

AUTHOR'S NOTES

While working on *No Dignity in Death: The Three Brides* and placing three adventures that were unconnected in my campaigns into a single location that came to be called Pembrooktonshire, my mind started to be filled with the possibilities for fleshing the place out. Early on I decided that it was probably best to leave the adventure itself alone and make the “fleshed out” material into its own book. It had to be released separately from (for those that just wanted the adventure) and simultaneously with (I hate when game companies rip off their customers by publishing additions or changes to their games or settings after the fact) the original adventure.

But how to best flesh out the setting in a way that was modular, entertaining, and personally interesting?

- The players in my home group seem to enjoy NPC interactions as much as actual adventuring. So when I run games, I often think of weird and sometimes disturbing personalities on the spot for NPCs.
- I am a big fan of *The League of Gentlemen*, the British TV series which takes place in the fictional town of Royston Vasey. One of the things I enjoy about the series is how every person in town seems to have a different sort of defective personality.
- While responding to a post on the Groggardia blog back in March, I made a quip that people will determine there are 137 of us in the Old School Renaissance. It was just a throwaway comment but people picked up on it as an in-joke.

Suddenly, I had my focus. I'd do what I normally do - come up with strange characters - to make Pembrooktonshire truly an adventure in itself rather than just a backdrop to adventure. All I had to do was come up with 137 weird and distinct NPC ideas. Easy, right? Hah! Towards the middle of the process I was considering a third book called *Nuke Pembrooktonshire* because I was beginning to despise the place. But doesn't that happen in all projects somewhere between “REALLY COOL IDEA!” and “Finished saleable product”? Luckily I caught a second wind that the last half was easier to complete than the first.

The inspiration for the individual characters came from many sources. Some were standard thriller-fare. Some were straight out of pop culture. Some were from my imagination. Some were designed to be horrific. Some were designed to be frightening in a more sophisticated kind of way. Some were meant to be comedic, and some were meant to be downright goofy. Some were intended to be a moment's diversion in a game, some were meant to be able to anchor an entire scenario.

There were some moments of doubt when writing this. Is this a valid and smart thing to work on and release? Will anybody care? Is it “old school” enough? In the end I just had to trust my own instincts. Whether this book gets bought or used or not, I would have felt the whole Pembrooktonshire creation to be incomplete without it. So here it is, and I can now close this creative chapter without regrets.

I hope it enriches your game, I hope it provides some entertaining reading, and I hope it inspires more original creations of your own!

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Helsinki, Finland
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HOW TO USE PEOPLE OF PEMBROOKTONSHIRE

Many traditional role-playing campaigns don't bother with "the town" or social interaction or political intrigue. That's perfectly fine. But some do, and in general these games have been underserved by gaming supplements. *No Dignity in Death* is largely an in-town adventure, and while details are given for the principal characters for the situations detailed therein, it gives almost nothing for interactions that are not related to those situations. Pembrooktonshire is obviously not your run-of-the-mill village, and obviously the possibilities for intrigue and adventure don't have to stop with *No Dignity in Death*.

People of Pembrooktonshire provides a toolkit for fleshing out the town and making it interesting while other adventures are experiencing downtime as well as a repository for triggers and hooks for entirely new adventures, all disguised in the form of character bios.

Nothing in this book is "official." The only version of Pembrooktonshire that is "official" is the one found in *No Dignity in Death*, and even in that adventure it is just a convenient background/excuse for the matters at hand. There isn't even much requiring the use of Pembrooktonshire in that adventure in the first place, especially if the given adventures are placed by the referee in different locations.

