

Interim Murder Mystery

The Characters:

Baroness Bristlebane of Gorionola
Lord Fizzlethorp of Templodius
Lady Gleran of Gorionola
Francisco of Templodius
Edwin of Gorionola
Lisa of Templodius
Huxenflam of Gorionola
Ariana of Templodius

Murdered: Cornelius of Gorionola

Also deceased (natural causes): Lord Gary of Templodius

Round 3 Characters: Heraldo, the beggar, father Hurbury, John Killborne

Backstory:

The house of Gorionola (*Baroness Bristlebane, Lady Gleran, Edwin, and Huxenflam*) has been in a feud with the house of Templodius (*Lord Fizzlethorp, Francisco, Lisa, Ariana*) for many years. Lord Garythroat has recently died after many years of illness, leaving Fizzlethorp in charge of the Templodius estate. Bristlebane and Fizzlethorp are meeting to finally negotiate peace between the families. On the night before the conference, however, Cornelius was killed

Personal Dossiers:

Baroness Bristle: I have seen this war from the beginning. It started between my father and Lord Garythroat when I was eleven years old, and I have always thought it to be a pointless conflict. Despite my previous attempts at peace, the fighting has continued for the last sixty years. The biggest problem was Lord Garythroat, he simply would not rest until my entire household was brought to ruin. Of course I defended myself, it would have been foolish not to. Then Garythroat died and was replaced by his son, Fizzlethorp. He seems a much more rational person and is an outspoken advocate of peace. Now there is at least a hope that the war will finally be resolved...

Lord Fizzlethorp: I strongly believe that no problem exists that cannot be solved by level-headed rationality. Emotion is the cause of suffering, and logic provides the only solution. This war has been very costly, both in gold and in human life. Since no one gains anything from the conflict, the only rational conclusion is that it should be ended. I am sure that many people may disagree with me, but this does not bother me because I

know that I will earn their respect in time. The only thing I lack is credibility. People do not seem to take me seriously and my own subjects have started to flout my authority. I cannot afford to show any weakness and must remain steadfast in all my decisions.

Lady Gleran: I am the daughter of Baroness Bristlebane. As much as I care for her, she is a fool to trust anyone from Templodius. Lord Fizzlethorp may say that peace is the only rational course of action, but I know in my heart that he is up to something—I have heard that he is very clever. But I can see right through his plan, he is putting us into a false sense of security that will be the downfall of all the Gorionolas. Why does my mother not see this? Although I mourn the death of Cornelius, I still cannot help but wonder why he has been around our family in the first place. He is of no relation that I know of, but the Baroness seems to be favoring him highly...

Francisco Caerless: Cornelius Noinall is dead? Ha! There are few I can name in the world who deserved death more than that son-of-a-swine. I always say, the only good Gorionola is a dead one. As for Fizzlethorp's plans of peace, I am absolutely disgusted by them. That sniveling coward is a stain on the good name of Templodius. Even if a truce were attainable, I would not want it. I would rather die than live side by side with filthy Gorionolas. Just the sight of them makes me boil with murderous rage...

Edwin: Frankly, I could not care less about peace talks and trade negotiations. I am sick of both families and their petty squabbles, I just want to get out. I have my own personal fortune, enough for me to get by and be reasonable comfortable for the rest of my life. All that has held me back from running away already is Lisa—I love her so much. Of course, we cannot tell anyone about our love because of this silly feud. I suppose that a truce would make things easier, but I know that will never happen. Our only chance is to run away. I have it all planned out, and unless someone discovers our plans, there should be no problems...

Lisa: I love Edwin more than anyone else in the world. I would kill for him if I had to. No one will keep us apart. He has planned an escape for us, so that we could get away from this foolish quarreling between our families that has kept us from declaring our love publicly, but I have never been able to speak to him privately about it. Whenever I manage to see Edwin, Cornelius is always around—I feel like that man has been following me. If he has discovered our secret, I fear I may have to take some drastic action...

