

Niccolo Galateo

Viscount of Fausseflammes

AC 1014

By Michael Berry

“It took the blessing of contracting lycanthropy to finally purge the bad Thyatian blood...”

I. Appearance

Niccolo stands just over six feet tall and is thought to weigh in excess of 200 pounds and all of it reputed to be muscle. Galateo is fully bearded and with long hair to his shoulders. He has purple eyes and black hair and olive skinned complexion to his skin. Niccolo rarely wears jewelry of any type and often dresses in wizard robes favoring those in neutral earth tones. While not favoring jewelry Niccolo has a weakness for perfumes from Bergdhoven and can often be smelled before he is seen.

II. Personality & Quirks

Niccolo Galateo is a Weretiger and lycanthrope. He enjoys solitude and resides alone at his tower in Fausseflammes. Niccolo is not interested in women, or men, and attempts to match him with eligible women ended many years ago. Niccolo spends much of his time in Fausseflammes but spends much of his time outside his tower in his Weretiger form in his own nature preserve. When not in Weretiger form he spends time at his research facility also found in his preserve continuing to research lycanthropy.

The main social contact Niccolo has with the world around him is his time spends at the Great School of Magic where he helps support his research by teaching for several months a year at the Great School. While teaching at the Great School Niccolo is not seen socially outside of the School and is noteworthy for never attending parties, galas or other social events so beloved by other members of the nobility. He spends the rest of his days in Glantri City at the Great School; either in class teaching or in the various laboratories found at the Great School of Magic and is never seen out of the Great School at night.

III. History & Background

In 968 Niccolo Galateo was born in Glantri City to a Thyatian father and an Alphatian mother. Only the very few close to Niccolo know that his mother was the last pure descendent of the Padfoots, a pure blooded family of Alphatian natural shape shifters who traced their family line all the way back to Old Alphatia and could take the form of tigers at will. The ability was lost with Niccolo as his father's impure bloodlines thus made his mother the last of a line of a family of natural shape shifters that had existed for thousands of years.

While not a pureblooded Alphatia Niccolo's father was himself a capable wizard of no small account himself and had enjoyed a long distinguished career with the Grand Army of Glantri after graduating the

Great School where he retired as Deputy Commander of Carnelia's division. Niccolo had a happy childhood with both his parents doting on their son and living a comfortable life in Glantri City. Niccolo was found to have strong latent magical ability at age 5 and a year later was sent off to the Great School of Magic. While very close to his parents the separation for Niccolo obviously was not as rough as it was for some children as his mother and father taught part time at the Great School while he was enrolled.

Graduating with honors at age 16 in 984 Niccolo naturally found himself intrigued by the subject of shape shifting and especially lycanthropy and after graduating the Great School left with his mother for an extended working stay in Alphatia where he joined the Alphatian Center for Disease Control, a series of laboratories dedicated to researching lycanthropy and searching for a cure as well as monitoring Alphatia and the rest of Mystara for epidemics of known forms of lycanthropy and watching for the signs of new strains of the disease. Niccolo and his mother stayed in Alphatia for 11 years until his mother passed away in her sleep in 995 and mourning her loss deeply Niccolo chose to return to Glantri.

Upon returning to Glantri Niccolo was intrigued by the rumors of rampant lycanthropic activity in the hills in and around Noevelle Averoigne so he established himself at Fortress d'Ylourgne and attached himself to the Viceroy of the fort, Prince Innocenti Malapietra, who relied on him to act as an outside agent and spy upon his brother Agnostio who served as the Castellan of d'Ylourgne in Innocenti's absence. Galateo gladly took the offer and the mission and used the opportunity to get information on what was going in the hills in and around Noevelle Averoigne. Niccolo used the substantial payments Prince Innocenti provided to establish his own well hidden laboratory in the hills around Fortress d'Ylourgne where he continued his own researches into lycanthropy. Finally in 998 Niccolo took the final step in his research and infected his self with tiger lycanthropy so he could study the disease first hand. During these years Galateo also determined that the legendary White Wolf was the Baron of Morlay and also determined, and secretly supported his plan to establish a Lycanthropic Principality in the Valley of the Wolves. Returning to Glantri gave Niccolo a few last years to spend with his father who also passed way in 1003 just prior to the Great War which offered great opportunities to Niccolo which he did not fail to act upon.

The declaration of war upon Glantri by Alphatia in 1005 sped Malachie du Marais's plans seeing the opportunity to sell his plan of establishing a Lycanthropic Principality. While not particularly politically active nor with much pull, Innocenti was aghast at the idea and would have never been able to have been persuaded by a mere agent of his, Niccolo did lend his support financially and covertly helping to try to convince otherwise hesitant residents that lycanthropes were not all monsters. The measure passed the Council and Morlay-Malinbois was established as the 13th Glantrian Principality. A year later as the costs of the expanded Grand Army of Glantri began to eat at the Glantrian treasury a new measure that directly affected Niccolo Galateo was passed and with it Niccolo saw his opportunity to further himself and the cause of lycanthropes.

In 1006 the Council of Princes approves the creation of 8 new dominions. The Princes felt the new dominions would provide greater control of the population and needed increase in revenue tax with the massive increase in the Grand Army due to the war with Alphatia. As a side benefit the new dominions would also provide more balance to a Glantrian nobility structure that now had nearly as many Principalities as Baronies and Viscounties *combined*. The Viscounty of d'Ylourgne was created and the Fortress of d'Ylourgne was decommissioned. Prince Innocenti lost his Viceroyalty and Niccolo his job spying on the Princes' brother and the tidy income that brought. Seeing an opportunity to join the nobility Niccolo decided to compete for one of the new Baronies. He won the Awards Festival to a new Barony created between the Baronies of Egorn and Oxhill in the Sablestone region and named it

Edleview. Recognizing the support and help of Prince Innocenti and not being prepared to formally join House Morlay as he was inclined to do, the new Baron of Edleview declared his allegiance to House Sirrechia.