Nothing in this book supercedes the information found in the original adventure unless the referee so chooses. There, Constable Stark is gone on holiday, and that is not so unusual for a resident to do. Here, since foreign holidays are unconscionable to the average citizen, it is instead revealed that he was murdered. In the original campaign that spawned the adventure, he was at some sort of policeman's con-

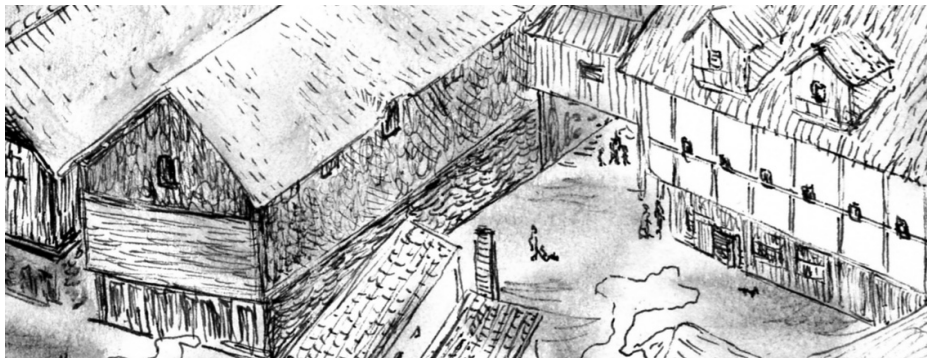
vention elsewhere in the kingdom, however it was worded at the time. None is more correct than the others except what the individual referee decides.

It is not expected that the entirety of this book will be used by any one referee. The characters in this book introduce a great variety of tones and elements into the town. By deciding which characters and/or elements to use, the referee can decide whether this town is to be played for laughs, as a political dystopia, as a horror setting, as a surrealistic farce, or something else, or even all of these at the same time.

By the same token, many of the characters' oddities have little connection to the character itself. Elements of a character can be mixed and matched with other characters found here, or in other supplements (Hommllet or The Keep could have just gotten much more interesting), or NPCs of the referee's own design.

Be aware of the effect that any change will have in other areas. For example, if a referee dislikes the idea about dwarfs being the secret overlords and protectors of the area, then The Great Games portion of *No Dignity in Death* will require a major revision, if it is to be used at all, and there will also need to be effective fighting men in the town. Small Town Murder would require no adjustment at all in this situation, and A Lonely House on a Lonely Hill would change only in backstory that players will very likely never discover to begin with.

Even if not one word of this book is used as-written, it is hoped that simply reading this text colors one's impression of *No Dignity in Death* and inspires ideas about fleshing out the town.



the while frolicking in their shoe fairy manner. They are quick to hide when visitors come, and DeCameron, after all these years, credits his blackouts to some sort of transcendental state of crafting.

But he can't find a wife. The last woman he brought around must have run off when he went into one of his trances... but were his customers ever so pleased with the quality of the leather shoes he made that day!

Hector Degauchy, Postman

The oldest and most respected of the small Pembroke-tonshire postal service, Degauchy manages to deliver more mail in less time than anyone ever has. His six-hour route takes him merely four hours.

That's very unusual, considering that half of his mail are letters written by people that don't exist, is delivered to addresses that don't exist, and were sent (with proper postage!) from addresses that don't exist.

Giles Denton, Beekeeper

Giles is a man in his early thirties that prefers the finer things in life, from clothing to furniture to women. The premium he charges for his honey supports all this and more.

Giles has delusions of grandeur and has taken to learning how to control his bees using pheromones, and is convinced his bee army could be used to make him ruler of Pembroke-tonshire. He has successfully engineered the death of several local animals this way, but has been hesitant to try it on a human. If only there were some strangers that could be used for the test...

Warren Diadoro, Jeweler

Diadoro is one of the more trusted men in Pembroke-tonshire. He is the man who creates, repairs, polishes, and modifies jewelry for the richest people in town.

The thing that annoys Warren about his job is when people want him to repair or polish items that he didn't create. When doing these duties, he heats these items up over a flame. And damned if half the jewelry worn by the nobles doesn't have some sort of weird foreign squiggly writing that appears only when heated.

Louis Diggle, Wagon Maker

Many of the rich hate that they must walk on the streets like commoners, so the demand for wagons and coaches is far above what it should be for a town of this size. Many of the wealthy use coaches to travel across their own estates or even courtyards!

Louis is the main man responsible for creating these coaches. Because this is a matter of upper class pride, the coaches are becoming exceedingly extravagant and decadent, with ridiculous amenities that make them resemble mobile homes more than conveyances. Many commoners don't live in accommodations as luxurious, or sometimes even as spacious, as a nobleman's coach.

