: Not again!

(The earthquake changes the shape of the room)

Ash: ...I do not feel I'm welcome here.

4.3.5 Fragments of Memory

@Wine Cellar-Room of Rotten Grapes

-OUTDOORS-FIELD-DAY-

(Suddenly, Ashley stands in a green field. He sees a large tree in the distance. He looks around and sees the same boy he saw in the Wine Guild Hall)

(The screen turns black and the following word appears in red letters)

<"...Papa">

(Ashley goes back to reality)

4.3.6 Ashley's Past

@Wine Cellar-The Gallows

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-THE GALLOWES-DAY-

(Ashley has just defeated the Minotaur and is leaving the room. He hears a tapping metallic sound, turns around, and sees Sydney)

Ash: Sydney!

(Sydney claps his metallic hands as a sign of admiration)

Syd: So this is a Riskbreaker. Most men complacently accept "knowledge" as "truth". They are sheep, ruled by fear. But you are different. Always calm,

detached. A smooth flow of thought into action. Indeed...it is almost as if...as if you had no soul.

How do you do it? Body and soul are one...Yet yours are separate, like a child from the knight in his storybook. Where is your soul, Riskbreaker? Is this VKP training? Or did you see something that made you shut your soul away?

(Sydney shows the palm of his hand)

Syd: Show me your soul...

-OUTDOORS-FIELD-DAY-

(Grey images of Sydney and Ashley stand in the field. Under the big tree Ashley saw there is a family (two parents and a child) having a picnic. The father looks a lot like Ashley. His wife gets up, kisses him and walks away. Ashley speaks to his son, then he turns to see his wife getting killed. He jumps up and runs to her, but while he tries to do so, his son gets killed too)

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-THE GALLOWES-DAY-

(Ashley is kneeling down as Sydney read his mind)
Syd: You killed your wife and child...
Ash: ...They were slain by fallen knights, jackals.
Syd: Wrong. You failed to protect your wife, your child. You failed in your duty as a knight, as a husband...as a father. You killed them!!
Ash: (gets up) Sydney!!
Syd: (flies away) Try to catch me, Ashley Riot! Look outside yourself to find your truth.
Ash: What's your game?
Syd: Hardin!
(Hardin enters, holding Merlose)
Mer: Ashley!
Ash: Merlose!!
Mer: Pay no heed to me! Take them, Riot!!
Syd: The city of shade will forgive your sins, my son - and call forth a power...a power that lies within you even now!
(Sydney starts floating in the air)
Syd: This is my game. I run, you give chase. I am the hart, and you the hunter. But this hart has laid a few snares of his own...I am waiting for you,
Riskbreaker!
(Sydney disappears)
Ash: H-Hold! Sydney!!
(Hardin runs away with Merlose)
Ash: Damn!
(A pink light flashes from Ashley's body. He recovers a few Battle Abilities that he had lost in his memory)
Ash: ...What is happening?
Voice: I am waiting for you, Ashley Riot...

4.3.7 The Living Dead-part 1

@Wine Cellar-Room of Cheap Red Wine

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-ROOM OF CHEAP RED WINE-DAY-

(Ashley sees a dying knight from the Crimson Blades. He has wounds all over and his skin has turned to a pale greyish color)

Ash:

Blade: Ur...I...I b-beg of ye...Soo...Stop the...p-pain...

(He dies. His soul can be seen flying away. Ashley walks away but the corpse stands up)

Ash: Is this some magick, or merely the power of Leà Monde...?

[Ashley kills the zombie]

4.3.8 The Living Dead-part 2

@Wine Cellar-Room of Cheap White Wine

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-ROOM OF CHEAP WHITE WINE-DAY

(Three zombies attack Ashley)

Ash: ...Is this, too, part of your game, Sydney?

[Ashley kills the zombies]

4.3.9 The Quake/2

@Catacombs-Shrine to the Martyrs

-INDOORS-CATACOMBS-SHRINE TO THE MARTYRS-DAY-

(Ashley has just defeated a Ghost. The earth starts moving again)
Ash: Not again!

4.3.10 Hardin's Power

@Catacombs-The Withered Spring

-INDOORS-CATACOMBS-THE WITHERED SPRING-DAY-

(As Ashley exits the room, he is stared by a grey image of Hardin)

4.3.11 Sydney's Game

@Sanctum-Prisoners' Niche

-INDOORS-SANCTUM-THE CLEANSING CHANTRY-DAY-

(Sydney is drawing on the floor, while Hardin spies Ashley. Sydney turns to Merlose)

Syd: ...Do not attempt escape, and no harm will come to you.

Mer: ...What evil are you working here?

Syd: Just a little drawing, my dear. What think you, Hardin?

Har: Gods...Is he even human? He fights with the strength of a brigade...

(Hardin turns to Sydney)

Har: Are Riskbreakers all this powerful?

Syd: (gets up) I think not. Our Ashley is a vessel, you see. He has merely partaken of the power around him. It is as I have foreseen.

Har: ...What next, then?

Syd: What next? Let him give chase a while.

Har: This is madness, Sydney!! The Blades will hold this town soon, and we dare not face their undivided forces! We've no time to play cat and mouse!

Syd: Relax, my good Hardin. Remember, it is all part of my plan.

Har: Were the duke's betrayal, the cardinal's meddling...and a Riskbreaker strong as a bloody titan all part of your precious plan, too, Sydney?

(Sydney stares into his eyes. Hardin calms down)

Har: Sydney, forgive me.

Syd: Be calm, Hardin. it is of no account.

(Sydney turns to Merlose)

Syd: You impress me, Inquisitor...More concerned about our doings than your own fate?

Mer: What villainy are you planning, Sydney?

Syd: Why, I'm preparing a feast for your friend.

(Sydney starts the summoning rite. A halo of light appears around him, representing ancient Kildean glyphs)

Syd: Gylda-Meuntes-Haatis-Mota-Fehrtes-Ratis-Alpa-Kilmota, Emperor of the Shade, descend from the Dark, honor sin-soaked contracts of kinship, lead your beast unto me!

(Merlose sees a grey image of a boy that looks like the duke's son)

Boy: I must help father...

-INDOORS-SANCTUM-PRISONERS' NICHE-DAY-

Ash: ...Merlose?

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4.4 Within Leà Monde
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4.4.1 The Blades Move-part 1

@Rue Mal Falde

-OUTDOORS-TOWN CENTER WEST-RUE MAL FALDE-DAY-

(Ashley sees some Crimson Blades and hides behind a corner)

B1: Well? Find anything?

B2: Naught but dust on this side, sir.

B1: We shall join the others, then. Yet crossing the river means...

B3: It's too dangerous inside the city walls. You heard what befell our brothers!

B1: Yet we waste our time here...

B2: The cold ones will not walk under the sun, but soon night will fall...

Ash: I'll have to find another way around.

4.4.2 The Blades Move-part 2

@Town Center West-Rue Vermillion

-OUTDOORS-TOWN CENTER WEST-THE RENE COASTROAD-DAY-

(Commander Duane of the Crimson Blades stands on the edge of the coastroad. He is approached by two Blades)

Dua: Well?

B1: Just a workshop. Nothing else here.

B2: We've still no word from Squad 3.

Dua: They're dead then?

B2: I...I could not...

Dua: Did you not verify their corpses?

B2: S-Sir, my apologies.

(Duane slaps him on the face)

Dua: Coward! Ye are a stain on the escutcheon of our order!

The loss of our brothers cannot be helped. Pray that fate will not be as cruel a mistress to us. Search! The rathole Mullenkamp's been using is here somewhere! Leave no stone unturned!

B1 & B2: Sir!

(The Blades leave)

Dua: I, for one, cannot leave this accursed city soon enough.

4.4.3 Incomplete Death

@Tircolas Flow

-OUTDOORS-TOWN CENTER WEST-TIRCOLAS FLOW-DAY-

(Ashley sees more Commander Grissom of the Blades speaking to a dying cultist. He hides behind a corner)

Gri: Answer wisely, and you may yet live. Now tell me where Sydney hides!

C: Save your breath, knight...you fools think the Dark will bend to you?

Gri: We are prelates of the Lord, scum. We are not here to bend, we are come to cleanse!

(The cultist spits on his face. Grissom cleans the spit, mentally pronounces a short prayer and violently slams the cultist's head against the wall)

Gri: Now, there is still time. Pray...perhaps He will forgive. And I will pardon your sins in His name.

C: ...Go to hell.

(The cultist dissolves)

(Guildenstern arrives, followed by Commander Samantha)

Gui: So end those who serve the Dark.

Sam: What mean you?

Gui: The Dark is formless and invisible. It invades the body like a plague, an unseen visitor. Yet those it taints become...undying.

Sam: Undying?

Gui: Yes. They do not die.

Sam: But...he did die. Turned to dust...leaving no trace. Did he not?

Gui: What is death? Is it the ruination of the flesh? Surely, that is death, but it is only one facet of the truth. True death...is the death of the soul.

Sam: And theirs is not a true death?

Gui: Even should their flesh crumble to decay, their sould will wander eternally. The undying of Leà Monde do die...But it is...an incomplete death.

Ash: An incomplete death...

Gui: Trapped in purgation, they yearn for life. Thus they seek bodies without souls...and the "corpses that walk" are born. They say the howl of the north wind is the cry of the wandering souls...

(Guildenstern turns to Grissom)

Gui: Grissom, gather our remaining men. Join with Tieger's knights, and crush Mullenkamp. Go!

Gri: By your command.

(Grissom leaves)

Sam: ...Will the same happen to me?

Gui: (embraces her) You will not die. And...

Sam: And?

Gui: There is one who has found the true undeath. Immortality, my love.

(They kiss)

Sam: Let us search for this...Sydney.

(Guildenstern and Samantha leave)

Ash: So the cardinal seeks immortality...

(Duane and two knights see Ashley)

Dua: That's right. But it's naught that concerns you.

(Ashley is surrounded)

Dua: An incomplete death's more than a VKP butcher deserves.

[Ashley kills Duane and the two Blades]

Dua: G-God...My soul...is not ready...

