

Case File: The Auction

A DRESDEN FILES RPG ENCOUNTER BY TREVILIX

The White Council has asked the players to attend an upcoming auction. One of the items in the auction is a grimoire of a long dead necromancer, disguised as a diary. The White Council wants the players to obtain it so it does not fall into the wrong hands. And when the White Council "asks" you to do something, you do it. Of course, they didn't offer to fund this venture so the PCs are on their own monetarily.

Unfortunately, the PCs aren't the only ones who are after the grimoire. A number of others are showing up to the auction with the same purpose in mind.

Locations

Bonahan Auction House

Aspect: How is this place still standing?

Bonahan auction house is an old and respected city institution, but is showing its age. Auctions have been held here since 1874, but the economy has been rough lately and that means fewer people can buy the items sold here. Because of this, the building has fallen into disrepair. The current manager and auctioneer, Christian Bonahan, is hoping to turn this around soon.

FACE: Christian Bonahan

Motivation: I'm going to make every penny count.

Alley

Aspect: Can't See My Hand in Front of My Face

Between the auction house and the office building next door is a dark alleyway. The PCs will have to pass by it, as the only parking lot/subway entrance is on the other side of the office building. This is where the PCs may be ambushed on the way out.

Act One - The Prelude to the Auction

The auction takes place on the second floor of the auction house and starts precisely at 7PM. The GM should suggest the PCs arrive early to see the items and who they will be bidding against. When they arrive, a number of people will be milling about doing the same. Allow the PCs to interact with anyone and scope them out, perhaps even insulting someone as they do.

Act Two - The Bidding War

The auction is relatively unexciting with items going for their expected value. The diary is expected to go for between \$300-\$500 and bidding starts at \$100. When it comes up, the bidding starts off slow, but quickly increases in fervor as the main NPCs (and the PCs) start a bidding war.

GMs should play the auction as a bidding frenzy, with the NPCs shouting out bids, scowling (or growling) at other bidders. Each NPC has a maximum amount to bid to, and if they lose they will be very unhappy. The winner of the auction will be whoever can bid the most money – be it the PCs or an NPC.

Act Three - The Aftermath

What happens after the auction is over depends on what happened during the auction. If the PCs won, they will get

ambushed by one or more of the NPCs from the alleyway as they leave.

If they lost, it is up to the players on what they do. They could follow the winner to steal the grimoire, or even attack them from the alleyway. This can also be used a way to introduce a new scenario or plot hook – who is the winner and what are they planning on doing with the book?

The NPCs

Note: The maximum bids below are suggestions. Modify them to make the bidding war more exciting.

Jonathan Blackwell, Necromantic Sorcerer

Aspect: Powerful in My Own Mind.

Jonathan is a minor necromancer who has become fairly powerful on his own. He is cold, cruel and condescending with anyone he considers beneath him (which is everyone). In order to ensure his success tonight, he has brought a ghoul bodyguard (OW58) with him who is in human guise. Jonathan is the PCs biggest opponent and is confident he will get the book one way or another. Maximum bid: \$1800

Jenna Dixon, Minor Talent Con Artist

Aspect: You Can Trust Me!

Jenna has always been able to tell what people are thinking (Reading People - YS129) and alter their emotions to her advantage (Incite Emotion – YS172). She unknowingly uses this ability in her cons and is highly successful. She is at the auction to scope out potential marks and use the book as an opening. Maximum bid: \$850

Naasir Achebe, Were-Panther (see Classic Werewolf OW92)

Aspect: Anything For My Family.

Naasir is an immigrant from Kenya who is working to save enough money to bring his family to the US. Unfortunately, his wife and son in Africa have been kidnapped by an evil shaman. Naasir has come to the auction in the hopes of winning the grimoire to use as payment to free his family. If shown he can trust them, Naasir may reveal his problem and become an ally to the PCs. Maximum bid: \$400.

Harlan Gilles, Businessman

Aspect: I Don't Lose Often.

Harlan is a shrewd and well-connected businessman who has recently taken an interest in the supernatural. He is in the process of collecting occult books and heard about the grimoire at the auction tonight. Maximum bid: \$1500

Trevor Booth (Aspect: My Wife Deserves The Best) and

Candy Booth (Aspect: I Deserve The Best)

Trevor, an aging retiree, and his trophy wife, Candy (40 years his junior), are at the auction tonight to get Candy anything she wants. Candy is obnoxious and loudly proclaims to Trevor whenever she sees anything she wants ("OOOOH, I want that baby!"). She is not above to flirting with anyone else in front of Trevor, including the PCs. Candy will take an interest in the grimoire briefly. Maximum bid: \$750.

A number of other people are at the auction (around 20 in total), to provide background and flavor for the setting.