As time goes on and Diggle's designs become even more outrageous, and then become standardized so even more middle-class clients can afford certain upgrades, previous wealthy clients feel their coaches need to be improved, so Diggle and his team always have plenty to do.

Not all of the added luxury is unnecessary, as the ingenuity of Diggle and his team have resulted in wagons and coaches that feature superior handling, comfort (no matter how rocky the road, the passengers enjoy a smooth ride), cleanliness (the pulling horses' refuse never touches the ground), and safety.

Diggle also hires people to perform random acts of vandalism on coaches and wagons, just because enough business is never enough.

Edward Dilhorne, Clockmaker

It takes a detail-oriented and fastidious man to successfully build a working, dependable clock from scratch. Unfortunately, Dilhorne is not a detail-oriented or fastidious man.

His clocks are things of absolute beauty, have no doubt. And they work. Dilhorne's problem is consistency. He has great difficulty creating clocks that tell time at the same rate as other clocks.

Luckily, his clocks are sympathetic to his plight and do what they can to protect his reputation. Clocks that are near each other, say within a city block, synchronize themselves to each other. However, they may be hours off from clocks across town and significant minutes off from clocks several blocks away.

But when someone checks their neighbor's clock, it

Whenever dealing with a different ruler, or when a ruler (or advisor) changes, Edmund chooses another place to be “Pembrooktonshire.” At present there are five different villages which he has so named, all five are being heavily persecuted by the regional rulers, and there is even a war being waged between royal noble houses over who has dominion over one of these “Pembrooktonshires.”

Charles Englefield, Barber

Charles is one of the town’s barbers, cutting hair, shaving customers, and performing dentistry all day long.

Englefield has a list of “approved” hair, moustache, and beard styles, which he himself determines according to what he believes to be proper for a Pembrookshiretonian. Customers are not shown this list, but anyone who chooses a style that is not approved is also diagnosed with a dental problem. Painful surgery follows.

Bernard Eyre, Leech

Eyre is head of one of the great families of Pembrooktonshire, and is the foremost man of medicine in town.

His methods are barbaric. He does use leeches, he bleeds his patients nearly dry when they are ill, prescribes near-lethal poisonous “remedies,” and generally is sadistic to those that dare need his services. He also prescribes courses of laxatives and even more disgusting “fitness regimens” for healthy patients seeking ways to remain so.

He is so highly thought-of socially that it is considered a deliberate insult and a scandal if someone that can afford his services chooses not to. And how ungrateful and lacking in social graces it would be to dare to not improve if under Dr. Eyre’s care! On occasion when one of his patients dies, the deceased’s family is so mortified that their relative would have the audacity to die while under the care of someone so well-respected that they pay the doctor a generous sum of money as an apology for the impertinence.

Titricia Finn, Midwife

A spinster in her early 60s, Ms. Finn handles the deliveries for the majority of Pembrooktonshire’s births. She’s very good; she’s never lost a mother or a child in her care.

While she goes to church every Sunday and keeps

up appearances, Titricia is not what she seems. She worships the Outer Powers, and they have given her a task. After delivering a baby, she takes it into a private room to “be cleaned.” She insists on privacy, and because of her flawless reputation, no one argues. Here the child is traded to an agent of the Outer Powers for a changeling; a facsimile of the child so perfect that neither the parents nor the child will ever realize it isn’t a natural human. Changelings are more impulsive and stubborn than the norm, and tend to be more physical than intellectual (-1 intelligence and wisdom, +1 strength and constitution), but otherwise are human. The only clues that they are something else are that protection spells affect them as if they were summoned beings, and because they have no true souls they can never be raised from the dead.

Because she does not handle every birth in town, and because sometimes she just doesn’t have the opportunity to do the switch in time, there is a 1 in 4 chance that any Pembrooktonshire native under the age of 30 is a natural, normal human.

Horace Fitzherbert, Philosopher

A stunningly calculating merchant and leading producer of sweet candies in his prime, Horace has stepped down from active work, and his position as head of one of Pembrooktonshire’s great families, in order to write books and reveal the nature of the universe to the people.

