

Mystery of the Black Elbow

Cast of Characters:

Johan der Atentader was formerly a priest in Germany but quit when he read the Ten Commandments. He now works as an assassin for the Black Elbow, combining his love of fighting with his love of money with his love of spending money on alcohol. Although by no means a master of subtlety, Johan has never lost a swordfight and worked hard to achieve his status among The Seven.

Isabel Flyheart is widely known as the greatest archer in all of England. Rumor has it that she once shot a wing off a dragonfly from a mile away without firing a single arrow. This probably never happened, but she is a very good archer nonetheless. Because of her skill, the Black Elbow eagerly offered Isabel a place among The Seven.

Richard Gull was admitted into the Black Elbow and promoted to be a member of The Seven because of a generous series of monetary contributions to the guild. Thanks to Richard, all of the guild's pickpockets now have pockets of their own and are thus able to more fully understand their prey. Richard is not particularly intelligent, crafty, strong, or in possession of any skill in particular. Despite all of this, he somehow manages to be a surprisingly successful assassin. Many wonder what his secret is.

Edith Piemouse is a nun who left her convent because the wages were "simply unacceptable". She does, however, still spend much of her time at the local Church of the Faithful--a very useful place for the Black Elbow (and other ruffians) for discussing business deals. Edith also profits a great deal by charging fees for advice, secrecy, and the secrets of others. In the past, Edith's services have helped the Black Elbow drive out its competition. She considers herself a "warrior of God".

John Killborne is a master of making poisons, which he sells in his shop. He is also the only member of The Seven to be caught by city authorities. He was arrested for attempted murder of a noble name Cornelius Noinall. John was eager to point fingers in order to save himself from punishment, but fortunately never mentioned the Black Elbow.

Rachael Flair has been an assassain years before she joined the Black Elbow. She is beautiful, clever, and a master of deception--and uses all of this to her advantage. Thus, Rachael is able to take even the most heavily guarded targets by surprise and had no trouble getting promoted to her current status among The Seven.

Oliver Payne joined the Black Elbow as a boy after watching his parents executed by city authorities and now considers the guild his home. He is

fircely loyal to the guild and would gladly give his life to protect it. Because of his zeal--and his legendary skill with a sword--Oliver is feared by all who oppose the Black Elbow.

Backstory:

England has many villains prowling its lands, but the Black Elbow is the most feared organization of ruffians in the country. The Black Elbow is a guild of England's finest assassins whose sole goal is to sow death and destruction—and for very reasonable rates. The guild has only one rule: never kill a fellow Black Elbow assassin. This rule is so strictly adhered that even those who break it are not killed, but are instead imprisoned forever in the pit of boredom and forced to wear the itchy sweater of penance. Susanna Sworein is in charge of finding out and punishing those who break this rule. The guild is led by “The Seven”, a council of seven accomplished assassins, John Killborne, Edith Piemouse, Johan Der Atentader, Isabel Flyheart, Richard Gull, Rachael Flair, and Oliver Payne.

But lately the guild has run into hard times because a rival guild from Ireland known as Stab O'soft has moved into England and is competing for the already scarce supply of people who want other people killed. To make matters worse, there is rumor that there may be subversion within Black Elbow . . .

Places of Interest:

The Newton's Fig Tavern. It is a neutral territory where gossip and underhand deals are freely exchanged.

Flanagan's Port. These are the town docks where merchant ships come and go. It is secretly controlled by Stab O'soft, anyone who they are hostile to will not last long there.

The Church of the Faithful. The English church that Edith Piemouse embezzles from. Underhand deals are often made there when no one else is around.

John Killborne's poison shop. Because he sells more than just poison, the store gets a lot of business.

Seating Arrangement of Actors:

Isabel Flyheart / Johan / Rachael Flair / John Killborne / Edith Piemouse / Richard Gull

*Originally, Edith Piemouse was set to sit next to Rachael Flair, but John quietly switches the nametags while the audience is milling about. He is obsessively infatuated with her, and also the only male member of “The Seven” who has never at any point even received passing affections from her—which annoys him considerably.