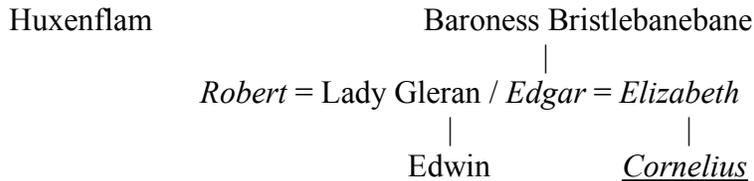
Huxenflam: I certainly hope these peace talks turn out well. As the official overseer of the Gorionola's finances, I know that we need some prosperity desperately if we are to survive in the transportation industry. Our economic times are very tough at the moment, and this war is not helping by any means. I have cut the costs of our enterprise as much as I can. All that is left, besides the minimal and essential costs of materials, is my own humble fee—and I assure you, it is not much. My new clothes are not nearly as expensive as they look, and that new house I just purchased was entirely from an inheritance and has no relation whatsoever to the affairs of the Gorionola's. I assure you that all of my bookkeeping records are entirely sound, there is no need for anyone to

check them. I have worked for the Gorionola's all of my life, and I believe the trust they have for me is well-earned. The only person who doubts my integrity is that Cornelius Noinall, he always has to poke his nose into everything...

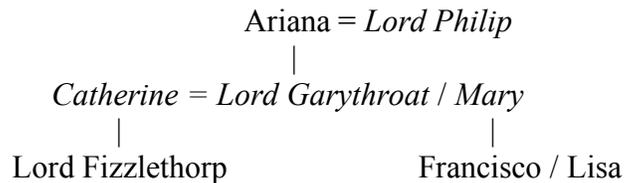
Ariana: My son, Garythroat, was a noble lord that served our family very well. And now that he is dead, the estate has moved to the hands of my grandson, Fizzlethorp. I always had my doubts about that child; he has been less than promising in both virtue and common sense. His blind pursuit of peace is no less than sheer madness. I have told my grandson many times that peace and prosperity for our household can never be achieved until every Gorionola is dead, but he just will not listen to reason. Perhaps I can find some other means of persuasion...

Relationships of Characters:

Gorionola:



Templodius:



Key symbols:

= married

/ sibling

| parent (mother above, first born below)

Dead (can mostly be ignored—except for Cornelius...he's kinda important)

Round 1:

The dead body of Cornelius was discovered in a dark alleyway with multiple stab wounds. One of the wounds was noticeably larger than the others, possibly made by a different blade. One peculiar thing I noticed from examining the body was that the blood around the wounds was of an abnormally bluish color, probably resulting from poison.

Although esteemed for his logic, Fizzlethorp was never very popular because he often put self-interest ahead of honor. When he was a child, he snitched on his friends on multiple occasions to get out of trouble.

When Lord Philip, Ariana's husband, was alive, he often complained to me about how manipulative she was sometimes. Whenever they were in disagreement, she found ways to go behind his back to get her way.

Baroness Bristlebane had a son named Edgar who disgraced his household by eloping with a woman of a questionable background. About a year ago, he was discovered to be dead from tuberculosis, along with his wife.

Francisco's open hatred of the entire Gorionola family is well known. He has gotten himself into many brawls with members of their family. He once heard him say that he would slay every Gorionola that he should ever come across if it were not for the fact that killing is punishable by death and, "they are simply not worth the trouble".

I am not exactly sure how Cornelius is related to the Gorionolas, but I know that the kinship is distant, if it exists at all.

I talked to Edwin once about his opinion on ending the rivalry between families. He favored the idea, but strongly doubted that it would actually happen.

Lady Gleran does not seem to be happy with her mother's (Baroness Bristlebane) decision to accept Lord Fizzlethorp's plan for a truce. I have seen the two in many heated debates on the subject. Lady Gleran seems to think that the Templodian's offer of peace is just a trick, and is afraid of what will happen if the Gorionolas let their guard down.

Lisa is a very determined person. When she wants something, she will do anything to get it, and will push aside anyone she has to.

Huxenflam has been in charge of managing the Gorionola's finances ever since the Baroness appointed him many years ago. The past several years have not gone well for the family, but he seems to be personally well-off. Something seems amiss...

Ariana is part of the reason that the feud has lasted so long. She was constantly pushing her son, Lord Garythroat, towards acts of aggression. She got along very well with Garythroat, they saw eye-to-eye on nearly everything; but she does not seem to be quite

as much of a success with Fizzlethorp. A few days ago, when I was going to visit him, I saw her storm out of his room, muttering furiously.

Lady Gleran never drinks wine. I have seen her at a party at the Gorionola house once and offered her some. She refused, I asked why, to which she responded, “I wish to keep my wits about me at all times”

In speaking of the party that night, I could have sworn that I saw Lisa there...but it must have just been my imagination.

Cornelius Noinall was a close friend of the Baroness. I have seen them speaking together on many occasions. I talked to Bristlebane once about her relationship with him, she told me that they trusted each other completely and there was nothing he would not tell her.