(Duane dissolves)

(Guildenstern appears on the other side on the river. Ashley and Guildenstern stare into each other's eyes for a few second, then Guildenstern turns back and walks away)

@City Walls West-Where the Master Fell

-INDOORS-CITY WALLS WEST-WHERE THE MASTER FELL-DAY-

(As Ashley exits the room, he is spied by Rosencrantz)

4.4.5 He Intends To Die...

@Abandoned Mines B1-Traitor's Parting

-INDOORS-ABANDONED MINES B1-TRAITOR'S PARTING-DAY-

(Ashley is about to exit the room. Suddenly, he starts seeing through Merlose's eyes)

-INDOORS-TOWN CENTER WEST-DINAS WALK-DAY-

Syd: Well? What do you say?

(Sydney turns to Merlose)

Syd: You find us strange, no?

Mer: "Unnatural" is more the word. That thing you do...it...

(Sydney waves a finger in denial and points to Hardin, who is using his seer power)

Har: ...They have formed into three groups. They are wounded...and increasingly wary of being split apart. They seem less focused than our visitors last night.

Syd: The soldiers last night were trained elites; these latecomers are mere sellswords. Guildenstern doubtlessly wished to catch us in the Graylands. Yet we proved too cunning a quarry...

Har: It is a hollow victory. Our losses are greater than the Blades'. And they have cut out puppets' strings and turned them against us. They will soon hold the surface. We are lost!

Syd: We have sacrificed much...Yet it need not be in vain. Need it, Hardin?

Har: How can they control our servants? How?

Syd: Not all of them can. Only a few.

Har: Yet we are the masters, are we not? Have we been betrayed by one of our own?

Syd: I think not. The Cardinal has prepared long for this. Twenty years watching...waiting.

Har: Think! They struck us just as we were moving on the duke! They knew our plans, Sydney!

Syd: Temper, Hardin. You must learn control.

Har: We are lost, Sydney! Lost! We must leave now, or we'll be warming our toes in hell!!

(Sydney casts an angry glance at Hardin)

Syd: I said control yourself!!

I am telling you all is well. Trust me, Hardin. All is well.

(Hardin falls to the floor)

Syd: We are friends, you and I. Is that not so, Hardin? Give me your trust, friend.

Har: Yes...

...friends.

Syd: Take the Inquisitor with you and go ahead. Oh, and don't be too rough.

Har: What will you do?

Syd: Just going to pay a visit on Guildenstern. Worry not, friend. Use sigils to lock all you can. It will cost our guests valuable time to

unbind them.

(Sydney walks towards the exit)

Har: Sydney...

(Sydney stops on the doorway)

Har: ...If we are friends, do not "compel" me so...Never again, Sydney!

(Merlose sees a grey image of the small boy she saw before)

Boy: He intends to die...

Har: This way, quick!

-INDOORS-ABANDONED MINES B1-TRAITOR'S PARTING-DAY-

Ash: ...Merlose.

(As he leaves the room, Rosencrantz is spying on him)

Ros: ...What have you done, Sydney?

4.4.6 The Gran Grimoire

@Town Center West-Villeport Way

-OUTDOORS-TOWN CENTER WEST-VILLEPORT WAY-DAY-

(Ashley sees Sydney walking towards a gate. He hides behind a corner and listens. On the other side of the gate are Samantha and Guildenstern)

Sam: We can pass through here.

(Guildenstern is examining some carvings)

Sam: What have you found?

Gui: Ancient Kildean lettering...It's quite worn, nigh undreadable.

Sam: Anything useful?

Gui: I think not. Yet...

Sam: Yet?

Gui: The carvings are particularly deep in places.

Sam: They're quite charming...What do they mean?

Gui:There's more here...and here.

Sam: Ancient Kildean...from Mullenkamp's time.

Gui: Ah, truly. These were written before the birth of St. Iocus... time when sorcerers were common as sellswords.

(Samantha looks worried)

Gui: What is it?

Sam: The cardinal, he will stop the legacy of Mullenkamp...the Grimores...from falling into the wrong hands, will he not?

Gui: ...Of course, my love. To cede its power to a fanatic such as Sydney would be madness.

Sam: I fear he already has the Gran Grimoire. What think you?

Gui: I do not know. Yet surely we would not be here, chatting so amiably, if he had.

Sam: The Gran Grimoire...the ultimate codex of sorcery.

Gui: It is only a book...a covenant. Yet it is the Prime Mover, the machinery of life itself.

(Sydney suddenly appears on the other side of the gate)

Syd: And if you had that "book"?

Gui: Sydney...

(Samantha is about to draw her weapon, Guildenstern stops her)

Syd: You wouldn't know what to do with such power!

Sam: Then pray tell, for what purpose have you been in league with the duke these many years? You seek to control men...nay, to control God himself!!

Syd: Oh, please. Warping the minds of men and shepherding the masses has always been your Church's domain. You lure sheep with empty miracles and a dead God. ...Or perhaps you, too, are a sheep, Samantha. A poor little

lamb, bleating for your faith as though it were milk of the poppy. Yet mark your savior well, for he is one of the demons you so fear, Samantha.
Sam: Be silent!
Syd: A sweeter faith still is the draught called "love".
(Sydney attempts to read Samantha's mind)
Gui: Be wary, Samantha!! Don't let him get to you!
Syd: Ahh, truly the cardinal's own hand. Your will is strong, Guildenstern.
Gui: ...You are not the only shepherd here, Sydney!!
(Guildenstern suddenly appears behind Sydney and attacks with a slash of his rapier. Sydney dodges the blow and Guildenstern disappears and reappears on the other side of the gate)
Gui: Watch your crook, lest it be wrenched from you.
(Sydney disappears, Samantha takes a step forward)
Gui: It's no use. We must make haste.
Sam: The fiend!!
(Samantha starts walking away)
Gui: Run, Sydney, run. You will be ours in the end.
(Guildenstern follows Samantha)
Ashley: The Gran Grimoire...?

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4.5 Snowfly Forest
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4.5.1 The Wellspring

@Snowfly Forest-Faerie Circle

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-FAERIE CIRCLE-DAY-

(Ashley arrives into the forest via the Undercity. It seems as if it is snowing)

Ash: Snow? No...Snowflies.

-OUTDOORS-TOWN CENTER SOUTH-THE RENE COASTROAD-DAY-

(Ashley sees through Samantha's eyes. She is with Neesa)

Nee: Well? Will she open for you?

Sam: Nay...The sigil holds it fast. How fare you?

Nee: It was just a workshop.

Sam: I mean your men, how many have we lost?

Nee: Ah, how goes the battle, you mean? The city is ours, dearie, more or less.

Sam: How many dead?

Nee: Three, maybe four score. We've lost contact with some...We'll know better when the fighting cools.

Sam: The dead walk in greater numbers as the day wanes...

Nee: I know.

Sam: They'll walk beneath the stars when eventide comes.

Nee: You would fight this battle differently?

Sam: It is not that! I...No training could prepare one for this...

Nee: Lost your nerve, Samantha? War is change. We must follow suit.

(Guildenstern approaches them)

Gui: Control your fear. Lest you be controlled in its stead.

Sam: Romeo...

Sydney's lot have caught wind of our little foray and summoned their

dark brood to repel us. They summon, yet they cannot command. Soon, the paling that holds the demons in Leà Monde will fall!

Nee: Sydney must be stopped...

Gui: Indeed, commander Neesa. You have the right idea, now to action!!

(Neesa salutes him and walks away)

Gui: What ails you, Samantha?

Sam: What is Sydney thinking? Summoning evil beyond his control...He fills his chalice with poison, and savors it like wine!

(Neesa is listening)

Gui: Think not on him, Samantha.

Sam: Yet what he does defies nature's order.

(A quick flash shows a grey image of Ashley)

Sam: Nature's order...?

(Guildenstern hits Samantha. She starts bleeding from the side of her lips)

Gui: ...That was him! That Riskbreaker has done this! Damn him!

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-FAERIE CIRCLE-DAY-

(Ashley is kneeling down and bleeding from the side of his mouth. He is approached by Rosencrantz)

Ros: The symptoms resemble those of case...72, was it?

(Ashley gets up and draws his weapon)

Ros: Borrowing another's eyes and ears - clairvoyance, is you will. All people are tuned to a certain "rhythm". Some can find a like rhythm and jump on board.

Ash: You're not a Knight of the Cross...one of Sydney's, then?

Ros: True seers can join one regardless of their rhythm. But not you, not yet...My name is Rosencrantz. I am a Riskbreaker, like yourself.

Ash: What's this?

Ros: Grand Stewart LeSait has sent me to assist you. We're to be partners.

(Rosencrantz stretches out his hand to Ashley)

Ash: You must know, Riskbreakers always work alone. And a change of plans mid-mission is unthinkable.

Ros: Yet you know nothing! Naught about Leà Monde, Mullenkamp, Sydney...Nothing at all!

Ash: And you do?

Ros: Of course. You're the only one who does not. The VKP and Parliament know - have known - about the dark powers and the dead that walk...They've just kept it secret.

(Ashley sheaths his weapon)

Ash: Continue.

Ros: We didn't think you'd go straight to Leà Monde from the manor. So they sent me to help. I am better in a scrape than our Inquisitor friend, who admittedly lacks battle experience.

Ash: You say the VKP knew of the dark powers?

Ros: Indeed, I was assigned to the investigation...

(Ashley turns around and takes a few steps)

Ros: You know Leà Monde is a "wellspring."

Ash: What?

Ros: A power grows in those, like you, whom its dark waters have touched. You may not feel it or understand it, but it is there, making you something more than mortal. To wit, there is no power without the Dark. Yet it is not easily tamed. Thus Parliament raised a paling round the cities of man and set the Dark out to pasture. ...Leà Monde, however, has strong ties to the Dark, for this is the Dark city of the ancient Kildean priestess Mullenkamp. All that was needed is fodder, and THEY would come to feed.

Ash: Fodder? ...No!

Ros: Yes. The great quake 25 years past stocked the city's larders with corpses.

(The earth shakes for a short time)

Ros: The wand'ring spirits wail and hunger...

Ash: ...Rosencrantz, was it? Your words bear much meaning.

Ros: Please, my friend! I speak only the truth.

Ash: Yet you have no evidence.

Ros: ...For that, you must search.

