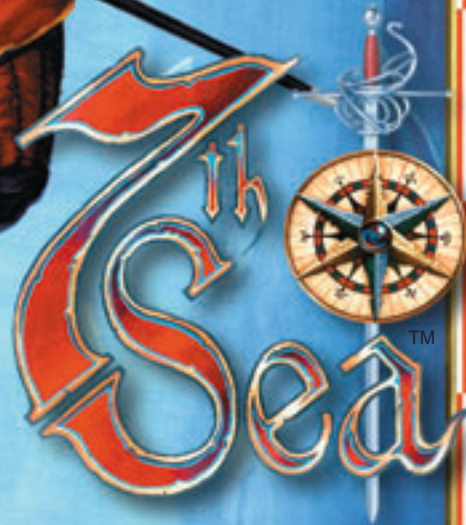


Tangled Strands™



Kevin P. Boerwinkle

7th Sea
Game Year:
1668

Tangled Strands™

What Webs We Weave...

In a dark corner of Vodacce lurks a criminal mastermind known as the Scarred Man. Through strength, fear, and dark Sorte magic, he has carved out a comfortable empire for himself. But the threads of his destiny extend further than he knows, leading to a pair of heroic innocents who hold the key to his demise. Helena and Ramon, lovers, fugitives, and Castillian patriots, have deep ties to the scoundrel's past. Unless your Heroes can help them, he'll see to it that they have no future. From the fields of Castille to the alleyways of Porto Spatia, the tangled threads lead into the heart of true love, thwarted ambition, and a most disagreeable foe.

Tangled Strands is a multi-part adventure set in the world of *7th Sea*. It is intended to be run in several stages over the course of a campaign, and contains scenario descriptions, character run-downs, maps, and complete rules for your convenience. It requires the *7th Sea Players' Guide* and *GMs' Guide* for play. Copies of the *Castille* and *Vodacce* sourcebooks are recommended, but not required.



\$11.95 M.S.R.P.

AEG 7107

ISBN 1-887953-36-1

www.alderac.com

Tangled Strands



“The ties to our past set the stage for our future.”

— Helena di Lucani

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Special Thanks

MOOSE: I would like to thank all of the people who have gamed with me over the years, especially the ones I was too busy or too lazy to keep in touch with. Extra special thanks to jim pinto, who gave me my first crack at writing, to Kevin Wilson, who let me sit under his learning tree, and to Rob Vaux, for having to deal with me.

Bull: Thanks to Cheryl.

Des: Lots of thanks to my bud May for all her emotional support and for being so kind as to give me food and grammar advice.



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Introduction

The story of *Tangled Strands* is presented as a series of episodes connected by three NPCs. One of them, Helena, is a Hero, Ramon is a Scoundrel, and Alessandro is a Villain. Helena and Ramon are in love with each other. Ramon and Alessandro shared a prison cell for a few years and hate each other intensely. Alessandro is Helena's older brother and believes that no man is good enough for her, especially not Ramon. Each episode is set up as an encounter that can be fit in between or within other Stories in a campaign. The players meet Helena and Ramon first. Later, they encounter Alessandro, and in the last episode they discover the connection between the three characters. Please note that each Episode is a Story of its own. As such, the Heroes should be granted experience at the end of each episode.

The first two episodes should be run as consecutive adventures. We recommend that you run at least two other stories between episode two and episode three, and that no fewer than 3 other stories come between episodes three and four.

Game Masters familiar with published adventures may notice that the NPCs in this book are provided with more detailed backgrounds than characters in such products typically are. This allows any of these characters to emerge as recurring characters in the GM's campaign. This story should provide the players with a few nights of action-filled 7th Sea roleplaying, but the characters from this story can keep coming into and going from the campaign's action for years after this story is over. Helena and Ramon can become very good allies, and most of the other characters in this story can become lifelong enemies.