*Edith arrives a few minutes late. She was delayed by Chronic Kneeling Syndrome from spending all day in church.

Round 1:

I was at church last Sunday to confess the sins I committed on the way there when I ran into Edith Piemouse. She was talking quietly to a couple of rather shady-looking men. I couldn't hear what any of them were saying, but the men seemed to have Irish accents.

I hear that Johan used to be a priest in Germany but quit to become an assassin. It seems to me that he just wants to follow wherever the money is.

Most of the seven are in frequent contact with each other, but Edith is almost always off on business at the church. The only one among our guild who I ever see with her is Rachael.

I have been to John Killborne's poison shop. I never realized that there are so many ways to kill someone. Every death imaginable can be made by one of his poisons: quick and painless, slow and tortured, death by suffocation, over-urination, even internal toading! And he doesn't just sell poisons either. There are love potions, truth serums, tranquilizers, you name it, and it is there. The only thing I did not see anywhere was anything medicinal.

I heard that Isabel was an amazing archer so I asked her out to the range yesterday for some shooting. I was surprised when she mistook me for Oliver Payne. It makes no sense; I look nothing like him. Then, when I told her that she was mistaken, she yelled at me and stormed off.

The Black Elbow must have really low standards to have appointed Richard Gull as one of The Seven. He is the most incompetent person I have ever met. Why, I bet he is too stupid to even understand that was an insult!

A couple weeks ago, I noticed that something seemed to be going on between Rachael and Oliver. I said nothing about it because it was none of my business. Yesterday, however, I saw her yelling furiously at him.

I've often observed that Johan is very much like a bear because he will never touch anyone who appears to be dead—and because he enjoys raw fish.

Those Stab O'soft ruffians are getting to be a real problem for us. They keep encroaching farther on our territory and taking away from our customer base. When I was walking by Flanagan's Port yesterday, one of them even tried to bully me into joining them. Of course, I just punched him in the face and told him to go back to Ireland. He is just lucky that Stab O'soft is the first assassin's guild with a dental plan.

I believe that our rival guild, Stab O'soft, is behind Oliver's death somehow. You see, they were getting to be such a problem for us that Oliver and I decided to take matters in our own hands and kill their leader, William of the Gates—he would make the kill and I would be a lookout. I do not know what went wrong, but the attempt failed and we barely managed to escape with our lives. One would only expect them to try to get revenge...

I never understood how Edith Piemouse could be appointed to one of The Seven, she knows nothing of loyalty! I used to be best friends with her as a child, but she did nothing but take money from me and abandon me for richer friends!

John is a spineless coward. I remember one time I was caught pick-pocketing in the marketplace, so I ran and hid in what I thought was the nearest safe place, John Killborne's potion shop. But when the guards came and started asking around, that man did not hesitate a moment to rat me out. I was in prison for a week and would have been hung if Oliver had not helped me escape.

I swear that Richard Gull has a guardian angel. I saw him on a kill once. He tried to sneak up on his target...but sneezed. Then he tried to fight...but was disarmed. Then he tried to run away...and tripped. Then, as the merchant Richard was trying to kill was about to kill him, a pot fell out of a nearby window and landed on the merchant's head. The strangest thing is that this sort of thing happens to Richard all the time. If he were not so lucky, he would have died dozens of times by now.

I saw Isabel at the archery range a few weeks ago. I had heard a lot about her legendary marksmanship, but after seeing her, I was not impressed. She must be starting to lose her eye, because those arrows were flying all over the place.

Johan and Oliver never seemed to get along well. I cannot remember once seeing them around each other without breaking into some sort of argument.

I do not trust Rachael. She is a manipulative seductress who will use anyone to get what she wants.