(Ashley walks into the forest)

Ash: I will cut you, next we meet. Leave the city before sundown, if you value your life.

(Rosencrantz descends the stairs that lead to the Undercity)

Ros: If you would enter the forest, follow the snowflies. They gather where the Dark runs strongest.

4.5.2 Follow The Snowflies

@Snowfly Forest-Faerie Circle, as Ashley enters the Forest

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-FAERIE CIRCLE-DAY-

(Rosencrantz walks out of the Undercity again)

Ros: He really went in there...The snowflies will mark his grave, I fear.

(Grissom's voice can be heard from below)

Gri: Ah, there you are, Rosencrantz!

(Grissom comes out of the Undercity, followed by two Blades)

Ros: It has been a while, Grissom. You seem well.

Gri: Where did he go?

Ros: Through the wood, he says. ...You will follow him?

Gri: I must avenge the foul murder of my brother, Duane.

Ros: Of course you must. ...But be wary, your foe is strong.

Gri: God is stronger.

Ros: The Dark is stronger, you mean.

Gri: And what is your business here? We had a deal, did we not? Join with Sydney and find the key. Time is short.

Ros: Very well. But...You should know: something is odd with Sydney.

Gri: Odd, you say?

Ros: A veritable bestiary of beasties spring up where'er he goes.

Nothing he cannot handle, still...

Gri: Ah, even the hyaena cowers, does he?

Ros: Don't be the fool, Grissom. Hyaenas know caution. These creatures...Sydney's the one summoning them.

Gri: Well now. Sydney's cup overfloweth, and he calls forth a flood.

Ros: There's a flood of vermin in this city, but it seems Sydney's manning the sluice.

Gri: Meaning?

Ros. You're a slow one. Sydney is increasing the flow of Dark energies on purpose.

Gri: Why would he?

Ros: That is the question...

(Grissom walks into the forest)

Ros: follow the snowflies, Grissom. They forgather where the Dark runs deepest.

(Grissom goes in, Rosencrantz is descending the stairs to the Undercity)

Ros: Wait...

(Rosencrantz looks back to the Faerie Circle)

4.5.3 The Hunt Begins

@Snowfly Forest-The Hunt Begins, halfway through

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-THE HUNT BEGINS-DAY-

Ash: So many snowflies...

4.5.4 The Winds Change

@Snowfly Forest-Return to the Land, after killing the Earth Dragon

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-RETURN TO THE LAND-DAY-

(The Earth Dragon dissolves under Ashley's blows; there is a short earthquake)

Ash: The winds have changed!

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-DAY-

Gri: The quake...a sign!

Faendos!

Lamkin!

Answer me, for the love of God!

(He walks on)

Gri: Follow the snowflies...right...

4.5.5 Summoning

@Snowfly Forest-Hewn From Nature

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-HEWN FROM NATURE-DAY-

(Ashley arrives and finds Grissom confronting Sydney. Grissom is wounded)

Syd: This is madness! You'll die.

Gri: I, too...I can summon. It is not your sacred right!!

Erulkes-Salma-Llon-Smohta-Derdes-Fful-Gend-Gylmota...

Syd: And I say you'll die!

Gri: Knight of Shadow, from ancient slumber, the bloody glyph, carved in flesh...

(A magical glyph starts appearing as Grissom pronounces the summon spell. Suddenly, he stops and shudders, spitting blood)

Gri: I-Imposs...

(He falls, apparently dead)

Syd: Very possible. The weak cannot reign in the Dark...there are limits to all things. You have reached yours.

(Sydney turns to Ashley)

Syd: The Dark is hungry. It has fed.

Gri: Speaking ill of the dead...are we, Sydney?

(Grissom stands up)

Gri: Knight of Shadow...from ancient slumber, the bloody...glyph...carved in flesh...take my body, lead me as your own!

Xylda-Nazam-Sson-Medaya!

(He summons a Dark Crusader)

Gri: This feeling...The power! It swells and flows through me!

(Grissom turns to Ashley)

Gri: Now, in my brother's name, you die.

Note: during the fight with Grissom, Ashley is supported by Sydney. He might, however, decide to attack Sydney. If he manages to kill Sydney before killing Grissom and the Last Crusader or getting killed, the following event will ensue. Nothing else will change.

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-HEWN FROM NATURE-DAY-

(Ashley delivers the final blow on Sydney. Sydney kneels down)

Syd: It is not my time!

(Sydney teleports away)

4.5.6 Sydney's True Past

@Snowfly Forest-Hewn from Nature, after killing Grissom

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-HEWN FROM NATURE-DAY-

(Grissom is dying)

Gri: ...F...Father.

(He dies. His corpse remains where it is, without dissolving)

Syd: Hmm...You reek, Riskbreaker. What is that stench? Ah, you have met Rosencrantz?

Ash: He told me Leà Monde was a "wellspring" for the Dark.

Syd: What think you?

Ash: I've been shown a lifetime of oddities in a day.

Syd: So you do believe the Dark exists, yet you do not believe that which you cannot see. The Dark covers your eyes, and you are blind.

Ash: There is no proof. Am I to believe the great quake was man's doing? Thousands of cityfolk, their lives sacrificed to make this "wellspring." By whom? Parliament? The Cardinal?

Syd: Why don't you ask?

Ash: Ask who?

Syd: The sacrificed. The witnesses.

(Sydney turns around)

Syd: You've impressed me. You truly are a Riskbreaker. Or...a trained assassin. A killer.

Ash: What nonsense is this?

Syd. Memories, Riskbreaker. Memories.

(Sydney reads Ashley's mind)

-OUTDOORS-FIELD-DAY-

(Grey images of Sydney and Ashley stand in the field, watching the scene of Ashley's family's death)

Ash (image): Stop this. Stop this now.

Syd (image): Do not run, Ashley. See with your eyes.

Mar: Papa, a sip of water!

Ash: Have some of Papa's wine, Marco!

Tia: Wait right there - I'll fetch some water.

(Tia stands up and kisses Ashley)

Tia: Don't you dare give Marco any wine!

(Tia walks away)

Ash: Wine is like sweet ambrosia!

Mar: Really?

(They see Tia getting killed. As her corpse falls to the ground, the killer's face is shown: it is Ashley. The scene turns grey, and the images of Ashley and Sydney become colored)

Ash: What!?

Syd: The truth, Ashley.

(The dead peasant can be seen, along with his son)

Ash. Madness!! Foul deception!!

Syd: You doubt what I have shown you? It is your memories that deceive.
The VKP has burned sweet lies into your soul.

(Ashley falls to the ground)

Ash: You lie!!

-OUTDOORS-SNOWFLY FOREST-HEWN FROM NATURE-DAY-

Ash: Lies...

Syd: An elite member of the Kingsguard loses his wife and child...A
trgedy. He becomes a VKP Riskbreaker. This is the lie! A memory false as
summer snow! You were an assassin and a saboteur in an elite squad.
Mistaking them for your target, you murdered an innocent family. For
country and justice you would take any life without thinking, until you
sent that family to their deaths.

(Ashley shakes his head)

Ash: By the gods, you lie!

Syd: The VKP saw the opportunity to turn your guilt to patriotic zeal.
They twisted your very soul, Ashley. your despair at losing your
"family" turned to hate for the lawless jackal that killed them. Hate
that should be reserved for yourself.

Ash: YOU...LIE!

Syd: Do I? Are your new-found abilities not proof enough? You believe
Leà Monde responsible? You are remembering the killing arts you learned
in a past life.

Ash: Noooooooooooo!

(Ashley jumps up and attacks Sydney. Sydney disappears and Ashley
stumbles over, then Sydney reappears behind him.)

Syd: What is memory? Men forget that which pains them...create new
memories to please themselves...lie to themselves, believe their own
lies. The VKP may have wielded the brand that burned your soul, but
you...you wanted it. You wanted them to burn your guilt away.

Ash: What do you want, Sydney? What are you trying to do to me?

Syd: Truth, Riskbreaker! I just want you to know the truth.

Ash: I spit on your truth!

Syd: But you have already begun believing. Am I wrong, Ashley? You have
seen demons walk the city streets, heard the cries of the dead and
damned. You deny these things? Are they illusions? What did you see
through that woman's eyes, Ashley?

Ash: ...You think you can see the past?

Syd: Not see, I "hear" it.

Ash: ...Hear?

(Sydney walks away. Ashley stands up)

Ash: Wait, Sydney!!

Syd: You want the truth? Then follow me, Ashley Riot.

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4.6 Truth or Lie

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4.6.1 Rosencrantz's Double-Crossing

@Keep-The Warrior's Rest

-OUTDOORS-KEEP-THE WARRIOR'S REST-DAY-

(Ashley comes out of a door and sees Guildenstern. He hides.

Guildenstern is with Samantha, who is kneeling down, examining some carvings)

Sam: ...It is true. It is as you say. Some parts were added later, but the original Kildean letters cover every wall. The walls of Leà monde, all carved with these glyphs...what do they mean?

Gui: ...These are "spellsongs". Leà Monde is surrounded by sorcery.

(Samantha stands up)

Gui: You'll likely find them on every den and dovecote in the city. This city...It is unchanged these past 2000 years. Neither the eroding winds nor the quake have sapped its strength. The Dark is strongest towards the center - the Great Cathedral. I have felt it. The entire city is a Circle of Magic!!

(Suddenly, Rosencrantz appears, apparently out of nowhere)

Ros: Brilliant! A brilliant deduction, my good sir! Top of your class at the academy, indeed.

Gui: What, you knew?

Ros: Didn't everyone? The city is the Circle, the "wellspring". And the "book" - the Gran Grimoire - for which you seek...You're standing in it. Leà Monde is the Gran Grimoire!

Gui: Why did you not tell us? This is betrayal most foul!

(Rosencrantz walks closer to him)

Gui: Why have you done this?

(Guildenstern tries to read his mind)

Ros: Your memory fails you. The Dark holds no power over me. ...Nor do I recall us ever being friends. My friendship with the Duke is fleeting as well.

Gui: Have you no honor?

Ros: That, I do have...and enough sense to know not to throw my life away for some fool cause.

Gui: You are naught but a glorified sellsword. You disgust me.