Huxenflam likes to work alone. He claims to be distracted by people “breathing down his neck”. Since he has worked with the Gorionola’s for so long and is a trusted member of their house, he is mostly left alone.

I have heard that Huxenflam keeps all of his records in Latin for some reason. I can’t understand why—I don’t know of anyone else in the family who even knows Latin

Francisco was a military general, but was kicked out of the army for excessive violence during times of peace. I assume that his problems stemmed from alcohol because he was almost always drunk.

From my understanding, Cornelius does not have an official job in the house of Gorionola, but he certainly does not laze about. According to Ariana: he works as a spy, finding out secrets from the family’s competition and making sure no one within the family is being subversive—he then gives this information directly to the Baroness.

Edwin has never shown much interest in his family’s affairs, but I have noticed something going on between him and Lisa. I would assume that their families don’t know about this because I am sure that both families would disapprove.

Lord Fizzlethorp is in a difficult position. There has been much more opposition to his ideas of peace than he has expected. If he goes through with this, he could be risking rebellion from his own family—possibly even endangering his own life. But he cannot back down either. Because he has only recently come into power, and since he is so different from his father—who was beloved by all his subjects—many people lack confidence in Fizzlethorp’s abilities. Calling off the truce to save his own skin would undermine what little authority Fizzlethorp has and could permanently cripple his control of his household. Unless extraordinary circumstances arise that give Fizzlethorp an excuse to back out of his decision and not lose face, the only course of action that remains for him is to pray that everything goes well.

Round 2:

I never expected Huxenflam to have such a serious gambling problem. I would have thought that someone from a noble family like Gorionola would be above such things. I often see him in Newton's Fig, playing games of chance and wagering large sums of gold. The last time I saw this, he seemed to be losing.

I have always suspected that something was happening between Edwin and that whore, Lisa. After what I saw today, there is no doubt. If rumor of this affair gets out, it will bring great shame to the house of Templodius. Personally, I would not mind so much if it were only Edwin being disgraced, I never cared for him much. Perhaps I can turn his secret into my advantage...

I never trusted Huxenflam. He has never given a very satisfying explanation as to how he can maintain his wealth while the family's estate is dwindling under what he calls a 'rough season for the business'. I happen to know for a fact that none of our ships have sunk and taxes have been lowered. I took the liberty of reading over his documents while he was away from his workplace. My suspicions have been confirmed. He has indeed been stealing money from our treasury. I could tell the Baroness, but I think I know a much more profitable way of dealing with this matter...

I know not what to think about the peace conference that is happening tomorrow. On the one hand, it would be wonderful if the feud came to an end. But on the other hand, Lady Gleran is right when she says that it is very difficult to trust anything said by someone from Templodius. This could very well be a trick—I believe I shall personally investigate to see if it is. But until I find evidence that confirms or denies Fizzlethorp's integrity, I will need to convince Lady Gleran not to make any brash decisions.

While I was at the market yesterday, I noticed Fizzlethorp buy a basket of Colnalia weed. I wonder if he knows that if Colnalia weed is boiled in salted oil, it turns into a deadly poison...

Fizzlethorp seems very nervous lately. When I greeted him in the marketplace, he literally jumped. When he saw that I clearly meant him no ill, he tried to act calm, but his appearance was a dead giveaway that he was anything but tranquil. His face was pale, his eyes were bloodshot, his hands were fidgety, and his forehead was sweating. He has clearly been under a lot of stress lately—which is understandable given his situation. Francisco and Ariana are intimidating enough when they don't think of you as a traitor.

I had a close call today. The Baroness found one of the letters I had written to Edwin. Thank God she did not read it. If there is one thing she will not tolerate, it is discord within the family.

I originally had doubts about blackmailing Edwin, but I can rest easily now because I know he poses no real threat. I noticed him at a fencing lesson yesterday—that man has the coordination of a diseased cow.

I saw Lisa earlier today and she gave me a really hateful look. She must have found out that I am blackmailing Edwin. So be it, I never liked her anyways.

I must remember to not spend so much time around the Baroness and only converse with her on important matters. The other members of the family seem to dislike me enough as it is. If they were to find out about my claim to the inheritance, their lack of affection could turn into downright hatred.