These scenarios are more action-oriented than most of the previously published adventures for 7th Sea. The goal of each scenario is not to find some lost treasure or defeat a savage beast. The Heroes become involved in the plot because it is the right thing for a Hero to do. Heroes should want to stop an infamous band of bandits, not because of any reward offered (although this does provide incentives for Scoundrels to get involved), but because it needs to be done. When a Hero hears a cry for help, he should react to it. He may do so cautiously, to see if it is a trick, but he should still investigate it.

Hopefully, these stories can provide a little excitement for Heroes who are ordinarily caught up in political affairs, and a bit of a breather for those caught up in private vendettas. Game Masters will find some new NPCs and underlying storylines that can add spice to their campaigns.



Episode One: Hunting the Wolf Pack

Overview

In the first episode, the Heroes encounter trouble with a tough band of highwaymen. Ramon and Helena also have a score to settle with the bandits, so they either join the party to stop the bandits, or launch a separate offensive, which happens to coincide with that of the Heroes. In any event, the PCs, Helena, and Ramon should part on friendly terms.

Act One, Scene One: Lunch in the Tavern of the Pollo Rojo

Read the following passage to your players:

Our story begins in a small Castillian town named Villa de los Gordos, not too far from the section of that country that the invading Montaigne army has occupied. It lies twenty-two miles south of the outskirts of occupied territory, directly north of San Teodoro. Villa de los Gordos is famous for its good food. Though the war has had an effect on the quantity of available food, it has not damaged the quality of the victuals available. The best inn in town is the Pollo Rojo, which has comfortable beds in warm rooms for reasonable rates, and a tavern with an excellent selection of the local cuisine.

The action begins in the middle of lunch. You are in the Pollo Rojo's tavern, and you have just received your bowls of soup: a savory mix of vegetables and beef broth. The main course will be coming in about fifteen minutes. The aroma of cooking food wafts throughout the well-lit room. You are seated at a table in the center of the room. It is very busy and the room is full of voices as the customers talk to each other. A young couple sits not far from you, talking

about where they are traveling and what they will do in each place along the way. An overweight man with a red sombrero sits near the door, slurping his soup. The rest of his costume is more in keeping with Inish garb than Castillian. In the rear corner of the room opposite the door stands a small table, where a handsome man with tousled hair, a mustache, and a small scar on his left cheek idly plays with his wineglass.

A tall, thin man with short dark hair walks into the tavern. He looks around, and sees that there are no empty tables. He walks into the room distractedly, inadvertently bumping into the Inishman as he does so. The Inishman pays no attention to the bump, nor does he acknowledge the muttered apology that follows it. He is dressed mostly in black, and his clothing is dusty, as if he has spent a great deal of time on the road of late. He walks up to the man playing with his wineglass, who does not even look up, until the dusty man says his name: "Ramon. I had heard you were back."

The seated man looks up at him, and says in Castillian, "Go away, Tomas, I don't want to talk with you."

The thin fellow says, "I'd like to make you an offer."

"I'm not interested in anything you could offer me. Leave now," says Ramon pointing at the door. Tomas leaves, exiting through the door he came in by. As he passes your table, you see the anger in his face. Ramon pours himself another glass of wine.

Moments later, all of the chatter in the tavern stops. You notice the sudden silence, as all the heads belonging to men in the tavern has swung over to look at the door. A stunningly beautiful woman in a low-cut white blouse stands in the doorway. She is wearing high black boots, black trousers, and a red vest. Her sleeves end in a cuff tied with laces. Her belt has two gloves tucked into it, as well as a rapier on her right hip. A small smile seems to dance across her lips as she surveys the room. She walks over to Ramon and says, "Sorry I'm late getting here. Let's go." Ramon gets up and walks out of the tavern with her. Just as she disappears out the door, your food arrives.

Ten minutes later, a member of the town militia comes in and tacks up a poster to one of the walls. The poster is written in Castillian; it reads, "REWARD, 200 Doubloons (about 1,000 G), for the capture of the pernicious bandit gang known as the Wolf Pack and their current leader, the man known as El Baston, a former accomplice of El Lobo." The picture depicts a thin man with a domino mask and a dark bandana covering his hair. The mouth, chin,

and general proportions look very familiar. They remind you of the man who walked by your table earlier, whom the man named Ramon referred to as Tomas.