Ros: We live in peaceful, boring times. There's no rank to be had in killing on the fields of war. We must seize opportunity where we find it. Do you not agree, Guildenstern? You were using me too, after all. I'm your "opportunity", you know that. You need me.

Gui: You are a common harlot. You were born a worm, and you will die a worm. LeSait was right to expel you from the Riskbreakers.

(Rosencrantz bows in front of him)

Ros: Such praise! I am not worthy!

Gui: Where is the "key"?

Ros: Well, now...

(Guildenstern draws his rapier and points it at Rosencrantz)

Gui: Tell me, or I will see you dead.

Ros: You, kill me? I was a Riskbreaker, you know.

Sam: What is this?

(Guildenstern turns to Samantha. Her eyes are red, and she acts as if she couldn't see properly)

Sam: Where am I? What is this I see?

(Samantha falls to the ground)

Sam: Yet I am here!

Gui: Samantha, it is I!

Sam: W-Where? Where are you?

Ros: ...They are linked. Samantha's rhythm is attuned to his, Guildenstern.

Gui: Riskbreaker!!

(Samantha turns back to normal)

Sam: H-He is near...He hides.

(Samantha stands up)

Gui: It has passed, then.

(Rosencrantz walks away)

Gui: We join with Tieger.

Sam: Yes...

(They leave)

4.6.2 Confrontation

@Keep-The Warrior's Rest, as Ashley opens the door to go into the Town Center

-OUTDOORS-KEEP-THE WARRIOR'S REST-DAY-

(As Ashley opens the door, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern come in)

Gui: I did want to see what Sydney had planned for our little agent here...But now it is time to end the game. Rosencrantz, kill him. Show him your power. Show him how you make the Dark kneel.

Ros: My pleasure.

(Guildenstern walks away, back into the Town Center)

Ros: ...We meet again, Ashley. You have no idea how long I've waited to measure swords with you.

Ash: What do you mean?

Ros: You see, I've known you for a long time.

Ash: !!

Ros: I was the one who set you up as the VKP's errand-boy. And...I have you to thank for my current lack of employ.

Ash: What!?

Ros: Here, let me jog your memory!!

[They fight]

4.6.3 Rosencrantz's True Past

@Keep-The Warrior's Rest, when Ashley defeats Rosencrantz

-OUTDOORS-KEEP-THE WARRIOR'S REST-DAY-

[Ashley defeats Rosencrantz]

(Rosencrantz kneels to the ground)

Ros: Yield!!

(They stop fighting)

Ros: ...A shame your skill in the killing arts did not go the way of your memory.

Ash: What "killing arts"?

Ros. You really don't remember. I should give the VKP more credit...We were in the same unit, you and I.

Ash: What unit? You mean...in the Kingsguard?

Ros: The "Kingsguard"?

(Rosencrantz sits on the ground)

Ros: ...More VKP lies, I'm afraid. That summer day...That warm summer day. I was there, with you.

-OUTDOORS-FIELD-DAY-

(Tia's corpse can be seen. Ashley and Rosencrantz are the killers)

Ros: Well done, commandant! Both right through the heart! ...What?

They're just peasants.

(Ashley kneels next to Marco)

Ros: Their luck ran ill, is all. All witnesses to our operations must be "dealt" with. It is our code. They were wrong to picnic here. You are

the hand of justice. We...We are the hand of justice. It is for the good of the realm. A few sacrifices is nothing.

Ash: A few sacrifices?

(Ashley stands up)

Ash: You tell me why these people had to die! Why we had to kill them! They were innocents...Is it not our charge to protect these very souls?

(Ashley throws his scimitar away and kneels down)

Ros: What has come over you? You sound the addle-pated preacher!

(Ashley falls to the ground)

Ros: C-Commandant! What is wrong!?

-OUTDOORS-KEEP-THE WARRIOR'S REST-DAY-

Ros: The Riskbreakers may be the wards of the law now. But it was not always so...We were always the champions of justice, true, but a justice that served the state alone. We were above the law. We assassinated political enemies of Parliament and sent sharp steel to bloody the civil wars of our neighbors. To the people, we were the "Knights of Law and Order". To our enemies, we were the Parliament's hatchet-men. You were a commandant, one of the best. If only your sense of justice was not so keen. The VKP was not about to lose one of their best without a fight.

Ash: And you?

Ros: Myself? I was picked up by the VKP, like you. I learned about Leà Monde when i was sent to spy on them. Then I made some friends...

(Ashley stands up)

Ash: The Cardinal's men? Or Mullenkamp?

Ros: Both. You weren't the only one unhappy with the old killing teams. Threats, burglary, murder. We were no different than common ruffians. They prey on people, we on nations. There were others that tried to forget. Some went mad. Others took their own lives. Not I, however. I will use them as they used me. You know "them", eh? The privileged, ruling from their satin couches, born with silver spoons in their mouths, or shrewd moneyers, standing on the backs of the poor. But the pawns have seen the gameboard for what it is. Now there is only one thing left -

Ash: Leà Monde?

(Rosencrantz nods)

Ash: The Blades, the VKP, they all want the power it holds.

Ros: Correct. And dear Sydney holds the only key. ...I cannot fathom what his intentions are in using you as a vessel for the Dark.

Regardless, his time is nigh.

Ash: And the Blades will do your dirty work?

Ros: Those pious fools have been long steeped in filth.

(Short earthquake)

Ros: I will not yield so easily next we meet.

Ash: You are a poor loser, Rosencrantz.

Ros: Say what you will!

(Rosencrantz walks into the Town Center)

Ash: Lying to ourselves...Believing our own lies...

4.6.4 Merlose's Power

@Abandoned Mines B2-Dining in Darkness, after Ashley has killed the Dragon, as he tries to exit the room

-INDOORS-ABANDONED MINES B2-DINING IN DARKNESS-DAY-

Voice: ...ot...Where are you?

(Ashley turns around and sees nobody)

Voice: ...re you alive? Agent Riot?

Ash: Merlose? Melrose!! Where are you? Where?

-INDOORS-TOWN CENTER EAST-THE HOUSE GILGITTE-DAY-

(Merlose looks around and sees nobody. A grey image of Ashley can be seen behind her. Somebody knocks on the door from outside)

B1: Blast! Another o' them sigils!

B2: We won't get through 'ere.

(Melrose sees Hardin, on the highest level of the house)

Har: Fear not. The door will hold. I prefer leaving a guardian to backup my sigils, but I made this one particularly strong.

Mer: Then you can summon the Dark ones, as Sydney does?

Har: Come, we go to the Great Cathedral.

(Merlose sees Joshua beside Hardin. She remembers seeing a grey image of a boy just like him saying "He intends to die...")

Mer: That boy...

(Joshua hides behind Hardin)

Har: The Duke's son. Our honored...guest. He is timorous, though, and speaks not a word.

Mer: He seems quite taken with you.

Har: Yes, he knows not who I am.

Mer: Why did Mullenkamp seize the ducal manor? Answer me!

Har: Why should I?

Voice: We turned banners against the duke,

(Merlose turns around and sees a grey image of Hardin)

Grey Har: He sought to seal off our wellspring, after two decades of toil.

Mer: He sought to seal off our wellspring...

Har: You...

Grey Har: The duke is mortally ill...He fears he will pay for his life's sins in the next. So he seeks to bury this city, as though that would bring absolution.

Mer: And you seek to pluck the city from his dying hands, correct?

(Hardin's image disappears)

Mer: Why? Why did you take the manor?

(Hardin gives her no reply)

Mer: You will answer!

(The grey image reappears)

Grey Har: To inherit the city, you must have the "key". Only the bearer of the key can receive the power of the Gran Grimoire.

Mer: The key?

Grey Har: The key-bearer, the duke, will soon die. If he dies without a successor, all is lost. The duke thinks he can cut off the cursed Mullenkamp bloodline, bt that must not be allowed to happen. We will assume the legacy. Sydney is -

(The image disappears again. Hardin has stabbed himself in his left thigh)

Har: hinder me no further. We go, now.

Mer: This...This is my power?

Har: So it seems. As I can scrye on distant locales, so the talent of the heart-seers has flowered in you.

Mer: Talent?

Har: We all possess energy, Inquisitor. But it is a negative energy. An energy that should not exist. Yet it does, and it awakens the sleeping power...

Mer: The "Dark"?

Har: Yes, something like that.

Mer: And Sydney...?

Har: He is the strongest I know. Through the Dark, he sees people's pas;

he can even push his will on others...He may have other powers beyond my ken.

Mer: It is sad...

Har: What is?

Mer: Even if he can see the past and clasp the future, how are we to know if he speaks it? If he can push us to believe anything, how do we tell truth from falsehood?

Har: Why single him out? Everyone lies, surely you know that. Whether they are Dark sorcerers or corrupt clergy, they all lie, and we believe. Am I wrong?

Grey Har: He would not lie to me!

Mer: The Gran Grimoire...What will you do with it?

Har:

Mer: Fine, then, Let us be off. But...Sydney hides something from you, Hardin.

Har: ...I will bring rope.

(He walks away, still in pain from the wound. Again, a grey image of Ashley is seen behind Merlose)

-INDOORS-ABANDONED MINES B2-DINING IN DARKNESS-DAY-

Ash: The power to brand one's will onto another...Sydney's "true past"...was it a lie?

4.6.5 Tieger and Neesa

@Undercity East-The Greengrocer's Stairs

-OUTDOORS-UNDERCITY EAST-THE GREENGROCER'S STAIRS-NIGHT-

(Ashley enters the room and he sees Tieger and Neesa standing near a corpse)

Tie: Ach, there's no pulse. He's gone...

(Tieger and Neesa turn around and see Ashley)

Tie: You!! You did this!!

(Ashley is outnumbered, and tries fleeing; he walks back into Where Black Waters Ran)

-OUTDOORS-UNDERCITY EAST-WHERE BLACK WATERS RAN-NIGHT-

(As Ashley enters the room, he finds himself facing Tieger and Neesa, as if they had teleported behind him)

Tie: You killed our brother...

Nee: Tieger, this is him. The VKP's Riskbreaker.

Tie: So you're the one they speak of. They will sing songs of your death here!