I came close to death today. I was at Newton's Fig, the nearby tavern, just minding my own business, when Francisco—drunk, as usual—started yelling at me. I made a slighting comment about his character that the others in the tavern found to be rather amusing, but Francisco took great exception to it and slammed his mug onto my hand. He then proceeded to pummel me brutally until Geraldo, the innkeeper, pulled him away. He swore that one day, if he ever found me alone, he would finish me off. That man has always made me uneasy, but after today I am downright terrified of him...

Before I was attacked, I overheard Ariana plotting with Francisco about ways the feud could be continued. This does not bode well. I am surprised that Arianna would so blatantly undermine the authority of her Lord. I was not able to hear any specifics of the discussion, however, because that is when Francisco noticed me.

I am surprised that Huxenflam has shown no hostility towards me since I started blackmailing him. I guess this is not really all that surprising now that I think about it. After all, he can just steal more from the family and remain unaffected. He has even given me something that may come in useful, a potion that prevents drunkenness. Of course, I made him take some himself to make sure it was not a trick.

Lady Gleran has been acting strangely towards me lately—she has become very friendly. I am suspicious; I know she is plotting something. She has just asked me to come with her to Newton's Fig to discuss some 'important matters'. I am very hesitant to comply—partly because Francisco just attacked me there—but I will go anyway because I don't want her to know that I am on to her. I must be careful not to get drunk and give away my true identity. That reminds me, Huxenflam gave me that potion which prevents drunkenness. This would be the perfect opportunity to use it. Whatever Gleran is plotting, I will always remain one step ahead of her.

Round 3:

The following events all took place on the night the peace conferences were to be held, which was also the night of Cornelius's death.

Father Hurbury: Francisco Caerless arrived at the conference wearing different clothes than when he left for it. I examined his original clothing and discovered it to be stained with blood.

Heraldo: Lady Gleran and Cornelius Noinall stopped by at my tavern for awhile. I am not quite sure what it was exactly, but as soon as Gleran entered, something seemed odd about her. And when Fizzlethorp showed up awhile later, Gleran ran out the back exit without explanation. As she escaped, I noticed she was carrying a knife.

Beggar: Ariana bribed me to steal Cornelius' knife when he left Newton's Fig and I agreed to the deal. But then a little over an hour later, Cornelius came back and demanded me to give the weapon back, threatening to hang me if I refused.

Heraldo: Lisa stopped by that night as well. She seemed to be in quite a hurry. She asked me if I had seen Edwin recently and I told her that I had not.

Beggar: Lord Fizzlethorp was also at *Newton's Fig*—it was a busy night for the tavern—and had a few drinks with Cornelius. They left together, but went different ways when they got outside. Soon after Cornelius left, he had a rather large fit of coughing and started clutching his chest.

Heraldo: Francisco remained in my tavern for a couple of hours after his fight with Cornelius before finally leaving. I hoped that he would have cooled off during this time, but this did not seem to be the case. The way he looked when he left...well, lets just say I would not want to be a Gorionola and run into him

Father Hurbury: When I saw Edwin arrive at the conference, something about him seemed strange. I asked him if something had happened to him on the way. He claimed to have gone straight from his house to the meeting place. I noticed he had a good deal of fresh bruises on his arm. It looked as if he had gotten in a fight. I also noticed he was carrying a dagger. This last bit of information did not surprise me, but what did strike me as peculiar was the fact that the blade belonged to Lisa—and it had traces of blood on it.

Heraldo: As I was washing the mug Cornelius was drinking from earlier today, I noticed some faint blue stains on the sides. I recognized them as traces of a poison made from Colnalia weed, a slow acting but lethal poison.

John Killborne: My name is John Killborne, I work as an assassin-for-hire and I have been brought here by the law to confess something to you all. I was hired to kill Cornelius... (*point at Ariana*) by Ariana of Templo dius. (*to detective*) Please don't hang me sir, I swear that I am innocent. Cornelius was already dead when I got to him. I even

saw someone running away from the dead body before I got there. I am not sure who it was, but that must have been the person who killed Cornelius. I only stabbed the body so that I could say I completed my task and get paid for it. I know that what I did was wrong, but...the man was already dead. Please spare me sir, I swear to God that all I have said is true.

Father Hurbury: I have some information about Cornelius that may shed some light on the situation. He is the grandson of the Baroness, and thus the heir to her estate. His parents eloped and went to Italy. I preformed the marriage ceremony for them in secret, and the documents remain that prove their union. However, they were not disowned. Baroness Bristlebane had a soft spot for them even though the rest of the family was furious. Cornelius was born and raised in Italy, and grew to become a successful diplomat. When his parent died of illness, Cornelius left his position as a diplomat to live with his grandmother.