Round 2:

I examined Oliver Payne's corpse to determine more precisely the cause of death. He had multiple knife wounds, several cuts that probably came from a sword, and there was also an arrow sticking out of him. Furthermore, the skin around all of these injuries was covered in large red lumps, either from poison or an allergic reaction, I couldn't tell. It is unclear which of these wounds was fatal.

I heard Johan talking in his sleep once and what he said seemed to hint that he might have been planning to kill Oliver. If I am remembering correctly, his exact words were: I am going to kill you Oliver. You are going to die by my hands as I stab you repeatedly. Make no mistake, Oliver Payne: I, Johan der Atentader, am going to be your murderer.

I have seen Oliver and Isabel going to the church of the faithful together with suspicious frequency and hiding in dark corners. I imagine Rachael might be rather jealous about this...

I was at the Newton's Fig yesterday and saw Rachael and Johan whispering. At one point, Johan started yelling until Rachael calmed him down. If I had known Oliver was about to be killed, I would have paid more attention to what they said, but I could have sworn that I heard one of them mention something about flounder.

I remember once finding the cross that Edith wears as a necklace. I was surprised to find that the item has a sharp knife hidden in it.

I went to John's poison shop a week ago to buy a potion that makes wine taste like asparagus—I am a recovering alcoholic and needed some help—but when I got there, I saw two burly Irishmen talking to John. They seemed to be bullying him, but left as soon as I got there. When I asked John what was going on, he was too flustered to give me a straight answer.

Rachael is very persistent. If she fails at something, she is almost certain to try again.

Richard Gull has the dexterity of a drunken walrus. That man cannot fight to save his life. But every time he gets into a tight situation, something comes along and saves him. What is more, I have noticed a few people who always seem to be around when fortune smiles on him. I tried following one of them, but got harassed by a Stab O'soft ruffian when I followed them into Flanagan's Port.

Three days ago, I saw John Killborne stab a man who had just died of the plague in the heart. I was shocked. When I asked him why he did this, he replied that he needed blood fresh from a human heart to complete a special weakening draught that he was making and he would rather get it from someone who had already died.

Edith Piemouse seems to be bringing home the bacon these days. Every time I see her at the Church of the Faithful, someone is giving her money. This is strange considering how slow business has been for the rest of us.

Everyone knows Richard bought his way into the guild, but where did he get his money? He has no skill at anything in particular and his parents were a couple of mere Irish peasants.

Oliver Payne is deathly allergic to fish. Just the smell of a flounder is enough to make him extremely nauseous.

Johan and Oliver got in a fight at Newton's Fig yesterday. Actually, I would hardly even call it a fight because Oliver was unarmed and taken by surprise. Johan stabbed him twice, but was too drunk to deal a lethal blow and Oliver managed to escape—with Johan in stumbling pursuit.

Oliver Payne is an excellent fighter and a tough biscuit. His only flaw is being a little too trusting for his own good.

When I was at the church of the faithful yesterday, Isabel walked in, put down her arrows, and loudly told Edith that Oliver might be in danger. While Isabel was talking, however, I noticed that Edith was removing a feather from each of her arrows. I am surprised that Isabel did not notice . . . could she have deliberately been looking the other way?

Round 3:

I was in John's poison shop yesterday searching for . . . that's not important. Anyways, Oliver Payne stumbled in, his clothes were covered in blood and his face was pale from fear. John immediately grabbed a dark blue potion and gave it to Oliver, telling him to drink it immediately. When Oliver complied, the bleeding slowed and he became much more relaxed. John then told him to go to the Dark Bone Circle where he would be safe to fully rest and recover.

While I was planning some sins at the church of the faithful four days ago—it is a great place to find inspiration—I saw Edith talking with an Irish fellow. Then, Oliver burst in, threw the man out and started yelling at Edith. I left the church at that point because they were breaking my concentration, but if I had known there would be murder soon after, I would certainly have stayed.

I was out fishing with Johan two days ago. He asked me how loyal I was to the guild, but when he saw how shocked I was, he immediately changed the subject. Even stranger, he started laughing hysterically when he caught a small flounder.