[Ashley fights them both together and wins]

(Tieger kneels down in pain)

Tie: You...You fight well, Riskbreaker.

(Neesa leans on her pole to keep standing)

Nee: Flatter him not, Tieger.

Tie: We will withdraw, Neesa. Can you fly?

Nee: Well enough.

(They disappear)

Ash: ...That corpse was Grissom. But why here?

4.6.6 Joined the Cold Ones

@Undercity East-The Greengrocer's Stairs, after having defeated Tieger and Neesa

-OUTDOORS-UNDERCITY EAST-THE GREENGROCER'S STAIRS-NIGHT-

(Tieger and Neesa are here, together with Grissom, who is apparently alive, but his skin is pale green and his movements are disjointed)

Gri: ...Please, a moment. My body is not...cooperating.

(Grissom turns around and sees Ashley)

Gri: Yeuu...You!

Tie: I am sorry, brother. We cannot help you.

Gri: Wha...What's happening?

Nee: Grissom, you have left this coil! The Dark has filled you; you have joined the cold ones!! An ironic fate. I suppose it is better than the endless wand'ring - but to happen upon your own corpse!

(Grissom falls to the ground, with his hands in his hair)

Gri: Uhooooohhhhh!!!

Voice: Kill...kill them all...

Gri: W-Who speaks?

Voice: It is bitter...lonely....They must join us...Kill them!

Gri: ...The walls! The walls speak?

Voice: Your friends...They dream of killing you! They will steal your body! Kill them, Grissom!

(Tieger and Neesa approach Grissom, weapons at hand)

Gri: My flesh...is mine and mine alone!!

(He runs away)

Tie: GRISSOM!!

(Tieger and Neesa follow him)

4.6.7 The Great Cathedral

@Limestone Quarry-Dark Abhors Light, if Ashley has the Aster Sigil

-OUTDOORS-TOWN CENTER EAST-PLATEIA LUMITAR-DAY-

(Guildenstern, Rosencrantz, Samantha and a few soldiers stand in front of the Great Cathedral)

Gui: This it?

Ros: In the upper stories, I believe.

Gui: Move out!

(The Blades go into the Cathedral, followed by Guildenstern and Samantha. Rosencrantz goes the opposite way, and descends underground using a cloudstone)

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4.7 The Final Chapter
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4.7.1 Hardin's Scar

@Limestone Quarry-The Auction Block

-INDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL L4-THE ATRIUM-DAY-

(Merlose speaks to Joshua)

Mer: ...You're a brave boy.

Har: All the excitement at the manor got to him. He's not said a word.

You hungry, boy?

(Joshua shakes his head in denial)

Mer: You care well for your charges.

(She sees the grey image of Hardin)

Grey Har: ...It was during my days in the Peaceguard. There was an investigation into an incident. I was part of a special team, entrusted with delivering blades to rebels in a neighboring kingdom. Apparently, some did not reach their destination. They claimed some of us were making coppers selling the steel on the black market. ...We were all guilty, I was not the only one. They presented me with an offer. Betray my friends, and I would walk free. ...I had a brother, half my age. He was gravely ill, and we knew not when he would leave us. I wanted money...I wanted my freedom. I sold my friend, my brother. But they did not set me free. When I escaped from prison, my brother was dead.

(The shadow disappears)

Mer: So you joined Mullenkamp...to revenge this "injustice" done to you?

Har: You scrye too deep, woman!

Mer: This thing you do will not bring your brother back!

Har: Silence! What do you know!?

Mer: Do not play the child! Do not blame your weakness on another!!

Har: Witch!!

(He tries to hit her; Merlose shuts her eyes. When she reopens them, Hardin is kneeling to the ground, with a dart in his left side. There is a Blade with a crossbow. Guildenstern arrives from a cloudstone)

Har: Quicker than a damned bloodhound!

Gui: Our dark "hounds" know your stench, cultist.

4.7.2 The Blood-Sin

@Temple of Kiltia-The Dark Coast

-INDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL L4-THE ATRIUM-DAY-

(Hardin is kneeling to the ground. Guildenstern has his rapier in his hand)

Gui: Speak! Where is the key?

Har: How should I know!?

(Guildenstern reads his mind)

Gui: You are at my mercy. Now, speak!

Har: T-Truly, I do not know.

(Merlose holds Joshua, who struggles to go to Hardin)

Gui: You must know something - anything!!

(Guildenstern reads Hardin's mind again)

Har: Y-You...Your power, like Sydney's...! How! You do not draw from the wellspring!

Gui: You think the Dark flows only within your city? You underestimate the cardinal!!

(Guildenstern reads Hardin's mind for the third time. The background turns grey, and Hardin sees Sydney in front of him)

Syd: A might close, that was.

(Hardin stands up)

Har: Y-Yes.

Syd: It is time to take the city. Let us perform the rite of succession.

Har: The key...You've found it?

Syd: The key?

Har: The "Blood-Sin".

Syd: Ah, yes. The Blood-Sin...

Har: Is this a test, Sydney?

Syd: Yes, a test. Tell me of this key, brother.

Har: Only he who holds the Blood-Sin can succeed to the Dark city. The would-be successor must cede his phantom soul if he is to accept his prize - control of the Dark. These streets already teem with souls. All that is needed is the key. We have no time. The key, show it to me.

(The background turns normal, and Hardin sees Sydney is actually Guildenstern. He hits the ground with his fist)

Har: Diablerie!!

Gui: The Blood-Sin, you say? It has a familiar ring...Years past, during the Inquisition of the heretics, the "Rood Inverse" was carved on them, an abjuration of the flesh...Those who bore this tattoo called it the Blood-Sin.

(There is a short flash where Sydney is seen, with the tattoo on his back)

Gui: Good God! Sydney held the key all along!!

Har: What?

Gui: The tattoo on his back, it is the Blood-Sin! He has the key! He has played you false!

Har: N-No, I won't...

Gui: Then why does Sydney not take the city? The Duke is in his final hours...

Har: Surely...Surely he would not follow the Duke's wishes...?

(Hardin looks at Joshua)

Mer: Stop!!

(Hardin suddenly freezes, a trickle of blood comes out of his mouth. He has been stabbed by Guildenstern. He falls to the ground as Joshua screams out loud. There is a short scene in Bardorba Castle, where Joshua can be seen, hugging his father, the Duke)

-INDOORS-TEMPLE OF KILTIA-CHAMBER OF REASON-DAY-

Syd: ...Hardin.

(Rosencrantz enters the room)

Ros: What are your designs for the Riskbreaker?

Syd: Not yet figured it out, eh?

Ros: I thought so...So he is to succeed to the legacy, then?

Syd: I've given up.

(Sydney shakes his head)

Syd: There is no meaning in an "incomplete death".

Ros: What are you ranting about?

Syd: You do not understand? He is the perfect one to rule this city of darkness. He shows all the signs: he is ready.

Ros: That weak-spirited vagrant? He has the unquestioning faith of a child in his morality.

Syd: Better a pious child than an iniwuitous rogue! Unlike you, he would not misuse the Dark.

(Rosencrantz punches him in the face)

Syd: Why try to harry me, when it is he who has shamed you?

Nonetheless, you could not harm me.

(Sydney fires a psycho blow)

Ros: Your powers hold no sway over me! Prepare yourself, Sydney!

4.7.3 The Chosen One

@Temple of Kiltia-Chamber of Reason

-INDOORS-TEMPLE OF KILTIA-CHAMBER OF REASON-DAY-

(Ashley enters the room and is knocked down by Rosencrantz. Sydney is lying on the ground too)

Ros: Look at you!

(Rosencrantz kicks Ashley in the ribs and walks towards Sydney)

Ros: This...This is your "successor"? Open your eyes, Sydney. I am the one! Hardin is gone. Old man Bardorba's next. And, Sydney, your time will soon come, I think. You'd give the city to the cardinal's motley rabble? I think not! Not after the hardships I've endured! I'm sure you agree, Sydney. It is time. I will carry on the legacy in your name. Now, the rites! Name me your successor!!

Syd: I name you..."worm", as you crawl through the dust.

(Rosencrantz slashes his right arm off)

Ros: Then keep your immortality. Here, let me lighten your burden! Ah ha ha ha!

(Sydney stands up and picks his arm up)

Ros: Ha...heh? What!?

Syd: I gave my limbs to the gods.

(Sydney sticks his arm back)

Syd: Perhaps I'll add yours to the offering!

Ros: When will you learn you power is useless against me?

(Rosencrantz realises he's holding Sydney's arm in his weapon hand. He is startled and throws it away, but it was actually his Pussyfoot)

Ros: How...!?

Syd: Do not forget where you are standing, Rosencrantz.

Ros: Y-You have deceived me?

Syd: I have done nothing so base. You have deceived yourself with a boy's daydreams. Fear not, sweet Rosencrantz. I will not kill you.

(The Kali statue stares at Rosencrantz, then uses its upper right arm to cut his body in half. Rosencrantz dissolves, and Kali attacks Ashley)

Rys: I give you the city, Riskbreaker! All its power - all to you! Make haste! Join me! Already, your powers are close to readiness! Come!

Ash: Keep your accursed city! Where's Merlose!?

Syd: You may be able to save them - your wife and child!! Should you meet them, repent, Ashley, repent!!

4.7.4 Sydney's Motive

@Great Cathedral L3-Hopes of the Idealist, after Ashley has defeated Dao

-INDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL L3-HOPES OF THE IDEALIST-DAY-

(Flash of Merlose)

Mer: ...Help, Ashley!

Ash: Merlose! Where are you?

(Ashley looks up)

Ash: Above!

-INDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL L4-ATRIUM-DAY-

(Sydney arrives via cloudstone)

Syd: Hardin, what has happened?

Gui: We have been waiting for you, Sydney.

Syd: I will handle this.

Gui: No apology, Sydney? Not for the man you've deceived these many years?

Har: Is it...time? That tattoo...is the key...?

Syd: Forgive me, Hardin.

Har: Why? ...Why? All our efforts...

Gui: He has played you all like pawns, and now he throws you away! What is this "Phantom Soul" needed for the rites? Answer me, Sydney. Or you will die.

(Guildenstern fires a psycho blow at Sydney. Sydney starts bleeding from his mouth, then he dries the wound with his hand)

Syd: You really WANT to become a martyr for your fool religion.