His writings of course are very traditional, recalling golden days that never were and ideals that are impossible for people to live up to.

His most famous work is called *Suspicion as Proof*. It supposes that people have excellent intuition, and that while an individual may be mistaken, the collective opinions of a group of people would not be. Therefore, if there is mass suspicion, it should usually be taken as proof that the suspected thing is true.

The book made him famous and well-liked about town, and he is considered one of the foremost intellectuals in Pembrooktonshire history. He is often consulted on matters he knows absolutely nothing about, but that’s OK, since it’s his intuition that is important more than his knowledge.

And to those that disagree with his theories, the question must be asked: What are you hiding?

Cecil Ranahan, Nailer

A lot of construction happens in and around Pembrooktonshire, and the load of constantly making nails wore heavy on the established blacksmiths' time, so one apprentice decided to open his own forge and specialize in making nails.

He makes a decent living and is raising a respectable family.

Except for their cat. Their cat is a bastard. Literally. Pet genealogy is kept track of as strictly as human family trees in Pembrooktonshire, and to own a cat of low, or unknown, breeding is considered very low-class.

But Cecil won't get rid of it. He's found that he has gained eight of the cat's nine lives. And he's used four of them up already. Or is it five? And what will happen to Cecil if the cat's only life ends?

Clarence Ravensdale, Tax Assessor

As part of one of the great families of Pembrooktonshire, Clarence is the ultimate political appointee. He is the town's tax assessor, and in some ways the most feared man in town. He also has a crippling case of dyscalculia.

Because of this, he does not care about financial records or taxation history or even monetary tax payments. He has decided that all taxes shall be paid in heads of livestock. He has set up three pens on the outskirts of town. People listed as "poor" must fill up the small pen with livestock. "Freemen" must fill up the medium pen. "Gentlemen" and "Ladies" must fill up the large pen. One's status is determined by how impressive-looking Ravensdale deems one's home.

All of the great families are somehow classified as "poor." Clarence's explanation? "Those houses are much too big for my liking. They would take forever to clean."

Tobias Reuter, Author

Tobias is a greatly respected author and founder of the Reuter press and bookbindery. Now in his 80s, he lives just outside of town in a large villa. It was his dream to move the Reuter family up to the level of the great families of Pembrooktonshire, but it was not to be. And Tobias is livid.

The reason the family never ascended is because his son, Kurt, married downward, and when he took over

the press he opened up commissions to foreigners, thus encouraging the Reuter family to be exposed to all sorts of alien thought (foreign-penned works are officially banned for sale within the town). Only Tobias' reputation protected the family, but their chances of being important as a whole have passed.

Reuter's own claim to fame is his book *On Paper As On Stone*, which was the first book printed on his press. It is completely self-serving, promoting the printed book as being authoritative just by virtue of being printed, and carrying far more weight than a spoken argument. This led to many wanting to have their thoughts published, which of course would have resulted in many divergent views being printed, which would have ruined the perceived authority of the written word and given voice to too many unimportant and unconnected people in town. Reuter revised his famous tome to include qualifications for print, which includes sponsorship by a member of the great families of the town. This was Reuter's bid to greatness; the original printing had been a scandal precisely because Tobias was of the common folk and the great families' stranglehold on influence was threatened.

But instead of being the revolutionary that would have transformed Pembrooktonshire, Tobias threw his lot in with tradition and the great families, and even today is more loyal to them than to his son and son's family who he considers to have destroyed the Reuter name.

Georgine Revesby, Wealthy Procuress

Revesby is a social crusader and a moral standard in Pembrooktonshire, often giving public speeches about the importance of clean living. Of particular importance to her is the purity of young women, and has been the loudest voice in a generation calling for chastity in social life.

Her efforts have made it extremely unfashionable, barring exceptional situations (or personalities) to engage in or discuss physical relations, even so much as a kiss on the cheek. Many families feel so guilty about their carnal urges that married couples go for years without touching each other "improperly." This has also created something of a sexual counter-culture as well as a general "what we do in private is far different than what we say in public" repression. Revesby loves this because it continues to give her crusade ammunition and relevance in public life.