About two hours ago, while I was on my way to the tavern for a quick drink, I saw Johan rushing towards the guild headquarters. The only thing I remember about him that was unusual was a fishy smell.

A little over an hour ago, I saw John leave the Dark Bone Circle. I remained hidden, so he thought there was no one around when he tried to wipe the blood off his knife.

because Richard can't read, it is part of my job to read his letters to him. A few weeks ago, I got a letter that began, "I know your true loyalties, Richard. If you wish to keep them secret, you must . . ." at that point, he snatched the letter out of my hand and ran off.

I was at Flanagan's port a few hours ago to spy on Stab O'soft when I saw Richard Gull run by. His face was pale from either fear or exhaustion. When he got to the end of the docks, he pulled out his sword and tried to throw it into the ocean. Then, yelping in pain, he pulled the sword out of his foot and dropped it carefully into the water and collapsed onto the ground. It surprised me that none of those Stab O'soft ruffians killed him while he was so defenseless.

A few hours ago, I saw Oliver enter the Dark Bone Circle. He looked rather weak. A few minutes later, Rachael entered. When she left, I noticed that there was some blood on her clothes and she smelled like a dead fish.

I searched the Dark Bone Circle for clues, but all I found was a bucket of fish, which was probably caught a couple of days ago.

I have never been in the Dark Bone Circle, but I hear that it is filled with places to hide. Whoever killed Oliver could have been waiting for him.

Johan has a strange sense of honor. He has no problem kicking opponents when they are down, but he always keeps his word.

I saw Isabel at Flanagan's port yesterday dipping her arrows in oil of Flounder. When I asked her why, she told me that it was for good luck. But I have trouble believing this because everyone knows that carp is the fish of fortune.

Events that happened relating to the murder:

- Edith joins Stab O'soft, but keeps this a secret.
 - She is hired to kill Oliver Payne through any means necessary. In return, she will be made an honorary member of their guild and very rich.
- John is pressured into joining Stab O'soft by a group of hired thugs.
 - He must prove his loyalty by killing one of The Seven.
 - His reward: riches and not getting killed.
- Edith finds out that Richard is a Stab O'soft spy and blackmails him anonymously.
 - She intends to use him to kill Oliver
 - Because Richard is known to be a poor swordsman, the plan is that he will ambush Oliver in the Dark Bone Circle, fight for a while, and Edith will stab Oliver in the back.
 - Richard has no intention to kill Oliver.
- Edith tells Rachael about Isabel and Oliver.
 - They see each other in secret at the Church (this is also how Edith knows).
 - Oliver is telling Isabel about the possible threats to his life and she promises to help him if he is attacked.

- Rachael finds them—but they don't see her—and is furious. She storms off to drown her anger at the Newton's Fig tavern.
- Rachael runs into Johan at the tavern—he frequents there regularly—and tells him her problems. Johan sympathizes with her greatly.
 - Rachael leaves; Johan stays for another hour to continue drinking.
 - Rachael runs into Oliver, yells at him, storms off
- Isabel goes back to the Dark Bone Circle to get her bow and arrows.
- Oliver enters the tavern for a drink, and is attacked by a drunken Johan.
 - Oliver is unarmed. He is wounded in the fight, but manages to escape without being killed.
 - Johan tries to chase him, but is too drunk to keep up.
 - He loudly swears that he will finish Oliver off.
- John gives Oliver a potion after the fight
 - John does not make anything medicinal...
 - It was really a weakening draught. John intended to kill Oliver later by stabbing him because he is the only poisoner in the group and that would be too obvious.
- Oliver retires to the Dark Bone Circle to rest and recover.
 - Isabel hides to watch over Oliver and make sure nothing happens to him.
 - She falls asleep.
- Rachael apologizes to Oliver for saying things that infuriated Johan.
 - She bandages him, but gets some blood on her in the process. The bandages have been soaked in fish oil (she is not trying to kill him, they are just old bandages), but Oliver cannot smell it.
- Richard Gull attacks Oliver with intent to kill. The fight is a long one.
 - Isabel wakes up to find them fighting and tries to save Oliver.
 - She accidentally shoots Oliver, he falls unconscious.
 - *Because she thinks that she killed Oliver, Isabel does not say anything about it until forced into confession.
 - *Given the circumstances, Isabel is pardoned for her mistake, and the trial continues to find out whom the real subversive is.
- Soon after Richard and Isabel leave, John enters to stab Oliver
 - Seeing Oliver lying on the ground, John thinks that he is asleep (the weakening draught was a little too powerful), so he stabs him. Oliver does not die from this.
 - Outside observer sees him leave with blood on his knife.
 - John believes that he killed Oliver.
- Oliver wakes up in a great deal of pain. Thinking that he is dying, Oliver writes down all that has happened to him. By the end of the letter, he realizes that he will pull through.
- Nathan the janitor enters. Oliver tells him to get help.
- As Nathan is about to exit, Johan enters and tells Nathan that everything is taken care of.
 - Nathan hears a scream and this reminds him that he left his magic bucket in the circle so he goes back to get it.
 - He sees Johan put a knife in Oliver and make a bunch of red water come out.
 - Nathan becomes scared and leaves before Johan sees him.
 - Nathan forgets all of this until the end of the performance.
- An hour later, the banquet begins.