Act One, Scene Two: Following the Leads

At this point, the players have several options. They will almost definitely decide to defeat and capture the Wolf Pack, either because it is the right thing to do or for the reward money. In this case, they will need to find out where the bandits are hiding. None of the local residents know the location of the Wolf Pack's hideout, but Ramon does, and he intends to go after the Wolf Pack.

The locals do have some information about the Wolf Pack. Spending a day or two in Villa de los Gordos and asking questions of its inhabitants will allow the Heroes to discover several pieces of information, some of which may be useful and some of which may be mere rumor.

Feel free to role-play out the Heroes' interactions with the villagers. The following pieces of information can be dropped into conversations as you choose. Each one is from a different inhabitant of Villa de los Gordos.

- “There are about twenty men in the Wolf Pack. It used to be much more, but they just lost some of them along with their leader, El Lobo.”
- “The Wolf Pack has been robbing travelers along the roads all around here for the last twelve years. No one ever found their hideout. Sometimes one of them would be captured, but no matter what, they never said where the Wolf Pack hides, and they would never say the names of anyone else in the gang.”
- “I think there are only a dozen men in that gang. How could any group larger than that hide in so small an area for so long?”
- “El Lobo was actually a man from San Teodoro named Guillermo Soldano de Zepeda. He used to be a famous duelist before he faked his death and became a bandit. Got a few men together, including El Baston, and started the Wolf Pack. He got caught in an ambush a week ago, and was executed two days ago. I guess that leaves El Baston in charge now. He's been El Lobo's right-hand-man for years now. I think the Wolf Pack won't last for long with him in charge, he just isn't as crafty as El Lobo was.”
- “The Wolf Pack is a small army. The reason that no one has ever found their hideout is that everyone who has made it to their base camp has been killed to keep its location a secret.”
- “El Baston is either a coward or a genius. The soldiers who captured El Lobo held him prisoner for five days, with almost no guards, just to see if they could bait El Baston into attempting a rescue. El Baston never even attempted to save him.”
- “The Wolf Pack always worked along several of the roads around here. They usually found a blind curve or some other kind of cover to use as the site of an ambush. The unsuspecting traveler would come around the bend and come face to face with them — one man in the road with a drawn blade and several other men along the side of the road pointing guns. The man with the sword would always do all of the talking, and would be the only one who came within arm's reach of the victims. El Lobo, who was an incredible swordsman, would always be the man who approached the victims.”
- “The Wolf Pack has lost men every now and again, but this is the first time they've lost their leader. They'll probably change their tactics a little bit, ambushing victims in different places, that kind of thing.”
- “I was robbed by them three years ago. Took all my money, and my brand-new pistol. El Lobo himself made me hand it over. He had the point of his sword at my neck the whole time. They fled the scene and started heading north, away from the road. I tried to follow them, but they saw me and started shooting at me.”
- “The last time that the Wolf Pack lost anyone of importance was several years ago when the army captured one of El Lobo's lieutenants. He was a young ruffian, very brutal, very brave, but not especially clever or patient. They caught him because he wouldn't drop his loot, and it weighed him down enough for the soldiers to catch him. What was his name? Torres, I think... Ramon Torres, yes, that's it. They sent him to prison, I hear.”

If the party decides to investigate the connection between El Baston and Ramon, the logical thing to do is to find Ramon. He is staying in a room in the Casa del Toro Negro, another



hotel in the village. Ramon is reluctant to talk with the Heroes unless they explain why they want to know about El Baston and the Wolf Pack. When they arrive to talk to him, they find him and the woman with whom he left the tavern sharpening daggers and cleaning pistols. Ramon is cleaning a gun while she sharpens the blades.