The new Baron of Edleview had barely moved into his newly constructed tower of Edleview when the game of Glantrian politics came calling. In 1007 the Viscount of Fausseflammes died without an heir after ingesting a potion that was poisonous. Most of the newly elected nobles of AC 1006 declined to compete as some were in Alphatia as Glantri launching a insurgency campaign of its own in Alphatia earlier in the year, some are still settling into their new dominions and nearly all exhausted their finances campaigning for the new Baronies just last year. Being rather wealthy from his parents success Niccolo decided to compete as Fausseflammes would have been a perfect dominion for him to rule. Three Barons entered the Awards Festival: Niccolo Galateo, Baron of Edleview; Juan Manuel Cagigal y Monserrat, Baron of Egnorn; and Pieter Vandehaar, Baron of Oxhill. Prince Malachie after doing some mental calculations of the likely Council votes figured both Niccolo and Juan Manuel would be short which meant likely both will face off in a duel that Juan Manuel would likely win. Behind the scenes Malachie and Etienne approached Niccolo and worked out a 3 party deal with Prince Volospin. For his support, which he would not likely normally give a Thyatian; Niccolo would then leave House Sirrechia and join House Marais. Asked why he might agree to do so, Niccolo informs Volospin of his mother's heritage and that he has long been an agent of the Averoignian lycanthropes. Volospin agrees to vote for Niccolo IF he would agree to leave House Sirrechia. Niccolo does agree to the bargain and Niccolo was elected by the Council of Princes to be the new Viscount of Fausseflammes. Soon afterwards in Parliament Galateo announced he was leaving House Sirrechia and joining House Morlay, infuriating and embarrassing Prince Innocenti.

Niccolo spent the new few years settling into Fausseflammes, dealing with the Great Plague and avoiding numerous assassination attempts obviously initiated by the Prince of Caurenze. By the end of the Great War fewer attempts at Niccolo's life were made and life settled down as he established himself in Fausseflammes and set aside a nature preserve for his own use where he established a new laboratory and spent much of his time in Weretiger form. However Niccolo was drawn again into the Machiavellian politics of Glantri when he was approached in 1011 by Prince Malachie and enlisted in a scheme to oust the hated, and most decidedly un-sympathetic to lycanthropes, Prince Henri of Noevelle Averoigne. Niccolo played his part to perfection and sacrificed his laboratory in the hills of Ylourgne to the cause and Henri was defeated by Isidore d'Ambreville at the dueling court and became the new Princess of Noevelle Averoigne and another lycanthrope on the Council of Princes. In the years since Princess Isidore took control of Noevelle Averoigne Niccolo has stayed clear of politics and though the occasional assassins still make attempts on his life he has settled into a perfect life of research, teaching and enjoying a peaceful wilderness dominion where he further his own lycanthropic interests.

IV. Web of Intrigue

Niccolo is very loyal to Prince Malachie and to a lesser extent the Princess of Noevelle Averoigne. He never attends the House of Lords or parliamentary session but his spokesman has been instructed to always follow Prince Malachie's lead when it comes to votes. Galateo's betrayal of Prince Innocenti is still not forgotten, much less forgiven by the Prince of Caurenze and he still commissions teams of assassins to try to kill the traitor to Caurenze. Niccolo is extremely hard to get at in Fausseflammes as Innocenti has discovered to his chagrin and so most attempt are made in Glantri City but even then the notoriously unsocial Viscount is still a hard target to reach as he spends most of his waking time inside

the Great School and is rumored to teleport back and forth to Fausseflammes in the mornings and at night.

Otherwise Niccolo has little dealings with other nobles either professionally or personally. He was aware of the interest the Count of Wylon and previously Viscount of Ylourgne, Franz Lowenroth is rumored to have in him and after investigating him to find out why he might be, now Lowenroth, and especially his son, is now very much of interest to Galateo. Niccolo has learned of the fascination of the Count in big cats but the behavior of his son really intrigues Galateo and he believes there is something magical there and is considering reaching out to the Count as Galateo is probably one of the world's leading experts on shape shifting and lycanthropy, as well as the history of Alphatian shape shifters.

V. Statistics & Style of Magic

Statistics: 22nd level Wizard (reaching 23rd Level in 1015), WT17 (reaching 8th Level also in 1015); Str 12, Int 18, Wis 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Chr 9; AL - Neutral

Languages: Thyatin Common, Alphatian, Averoignian, Orc, Dragon

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger (skilled), Staff (skilled)

Skills(12): Alchemy (I), Alternative Magics (I), Knowledge of Lycanthropy (I+2), Alphatian History (I+2), Danger Sense (W+1), Animal Biology (I), Tracking (I)

Galateo though not a combat mage would prove to be a very formidable opponent in combat as he is a powerful spellcaster who is well versed in all the common offensive and defensive spells with the ability to transform at will into a high level Weretiger. Unlike many mages Niccolo would not hesitate to engage in hand to hand combat and would use a staff to defend himself.

'I want you to get this traitor where he breathes! I want you to find this nancy-boy Galateo, I want him DEAD! I want his family DEAD! I want his tower burned to the GROUND! I wanna go there in the middle of the night and I wanna PISS ON HIS ASHES!'

(ummm... Prince Innocenti Malapietra)