-Nathan returns to the circle, sees Oliver's corpse and asks Susana about it. The trial begins.

-Edith Piemouse arrives a few moments late.

Nathan's announcements

Beginning of Trial:

Nathan: Susanna! Susanna!

Susanna: What is it, Nathan?

Nathan: I was just in the Dark Bone Circle cleaning because that is my job and I saw Oliver Payne lying on the ground very very still and he wasn't breathing and his skin was cold and filled with holes and tears and there was lots of red water all over the place.

Susanna: Guards, don't let anyone leave! (*Runs off, comes back a moment later*) Oliver has been murdered. And because he died inside the Dark Bone Circle, it must have been one of them (points towards the actors) because they are the only ones who have access to the room of the murder. Well, besides Nathan . . . but he is an unarmed fool and couldn't kill an egg if he tried.

[Susanna explains the rules of the event]

Susanna: Nathan, sit down!

Round 2:

Nathan: Stop everything, I have a clue! This one time, I saw . . . I am sorry, I cannot remember your name . . .

Edith: Edith Piemouse.

Nathan: No, not you, you!

Richard: Me?

Nathan: Yes.

Richard: I am Richard Gull.

Nathan: Oh, right. As I was saying earlier—Edith? I have been calling you Esmerelda!

Edith: That is why I have to keep correcting you.

Nathan: Exactly! As I was saying earlier, I saw Richard once and he was not wearing any shoes and I think that might be significant . . . somehow.

Round 3:

Nathan: Stop everything, I have a clue! Um, I was . . . what was I . . . well, that does not matter. Anyways, Isabel told me that . . . something. I am not sure how long ago, but it was important! Well, what do you have to say for yourself?

Susanna: Sit down, Nathan.

Nathan: Hey! Do not you interfeerst me, I am trying to ask a question! You told me something, did you not?

Isabel: If you say so.

Nathan: Thank you. Now was that so hard? (*starts to sit down*) Wait! I take that back, I meant to ask my question to Johan . . . but I forgot what that question was and I don't want to interrupt the proceedings so I'll just be quiet.

Final Clue:

Nathan: Stop everything, I have a clue! I remember now. A few hours ago I went into the dark bone circle to sweep the walls and I saw Oliver leaning on a wall and he was suffering and I asked him wherefore he was suffering and he told me to get help and while I was about to leave Johan entered and told me he would take care of Oliver but he must have done a lousy job because when I walked back in a moment later to get my lucky bucket he was poking holes in Oliver who was screaming in suffering and there was lots of red water coming out of him, much more than there was before, and then I got scared and left before he saw me and then I put the bucket on my head and forgot everything and I was happy.