Gui: Not religion, Sydney. Revolution. A fresh wind to blow away the disease of the land. For our realm is sick. It suppurates with profiteers! Fawning merchants licking the boots of the nobility! They do nothing and blame others for their failure; they steal men's dreams and twist them to nightmares...We must cleanse this corruption. There must be strong, unwavering justice. And there must be fear to enforce that justice.

Syd: It is a wretched rule that does not value human life.

Gui: The world does not want a savior. These wretches leading lives of misery do not need salvation. The rotting branch must be pruned.

Syd: A tyrant always dies alone, Guildenstern. Surrounded by silver-tongued leeches, he is utterly alone. He sows sorrow and reaps death.

Gui: You are a leader, too. Do you not dream of what could be?

Syd: In my dreams, an evil tyrant's hands, which would choke the world. And he is the only one blind to his folly.

(Guildenstern points his rapier at Sydney)

Gui: ...This farce is over. I will have my answer.

Syd: And if I say no?

Gui: I will hew my retribution from your flesh. Like your pawn here...

(Sydney looks at Hardin)

Mer: If the soul is not true and fast, the rites are meaningless! It will lead to disaster!

(Samantha arrives)

Sam: Sydney!!

(Sydney hits her with a psycho bolt. She falls over)

Sam: Aahhh!!!

Syd: Hardin, we fly to safety! To blackened wing and wav'ring light...

Har: ...W-Wait. You sought to help the Duke...your father?

Syd: DELTA-ECKSIS!

(Hardin, Merlose and Sydney disappear)

(Guildenstern stabs Sydney through the heart. Sydney falls to the ground)

Gui: Perhaps I cannot kill you, immortal. But I shall have your Blood-Sin as my trophy!

=====
4.8 Battle For Darkness
=====

4.8.1 Prelude to Darkness

@Great Cathedral L4-Atrium, as Ashley approaches the staircase leading up

-INDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL L4-ATRIUM-EVENING-

(Ashley hears Sydney moaning from above)

Syd: Uh...hhh...

(Ashley walks up)

-INDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL L5-CANDLE ROOM-EVENING-

(Ashley sees Sydney, covered in blood)

Ash: What's this?

Syd: You're late, Riskbreaker...

Ash: Where's Merlose? What happened to Callo Merlose?

Syd: Worry not...I sent her to a safe place. She will escape...Unharmd.

Ash: What has happened here?

(Sydney coughs)

Syd: ...Look, and know.

(Sydney's back can be seen. It is all covered in blood, and the tattoo has been ripped off by Guildenstern. Ashley sees a grey image of Sydney as a boy)

Grey Syd: I wanted to help father. This city was his only hope...

Syd: You can see...

Grey Syd: I wanted to help father, as he helped me when I was born.

Syd: He wanted the city destroyed, even if it meant his own death. Then he iomplored me...Do not let them use it...the power. Stop him...Stop Guildenstern. Those who crave the Drak cannot control the Dark. You must stop him, kill him...before the Dark sucks his living soul away.

Ash: Where is he?

(Sydney points up)

Syd: Ashley, I...I'm...

Ash: I know.

-OUTDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL-ROOFTOP-NIGHT-

(Guildenstern and Samantha stand on top of the Cathedral, kissing. Guildenstern's torso is bare and he has Sydney's skin pasted to his back)

Sam: M-My love...why?

(Samantha has been stabbed by Guildenstern)

Gui: Forgive me, Samantha. I need your soul. Our cause needs a martyr.

Sam: Y-Your cause...There is no...place for me...for our dream...

Gui: I love you, Samantha. As God is my witness.

Sam: I...too, once thought so...

(Samantha falls off the roof. There is a pink light and lots of energy bolts around Guildenstern. Finally, Ashley arrives)

Ash: Guildenstern!!

(Guildenstern's eyes are white)

Gui: Come, Riskbreaker. Your death will be my rebirth!

(Guildenstern's body turns black. He holds a Holy Win Rood Blade in his hand)

Gui: Come, help celebrate my ascension!

4.8.2 The Truth

@Great Cathedral-Rooftop, after Ashley defeats Dark Guildenstern

-OUTDOORS-GREAT CATHEDRAL-ROOFTOP-NIGHT-

(Guildenstern has been defeated. After some lighting effects, The Holy Win drops off the roof and Ashley falls into a white emptiness. Here, he sees a grey image of himself as a young man)

Voice: Forget that which pains you...You cannot reclaim what is lost to time. Let it go. There is only regret here.

(Ashley's shadow disappears)

Voice: What difference does it make? Whether you lost a wife and child or killed an innocent family, you cannot bring back the dead.

(Guildenstern appears)

Ash: !!

Voice: Your hands are tainted with blood. Truth or no, your sins are eternal.

(Ashley sees Tia's corpse)

Voice: Release the past, look to the future! Join us, Ashley! Come home...

(Ashley's shadow reappears. Ashley walks towards him)

Voice: There is no growth without birth. Without a foothold in the past, we cannot walk towards the future.

(flash)

Ash: Get thee gone, Darkness!!

-OUTDOORS-FIELD-DAY-

Mar: Papa!!

(Ashley hugs Marco)

Ash: Forgive me, Marco, You must have been lonely...

Mar: Nuh-uh, I'm brave! Just like Papa!

(Tia approaches him)

Ash: ...Tia.

Tia: Welcome home, Ashley.

(Marco smiles)

Tia: You've done all you could for us. 'Twas a short time, but I knew happiness with you. You gave me a lifetime's worth of love.

Mar: Don't cry, Papa. See, I'm not crying. See?

Ash: But...this...

(Tia puts a finger on his lips)

Tia: Do not be misled by other's words. Believe your heart.

(They kiss)

Tia: I love you, Ashley.

(Tia and Marco smile, then disappear)

Voice: Come home, agent Riot. Your story is not yet finished...

-OUTDOORS-MAGIC CIRCLE-NIGHT-

(Ashley stands up. He is on a huge magic circle in the middle of the Cathedral. He sees Dark Angel Guildenstern flying next to the circle and draws his weapon)

4.8.3 Escape from Leà Monde

@Magic Circle, after Ashley has killed Dark Angel Guildenstern

-OUTDOORS-MAGIC CIRCLE-NIGHT-

(Dark Angel Guildenstern starts to fall apart. His huge, ominous body is torn by small explosions)

-INDOORS-WINE CELLAR-SMOKEBARREL STAIR-NIGHT-

(Merlose is escaping with Joshua and Hardin. She turns back for a moment, facing the door she has just come out of)

Mer: Ashley!

(There is an earthquake)

Har: Quickly! It's all collapsing!

Mer: But Agent Riot...

Har: There is no time!

(They leave)

-OUTDOORS-UNDERCITY WEST-CRUMBLING MARKET-NIGHT-

(There are a few Orcs who run around, panicked by the quake. One of them slips over and falls into the river)

-INDOORS-SANCTUM-CORRIDOR OF THE CLERICS-NIGHT-

(Tieger, weapon at hand, tells Neesa to escape)

Tie: Go!! Go now!!

Nee: And what then? We are finished!!

(Grissom, now completely a zombie, faces Tieger)

Tie: We must tell them what has happened here! Flee, Neesa!

Nee: Come back alive, Tieger! Alive!!

(Neesa flees)

Tie: Now the slowest dance begins, partner! 'Tis a fine tomb we shall share!

-INDOORS-CATACOMBS-NIGHT-

(Ashley is carrying Sydney to safety. The walls of the catacombs are crumbling down. Ashley has got no shirt - and the Blood-Sin can now be seen on his back)

(Somewhere else in the camatcombs, a Dragon and a Dullahan dissolve into dust)

-OUTDOORS-MAGIC CIRCLE-NIGHT-

(Guildenstern's torso can be seen as it falls into the circle. tehre is a big explosion; Leà Monde has been destroyed)

-OUTDOORS-ENTRANCE TO LEA' MONDE-DAWN-

(Hardin is lying down, mortally wounded by Guildenstern. Merlose faces the fallen city)

Mer: Gods be with you, Riot...

(Joshua pulls her arm, then kneels down next to Hardin, crying out loud)

Jos: Nooo! Hardin, stay here! Don't go!!

(Hardin strokes Joshua's head)

Har: You speak...at last. The terror...I am sorry...

(Hardin closes his eyes and dies, dissolving into nothingness. Joshua hugs Merlose and cries, as the morning sun rises)

4.8.4 The Conclusion

<Duke Bardorba's Secondary Residence, Graylands

One week later>

-INDOORS-BARDORBA RESIDENCE-DUKE'S BEDROOM-NIGHT-

(Ashley walks into the room. A servant waits for him to approach the Duke, then he exits and shuts the door behind him)

Duk: ...Well met, Sydney.

(The person that walked into the room now has Sydney's appearance. He is wearing a long white shirt that covers his back)

Duk: So, it is odne...You have suffered much. I, too, have played my part. Let us leave the rest to this Ashley. He is the one you have chosen.

(Sydney moves his lips, but what he is saying cannot be heard)

Duk: ...I know what must be done.

(Sydney smiles, and gives him a dagger)

Duk: ...I was not much of a father to you. Forgive me, my son.

(Sydney smiles serenely. The Duke stabs him in the chest and he

dissolves. The screen fades to black)

Voice: Sire! Your Excellency!! Someone, bring water! Our lord has fallen!

-OUTDOORS-OUTSIDE BARDORBA RESIDENCE-NIGHT-

(Someone is standing outside the residence. He is wearing a long, black leatehr coat. His face can be seen up to his lips; he looks like Ashley. He is approached by a guard)

Guard: Who walks there at this hour? What is your business? Show your papers!

(The person turns around; it's Merlose. She shows her VKP papers)

Mer: Callo Merlose, VKP Inquisitor.

Guard: M-My lady! I beg your forgiveness!

Mer: It is no matter, you are merely doing your duty.

Guard: T-Thank you, m'lady!

(The guard hastily walks off; Merlose walks in the other direction. The camera follows her for a bit, and then the person's true appearance can be seen: it's Ashley)

<-And so began the story of the wanderer,
the vagrant.>

<THE PHANTOM PAIN>

<VAGRANT STORY>

<ENDING CREDITS>

THE END!