Once the Heroes introduce themselves, Ramon gives his name and introduces the woman to them: Helena di Lucani, is fiancé. If the Heroes ask about the Wolf Pack, El Lobo, or El Baston, he will tell them the following:

“I was a member of the Wolf Pack, years ago. El Lobo himself taught me how to use a sword. He made me one of his lieutenants, such as he did with El Baston. I was caught in an ambush, sentenced to prison. I’ve made my way out and back. I met Helena, she’s convinced me to atone for my life of crime by eliminating the problems I caused in my reckless youth.”

“So you saw me in the tavern, when El Baston came into the room and wanted to talk to me? I know what he wanted; he wanted me to join him. He wanted me to become the Pack’s new leader because he no longer had the stomach for it. To tell you the truth, Helena and I are already preparing to attack them at the hideout. I know where it is. We would be very glad for any assistance. Would you be willing to work together to bring the Wolf Pack to justice?”

Helena interjects with a charming grin. “And we won’t take any part of the reward money either. You can keep it all.” Ramon winces when he hears this, but nods.

“Yes, you can keep all the money. I just want to stop them,”

“The Wolf Pack lives in a cave in the wall of a ravine. We called it the Den. I still remember how to get there. They’ve probably increased their security since I was with them. New traps, new members, new problems for us. I don’t know for sure how many of them there are now, or how good they are with the sword. But I suppose we’ll find out.”

If the Heroes seek out Ramon in order to fight him, he and Helena offer resistance, fencing while trying to reason with them. If the players are unwilling to discuss things with them, Ramon and Helena will flee and try to reaching a waiting pair of horses. They will then head for the Wolves’ Den and start attacking the bandits there for as long as they can before being overpowered by them.

If the Heroes do not bother to find Ramon and Helena, they will most likely have to patrol the roads in search of the Wolf Pack. If they do so, then they will encounter Ramon and Helena making their way towards the Den. The pair will offer to join forces against the bandits, which will be phrased very much like the conversation detailed above.

If the Heroes don't decide to go after the bandits, Ramon and/or Helena will approach them for aid. Though prepared to face the bandits alone, they know that the odds are long. The presence of the Heroes would even those odds considerably. They will appeal to them, based on the reward money and the fame and glory that defeating the infamous Wolf Pack will surely bring.

Act two Scene One: Into the Wolves' Den

Read the following passage to your players:

As Ramon leads the way to the Wolves' Den, he tells you about your destination.

"The Wolves' Den is located in a ravine a few miles west-northwest of here. On one side of the ravine lies a cave with a little ledge, barely two feet wide, leads to the mouth. As you walk inside, it continues on sharply to the right, leading to an entryway. Past that door, the cave opens up into a wider section that has two main sections. They live, eat, and sleep in the front, and store their ammunition, supplies, and loot."

Once the Heroes find the ravine, they have a choice to make. They can either follow the narrow ledge that leads from the top of the ravine to the cave, or they can climb down the side of the ravine to the opening.

If the Heroes decide to follow the trail, they run the risk of activating a trap that lies along the ledge, three-quarters of the way to the cave. The trap is a slightly discolored bit of the ledge, which requires a Perception Check with a TN of 30 to notice. This is actually a gap in that has been filled in with loose rubble and covered with dirt. Should anyone step on this spot, they will be sent plummeting to the bottom of the ravine forty feet below. The ravine floor is considered a Firm surface when figuring out the Falling Damage. Because of the ledge's steep slope narrow width, the Heroes will need to make a Finesse + Balance roll against a TN of 10 in order to make it safely to the cave. If anyone fails this roll, he has lost his balance and must make a Panache + Climbing Roll against a TN of 15 to avoid falling to the bottom of the ravine.