John Killborne: I just remembered something else that might be useful. And because I am so helpful and deserve to be spared I will tell you what it is. You see, I make most of my living through honest means—selling homemade poisons. About a week ago, Huxenflam purchased one of my personal favorites, Jallrooth oil. When combined with alcohol, Jalrooth oil causes a particularly slow and painful death from massive internal bleeding. There is only one known antidote to Jalrooth oil, but that would be getting into the area of medicine—and it is a personal rule of mine to stay well away from that sort of thing...can I go now? (*Detective refuses*)

Baroness Bristlebane: When my grandson returned, he was not recognized by the rest of the family. But the resemblance between Cornelius and his father was too much for me not to notice. Although the news he brought of my son's death struck me deeply with sadness, I rejoiced at the arrival of my grandson. I wanted to make his presence known to the rest of the family, but I feared that the news would make them—particularly my daughter Lady Gleran, who would have been next in line. I decided to take Cornelius in as a personal secretary until the time was right to make his identity known. He returned the favor by gathering information for me. This continued until the night of his death.

Father Hurbury: A few days ago, Lady Gleran demanded me to show her any records I had pertaining to Cornelius. I told her that I kept those sorts of things confidential—but I did not realize that I had information I kept about him on the table at that time. I did not realize that she had read them despite my refusal until she had left.

John Killborne: (*Points at Gleran*) It was her! I remember now, she was the one I saw running away from Cornelius' body before I got there, so she must have been the one who killed him. You see, this proves I'm innocent!

Timeline of the night of the murder:

12:00--Francisco and Ariana meet at Newton's Fig to discuss ways to continue the feud.

12:05--Cornelius secretly follows them in and listens in on the conversation.

12:15--Francisco notices Cornelius and attacks him.

12:16--Geraldo pulls Francisco away, Cornelius escapes.

12:30--Cornelius returns home, writes journal entry (in clue)

12:30--Ariana leaves the tavern and pays the beggar to steal Cornelius's knife next time he comes by

1:45--Huxenflam gives C. Jallrooth oil.

2:00--Francisco gets drunk at Newton's fig. He leaves, still angry about the peace conference, and decides to look for another Gorionola to beat up while he still can.

5:00--Lady Gleran takes C. back to the Newton's fig to "discuss something important". She intends to get him drunk, take him out the back exit, and stab him.

5:15--C. drinks the Jalrooth oil and then drinks with Gleran, activating the poison.

5:45--As lady Gleran is talking and drinking with C., Lord Fizzlethorp walks in. She gives up her plan and escapes out the back exit. Fizzlethorp does not see her. Gleran decides to kill C. later when he is alone.

6:30--C. continues to drink with Fizzlethorp.

7:00--Fizzlethorp poisons C. with Colnalia weed, which neutralizes the Jalrooth oil.

7:15--Fizzlethorp and C. exit the bar and separate.

7:15--C.'s knife is stolen by the beggar.

7:20--Edwin sets out to kill C.

7:30--Lisa sets out to find Edwin in order to stop him from killing C.

7:45--Francisco ambushes Edwin, but then Fizzlethorp happens to discover them and breaks up the fight.

7:46--Fizzlethorp forcibly escorts the drunken Francisco to the peace conference.

7:55--Edwin resumes his search for C.

8:20--Edwin attacks C., who is now unarmed, but C. manages to escape.

8:30--C. runs back to the tavern and notices the beggar examining his stolen dagger.

8:31--C. Threatens to have the beggar hanged if it is not given back. The beggar apologizes, explains he was paid to steal it by Ariana, and gives back the dagger to C.

8:35--C. sets out to kill Edwin

8:50--Ariana gives up on her search for Francisco and pays a local assassin to kill C.

9:15--Lisa spots C. stalking Edwin and stabs C. in the back, killing him.

9:20--Edwin freaks out because he does not want Lisa to be hanged for murder. They hide the body and Edwin takes Lisa's dagger so that he can take the blame if she becomes a suspect. Then they go to the peace conference and pretend nothing has happened.

10:29--Gleran finds C. dead, notices John Killborne approaching, runs away.

10:30--Ariana's assassin finds C. dead. He then stabs the dead body so that he can bring back a bloody knife and say he did his job.

11:00--Peace conference begins.

11:05--The dead body is found, the detective starts investigating the case.