5. Plot FAQ

In this section I will answer to frequently asked questions about the Vagrant Story plot. If you have any, you can send them at shinryu@libero.it. Please note that there actually are a lot of unsolved issues about Vagrant Story's plot, which leave lots of room for a sequel. I will try to answer questions about these issues with the most reliable theories among those found in the various VS discussion groups. !!!IMPORTANT!!! I will only answer questions about the PLOT. Yes, I have played through Vagrant Story for a few times and I know all the secrets, but if I wanted to do a FAQ/Walkthrough then I would have done that. If you need any info about gameplay, secrets etc. refer to Zy Nicholson's excellent FAQ which can be found on www.gamefaqs.com.

Q: Who's the boy in the picture in Bardorba's secondary residence?

A: It's Sydney. Not Joshua. Just like the boy Merlose and Ashley see ("He intends to die", "I wanted to help father" etc).

Q: What's Sydney's relation to the duke?

A: He's his son.

Q: Who's in the duke's room at the end, Ashley or Sydney? Why does the duke kill him? Who's the person outside the residence? What's with the ending?

A: Yup, the ending can be a bit tricky if you lost something. You see, Sydney's family (and therefore the duke's) were cursed with the Blood-Sin. That's why the duke wanted to destroy Leà Monde and its evil power; but to do so, they had to give the control of the Dark to somebody who wouldn't abuse it (Ashley). In the end, Ashley gains the Blood-Sin and the control of the Dark and thus becomes the vagrant. Sydney and the duke must die, so that their dynasty can be purified (that's why Sydney

was protecting Joshua). The person that is killed by the duke is Sydney, but he disguises himself as Ashley (in fact, the second intro sequence says that Ashley murdered the duke). Ashley is the one waiting outside the manor (he took Sydney there) and he disguises himself as Merlose.

Q: Who is A.J. Durai?

A: It's Alazlam J. Durai from Final Fantasy Tactics. If you didn't play this game, he was a historian, son of one of the game's characters, and he "told" the story of the game as it unfolded.

Q: Who exactly is Joshua?

A: He's the Duke's second son and Sydney's brother (although he probably doesn't know). Since Sydney and the Duke intended to die, thus destroying their family's Blood-Sin curse, Sydney kidnapped Joshua to protect him. In fact, Joshua was the only pure member of the Bardorba family, and therefore the only one who could continue the dynasty.

Q: What happened to Merlose in the end?

A: Nothing special. She returned to the VKP. In one of the intro sequences, you see text from a report, that was probably written by Merlose (or someone else at VKP) after the end.

Q: What was that scene all about with Ashley and the family after Ashley defeats Guildenstern's first form? In the end, did Ashley really have a family or not?

A: This topic is a very debated one. Tia says "Don't be misled by others, believe your heart" but we actually don't know who was misleading Ashley, if the VKP or Sydney. From there, every player can take their guess. I personally think Ashley did have a family, but it's just my theory and there's no evidence whatsoever to support it, apart from Tia telling Ashley he loves him and Marco calling him "papa". But of course, these could just be his false memories.

Q: How did Guildenstern manage to "steal" the Blood-Sin from Sydney? It looked like he ripped out Sydney's back and put the skin on himself, since Sydney's back was all red? Why didn't Ashley receive it when Sydney chose him as the next possessor?

A: Yes, as grisly as it may seem, Sydney's back was ripped off by Guildenstern (that's probably why he changes clothes in the ending). Ashley didn't receive the Blood-Sin immediately since Sydney still had it; he received it after Guildenstern's death, as you can see in the ending.

Q: What was the purpose of the setup by Sydney pretending to find the Blood-Sin at the beginning?

A: This is another uncertain topic. Some say he planned to use the Graylands incident as a decoy for the Blades (see scene 4.4.5, when Sydney says that the Blades probably meant to catch them in the Graylands). Also, he wanted to take Joshua with him.

Q: Why did the Duke and Sydney consider the Blood-Sin a curse to them? How would it have benefited the next possessor of it?

A: The Duke was about to die and he was afraid of having to pay for his sins. To wash away his guilt, he decided he had to destroy Leà Monde and free his family of the Blood-Sin (that's why Sydney brought Joshua with him; he was the only pure member of the family and therefore, the only one who could survive) but this would have meant setting free the power of the Dark. To avoid this power falling into the wrong hands, he chose to give it to someone who wouldn't abuse of it (Ashley). Sydney was just helping his father to reach his goal all the time. It's weird, because

if you think of it, he's a lot like Sephiroth (FFVII) in this respect; you just discover it near the very end.

Q: After the end, does Ashley now remain in hiding and a fugitive from now on, even with his powers?

A: Probably, since he's called "Vagrant"...anyway, nobody knows much about that, you should wait for Vagrant Story 2 (on PS2? ooh, baby ;)

6.Alternate theories

In this section I'll post theories that offer another interpretation of some events in the VS plot. As you'll understand, lots of things are unclear and therefore can be interpreted in various different ways. I'll also post my comments and personal opinions; if you have any, feel free to send them in at shinryu@libero.it and I'll post them too.

Quick reference guide:

6.1 - On the Duke's murder and Sydney's survival

In the ending, we see Ashley walking into Duke Bardorba's bedroom. He then reveals himself as Sydney. The Duke apologises for not having been a good father, then Sydney hands him a knife and the Duke kills his son and himself. Later, we see Ashley standing outside the Manor. Knowing that Ashley now has the power to change his appearance, was it him or Sydney who killed the Duke?

6.2 - On Ashley's past and the murder of his family

The most controversial issue in the game: Ashley remembers having his family killed by jackals, but Sydney and Rosencrantz tell him that they're all lies burned into him by the VKP. In the end, he sees his "wife" and "son" telling him "Do not be misled by other's words. Believe your heart." Who was lying, the VKP or Sydney? Was Ashley a quiet, peace-loving husband and father or a ruthless murderer before becoming a Riskbreaker?

6.1 - On the Duke's murder and Sydney's survival
(theory by CronoRye-cronory1@aol.com)

CronoRye: I'm sure that it is Ashley in the end murdering the Duke. He only appears to be Sydney in the eyes of the Duke (notice how it changes). And then Ashley is escaping outside at the end when he is confronted by someone and disguises himself as Merlose. Obviously now with the Blood-Sin he can assume the forms/vision of anyone like Sydney could do. I mean, if Sydney DID make it out alive (which I infer that he died in that final scene), why would he incriminate Ashley who has helped him to the point of assumedly saving his life. He could assume ANY FORM essentially that he wanted. He could have gone in as a commoner/Merlose/Joshua/ANYONE... he wouldn't damn Ashley to be a wanted criminal. I'm almost positive I've seen a design team interview that essentially explains that w/o spoiling the game, I'll try to find it. Ashley is a wanted criminal because he did so of his own will. He knew he could walk into the mansion as the Knight Ashley without anyone stopping him, and also knew what he needed to do for Sydney to complete this whole ending of the "evil blood line" (obviously Ashley having made a noble bond by the end with Sydney to want to complete the task... which is apparent in the scenes prior to and after the final battle).

Obviously what the Duke "needed" to see/needed to be with was Sydney for their double deaths. To be a little clearer, Ashley knew that he needed to appear as Sydney for the Duke to peacefully accept their choices of fate... for them both to die.

The most infallible part of this explanation is that Ashley is currently a WANTED CRIMINAL for murdering the Duke. That means no one saw the "Sydney apparition" get killed by the Duke... which was just Ashley letting himself get stabbed as Sydney (remember the power of the Blood-Sin... Sydney gets shot with the cross bow and survives like nothing... so obviously Ashley with that power can be stabbed and survive fine). If SYDNEY were the one who was actually killed in the room... why would Ashley be wanted? Sydney would be dead. There would be two dead bodies... and common sense would say that the criminal cult leader Sydney who is the mortal enemy of the Duke would be assumed the killer of the Duke. There's no mention of Sydney's dead body, or of Sydney altogether in the intro that talks about Ashley being a wanted criminal.

Shinryu: -Sydney's body wasn't found because he had been touched by the Dark. As you surely know, everyone who touches the power of the Dark doesn't die normally; his body disappears. You can see Sydney's body disappearing in the ending, which proves (in my opinion) that he's definitely not Ashley.

-The Duke wanted to die. There was no need of Ashley murdering him. He wanted to free his descendants (starting from Joshua) of the curse, and the only way was to destroy Leà Monde and kill himself and Sydney, the last two holders of the Dark. And, to avoid the Dark falling into the wrong hands, Sydney gave its power to Ashley who wouldn't abuse it.

-The reason why Sydney laid the blame on Ashley is probably because that was the only way he had to approach the Duke without laying the blame on anyone else (like Joshua or Merlose)

CronoRye: VERY True about the touched by the Dark... but... I thought that applied to only when you were in the confines of Lea Monde? (Feel free to correct me). Also, are you sure you are seeing Sydney disappear? I never saw that (either I don't remember or you imagined it LOL... most likely I don't remember since its been a long while), and regardless I have two explanations for that. Either A. It could be the Duke disappearing and it seems like its Sydney or B. Just part of the effect from Ashley. The Blood Sin's power is shown to have an almost unlimited range of visual deception. Sorry I took so long to respond but I was returning to college. Thanks for keeping an open mind though with the new section.

One thing you have to agree with is this... its obvious that the power to actually visually disguise yourself is harnessed with the holder of the Blood Sin (i.e. why Ashley in the end can turn into Merlose, but never had that power prior, and why Sydney is responsible for the all the visual trickery in the game). The only person who can utilize that power anymore IS Ashley. The holder of the Blood Sin. I apologize for not putting this in the original email I sent you, as it is the most crucial evidence and could essentially nullify the existing theory.

Also, in order for it to really be Sydney... you technically have to be saying that Sydney recovered from mortal wounds to be able to walk in like he was fine (wasn't he carried out in the end by Ashley? I'm not sure) ... and still be able to use the power of the Blood Sin even though he doesn't have it.