If the Heroes decide to climb down to the cave, they will need to make Brawn + Climbing rolls against a TN of 15 in order to avoid falling sixty

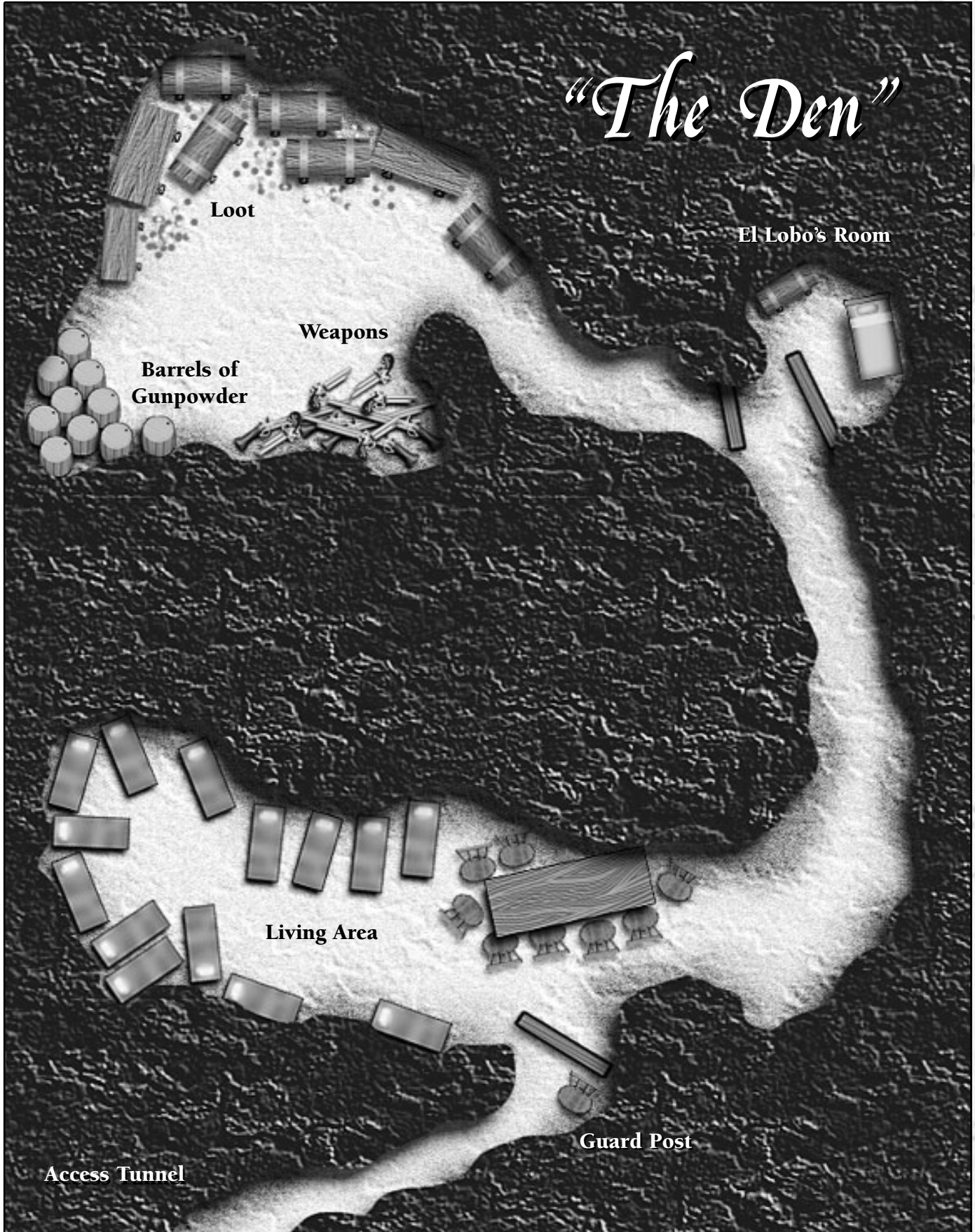
feet to the bottom of the ravine. As mentioned above, the ground at the bottom of the ravine is considered a Firm surface when figuring out the Falling Damage.

