

*During the season, you have an opportunity to examine further the materials that were being used in the strange laboratory you discovered when you visited the Scaligeri Kennels in Sarvos, as well as the carcass of the beast that lurked in wait therein.*

*The vast bulk of the materials found in the laboratory were relatively mundane, albeit extensive – the sorts of alchemical and medicinal materials that might be expected in the laboratory of a physick or thaumaturgist. A few, like the herbs and beggar's lye you recovered, were more unusual or valuable, but there was little out of the ordinary in terms of what was being used – rather, it was how they were being used that was noteworthy. Tinctures, salves, poisons and tools were all set to the purpose of warping and twisting the Scaligeri's chosen test subjects.*

*It is unclear how much of what they were attempting is even possible. Certainly, the notes recovered indicated they met many dead-ends, creating nothing more than a series of tortured and ultimately dead animals. They repeatedly attempted slight variations of a particular pattern – a series of treatments with alchemical substances, using magical materials as foci for warping energies, and the ongoing application of minor rituals – and, repeatedly, met with failure of one sort or another. In many cases, the animal subjects did undergo changes – but agonising and ultimately lethal ones. It seems that the use of healing herbs and tinctures did allow some of the creatures to survive longer than they otherwise would have – but you can find no evidence that the herbs ultimately would have done anything but prolong the hounds' existence. They would not have made the resulting mutations stable.*

*What exactly they did differently in their final experiment is unclear – but they certainly did something different. From the empty bottles and partially-completed admixtures you recovered, it looks like they had been brewing up a significant batch of potions and elixirs to augment their Spring magic – so it is likely that they attempted a far more powerful ritual than they had previously made use of.*

*However, from examining the carcass, even this final 'success' would not have lived for long. The poor beast was doomed. The damage done to its body from the bizarre growth of its bones and the tumorous bulk that it had gained would have killed it within a few more weeks. The Scaligeri created a monster fated to a painful and short existence, and no more. Without far more potent magic – a major ritual, perhaps, or a powerful alignment of the constellations – it seems the magicians would continue to have fallen short of their grand ambitions.*