As for the Duke wanting to die... I'm not saying that Ashley murdered him. I thought that it is inferred that the Duke kills himself (Keep in mind I haven't played the game in about 6 months). I don't remember the order of who died, or who killed whom... if the Duke killed himself, it

makes sense he wanted to do so in front of his son so his son could do the same and end the curse (this follows the notion of the cliché of the worst death is to have your son die before you). With Sydney dead (from my explanation), Ashley portrayed Sydney to give the Duke closure. Remember who Ashley is... VKP are loyal to the Duke. He would try to make it as easy as possible on the Duke. If the "other person" (be it Ashley as Sydney or Sydney himself) actually did inflict the mortal wound on the Duke, then the explanation still holds up.

Also, it would make sense that the only person who could relieve their family of this curse is the one who is "now" cursed in a sense. Also, what's the explanation for Ashley being RIGHT OUTSIDE the Duke's estate (or wherever the duke is at the end of the game) if Sydney was really there? That's kinda ridiculous for him to be there for no reason. Sydney would have at least told him to stay away since they'd be looking for him if he was going to use his image (which I've already stated reasons as to why he wouldn't use his image in the first place). It's clear that it can be seen as him leaving the scene, or even watching what he has done transpire. How would Ashley know to disguise himself unless he was the one who was there at the death? Surely the death of the Duke has just transpired when you see the scene with Ashley outside, I'm sure you can agree.

Shinryu:

a) Sydney does disappear. I wasn't very sure about this myself, so I checked it out. You actually see that very clearly after the Duke has stabbed him.

b) Concerning the fact that those who have been touched by the Dark dissolve only within Leà Monde... In the middle part of the ending you see Merlose, Joshua and Hardin just outside the City (in the same place where Ashley meets Merlose right after the introductory sequence at Bardorba Manor) and Hardin dissolves there. In the intro, Ashley and Merlose are in the same place discussing about the various ways to enter the City; which means that that place is quite clearly not inside it.

c) I'm not sure about the fact that only the holder of the Blood-Sin could use visual deception. Maybe to carry the Blood-Sin means to have greater powers (like immortality), but to lose it does not necessarily mean to lose all the power. True, Sydney lost control of the Dark to Ashley; but consider the fact that Romeo uses the power of the Dark too (when he reads Hardin's mind) and so do Ashley, Hardin, Merlose and Samantha (when they see through other people's eyes or read their minds). Sydney still remained a very powerful sorcerer, even without the Blood-Sin.

d) The final part of the ending, the one we're concerned with, takes place a week after the destruction of Leà Monde. This means Sydney had lots of time to recover from his wounds. Also, look at the clothes he's wearing: a long white shirt that covers the wounds on his back. Ashley wouldn't have worried with that, in my opinion. Moreover, Ashley's clothes as he stood outside the manor were different from the ones that Ashley/Sydney in Ashley's form wore in front of the Duke.

e) More in general, the cinematic structure of the event seems to suggest (at least in my opinion) that the one who entered the manor was actually Sydney. The Duke saying "...Well met, Sydney." and the way Ashley was waiting outside, as if he was waiting for something to happen, make me think this. Of course, this is just a feeling I got by watching the ending.

That's what I think. I want to make clear that these are just my two cents; I don't think there is any evidence to prove that my theory is more reliable than yours, or vice-versa.

Thanks to Paul Hong (Lhawkwingz@aol.com) and Anthony Turco (Novaseaker@hotmail.com) for their contributions on this topic. These won't be posted, however, since in my opinion the topic has been already discussed enough.

6.2 - On Ashley's past and the murder of his family

(contribution by Kristian M. - kerm@edsamail.com.ph)

Note: the arguments are listed in the following way: PRO stands for an argument which apparently confirms that Ashley was a peasant whose family was slayed by killers; ANTI stands for an argument which would suggest that on the contrary, he was the one who killed the family.

PRO: The fact that Ashley has the rood necklace which was "once owned by Tia" proves that his family did exist. If Ashley happens to have no family at all, and provided that the item descriptions are accurate and true, then how can he have gotten the necklace without getting it himself from his dead wife Tia? It is every unlikely that VKP took the rood necklace from the dead woman and gave it to Ashley; they could have given Ashley any accessory since they would still twist his mind eventually.

Shinryu: There is no doubt as to whether Tia and Marco existed; the problem is, who killed them. It's true that Ashley has Tia's necklace, but it is also possible that (provided he was the one who killed the family) he took it fom Tia and kept it to remember his sin.

ANTI: Both Sydney and Rosencrantz tell the same story: that Ashley does not work in the Kingsguard, but rather was in the VKP at that time and mistakenly killed an innocent family. They both say that the VKP "has burned sweet lies into his soul".

Shinryu: This is the strongest argument against Ashley having a family: Sydney and Rosencrantz had no apparent reason to lie to him.

PRO: In the scene of Sydney's past of Ashley, there exists two rood necklace -- one worn by Tia, and the other by the "killer" Ashley!! How can this be? Through the description of the rood necklace, it implies that there must only be one rood necklace existing in a given time, and that is the necklace that Tia owns or owned. Therefore, Sydney must have forgotten about this little, yet very essential, detail as he push his past version on Ashley, proving that he invents this scene.

Shinryu: Actually, I think the developers just overlooked this, since in the game Ashley always has the Rood necklace even if he's not actually wearing it. His texture is designed to be like that. They probably didn't have the time of designing a new texture for that short scene.

ANTI: That is just an error for the programmers. And besides, tt would take considerable disc space if they would create another Ashley model just for removing that necklace.

Shinryu: Exactly.

PRO: Ashley meets his wife and child near the ending. Tia's saying "Do not be misled by other's words" confirm that his own memories are true and that of Sydney's are false. Sydney himself even said that Tia and Marco were Ashley's wife and child when he said "You may be able to save them -- your wife and child!!".

Shinryu: Tia might still not be Ashley's wife, if we consider that she doesn't say who was trying to mislead Ashley (the VKP or Sydney); she might just be forgiving him for what he did (if he killed her) but this

theory proves weak since Tia actually says "I love you, Ashley" and Marco calls Ashley "Papa". Apart from all of this, when Sydney says "your wife and child" we don't know if he is calling them that just because Ashley still thinks they are.

ANTI: Sydney could be the one who makes Ashley see his "wife and child" near the ending. He planned it even before he went in the Atrium, when he said in the Temple of Kiltia, "Should you meet them (Tia and Marco) - - repent, Ashley, repent!!". Of course, Sydney wishes to help Ashley in every way possible, thus this boosted his morale, making him able to defeat Guildenstern.

Shinryu: This is an interesting theory...It doesn't necessarily mean that Ashley was the killer, maybe Sydney was testing Ashley's spirit by telling him those lies before eventually showing him the truth.

PRO: It could not be Sydney who created that final family reunion. Just before that incident, Ashley (after defeating superhuman Guildenstern) found himself in a bright vast space where a voice is talking to him. And after some talking, Ashley said, "Get thee gone, DARKNESS!!" (my emphasis). This tells us that the voice was the Dark, and therefore after that words of Ashley's, he meets his family. Therefore Sydney could not be the one who makes this last hill scene since Sydney uses the Dark as his power. Ashley's statement wouldn't have had any meaning if it were the Dark who created the scene with his family.

Shinryu: Right, after he says that we assume that the Dark has no power over him so he can see the truth. But it still could be Sydney that shows him that (and that later calls him saying "Come home")

PRO: It is very possible that Sydney only used his power to make Ashley believes that he didn't have a family. As Hardin says, "Through the Dark, he sees people's past; he can even push his will on others...". In fact, the first time he uses this power on Ashley, it shows Tia and Marco as Ashley's wife and son. He even said, "You failed to protect your wife, your child. You failed in your duty as a knight, as a husband, as a father." And what he did later was just to push his "truth" on Ashley, as if they were the true things that happened. Some view this as a form of test of Sydney on Ashley on whether Ashley will still cling on his own beliefs after he uses his great power of deception, since at this time Losstarot has shown his great interest in using Ashley as his successor.

Shinryu: Exactly, that's what I said above...before even reading this theory. See, in the end we all agree...

ANTI: Ashley regains Break Arts "from his suppressed memory". "Are his new-found abilities not proof enough?" This supports the claim of Sydney and Rosencrantz that VKP seals his true memory and "twisted his very soul" after.

Shinryu: Yes, mind-warping is a risky business, so the VKP burned Ashley's abilities too. (that is, if Sydney is not lying)

PRO: Who says members of the Kingsguards do not know Break Arts?

Shinryu: Or, Ashley could simply be learning those abilities from experience, and thanks to the Dark power in Leà Monde.

ANTI: Ashley seems to have only a single memory of his "family" -- and that is the picnic-on-the-hill incident. Other than that -- nothing.

Shinryu: Never thought about that...actually, it seems like a minor detail. The game probably wasn't long enough to put in lots of flashbacks (Final Fantasy style...)

PRO: The game only shows a single incident on Ashley's past, but that does not mean that that is the only memory that Ashley possess regarding his past. The storytellers could have only focused on a single past to increase the story's mysteries. If that is his only memory, then why doesn't Ashley question himself or his memory, like "Why can't I remember anything other than that picnic thing"? That is because he has other memories other than that.

Shinryu: In any case, any other memory could have been "injected" into him by the VKP.

Ok, this is my final theory:

1.the developers really wanted gamers to discuss about this (no doubt)

2.Ashley nevertheless had a family (Tia says "I love you" and Marco calls him "papa")

3.Sydney wants to test him since the person that has to hold the Dark needs to be of strong principles, so that he won't abuse of it.

Rosencrantz followed Sydney's orders, because he hoped to obtain control of the Dark too. Sydney says "He is the chosen one, all the signs are right" or something to that effect in the temple of Kiltia, and after that he doesn't trick Ashley anymore. He even apologises to him. Ashley sees the truth (his family) in the same moment when he rejects Darkness ("Get thee gone, Darkness!" - imho one of the best lines in the game).

As Sydney said, "those who crave the Dark cannot control the Dark".

Ashley's good principles made him free from BEING controlled by the Dark, and able to control the Dark. Also, clearing his mind of all doubts, he finally saw the truth.

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One final word: INTER MILAN WILL SOON RULE THE WORLD!!! or at least
that's what I've been hoping for the past 17 years ;)

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