Once they enter the cave, the Heroes need to travel along a narrow passage, forcing them to move in single file through the darkness with only the occasional sound of a bat flapping its wings. The air in this cave is close and stuffy, carrying only the slightest of breezes. The atmosphere grows colder and colder as the Heroes proceed, until they reach a wooden gateway wedged crudely into the passage. In front of it stands a colossal man with a bulbous belly and intimidating demeanor. This is El Sangriento, who serves as a lookout for the gang, armed with two pistols and a sword. El Sangriento will hear the Heroes coming and will shoot both of his pistols simultaneously at the first Hero who enters his sight. After that, he will yell for help and charge the Heroes in an attempt to grapple with the closest one. The racket he generates will give the Wolf Pack time to arm themselves.

Beyond the gate lies the den of the infamous Wolf Pack. An pervasive stench fills the entire cave. It smells like a latrine, combined with the blood and sweat from the many men who have inhabited this cave over the last twelve years. Some cots and bedrolls lie scattered to the left, with several empty old wine bottles between them. Across the way stand five rotting stools, making them seem terribly unstable. As one travels beyond them, the cave continues into the darkness.

The Wolf Pack stands here, ready to fight. El Baston stands to the rear of the area, hiding behind his Brutes. If he sees a vulnerable Hero, he will move in and attack that individual with one of his two pistols. Once he has fired both pistols, he will use his rapier. If less than half of the Brutes are left standing, he will retreat to the treasure chamber, where only one opponent can fight him at a time. Should the Heroes press an attack against him, he will try to fall back to the treasure room. If the fight reaches a point where the Wolf Pack is outnumbered and he has taken enough Dramatic Wounds to be Crippled, El Baston will accept any offer of surrender that the Heroes make. If the Heroes make no such offer, Helena will shout at him to surrender when he is the last one standing.

During the fight, Ramon will not make any special effort to fight El Baston. His main goal is to see to it that none of the bandits escapes the



cave. Helena is intent on guarding Ramon's back and will face any bandits who presume to challenge him.

The rear section of the cave is divided in two antechambers; the one on the right contains the private chambers of El Baston. Inside, the surroundings are very sparse, consisting of only one bed and his various personal belongings strewn casually about. The second antechamber filled mostly with piles of loot. Jewelry, Doubloons, Maravedi, Sol, Pistoles, and various other valuables cover the floor. Beside it to the left stand several barrels of ammo and stacks of spare guns that the bandits have managed to pick up along the way. Combined, the cash here adds up to 6,224 G, and the jewelry is worth another 2,000 G. The Wolf Pack has recently robbed a Montaigne payroll shipment, but has squandered most of the money already. Most of the money here comes from that shipment, and is therefore in Pistoles.

Act Two, Scene Two: The Reward

When the Heroes take the Wolf Pack to the authorities, Ramon and Helena do not accompany them.

"This is where we will be leaving you," he says. "I do not think that it would be terribly wise for an escaped convict such as myself to be seen by the authorities, especially the same ones who captured me all those years ago."

Helena insists that neither she nor Ramon will accept any share of the reward or the bandit's loot. "We already told you that we don't want any part of the reward money. You earned it. Keep it, and you can do whatever you want with their loot, too —"

Ramon speaks up, saying: "Wait, wait! I never agreed —"

Helena clamps her lovely hand over his mouth and whispers confidingly, "— although I recommend turning it over to the authorities, also." Then she removes her hand from his mouth.

Ramon stammers a bit, and then says, "As you wish." He sighs. "Thank you all so very much, for helping me set right a wrong that I helped to bring about. I hope that all the errors of my youth can be corrected as well as this one has been. Take care of your rewards, and we'll see you in the Pollo Rojo. I'd like to buy each of you a drink."

As the Heroes head away to take the bandits to the authorities, Ramon turns to Helena and mutters, "Although I have no clue how I'm going to be able to pay for them."

Helena says, "Hush, darling," and kisses him. This seems to mollify Ramon.

Awarding Experience and Reputation

At the end of this episode, each Hero should gain 3 Experience Points for participating in this adventure, plus an additional Experience Point to any Hero who offered El Baston a chance to surrender. If the Heroes successfully capture the Wolf Pack, they will gain 4 Reputation Points each. If they try to capture them but fail, they gain 1 Reputation Point for having the courage, if not the skill, to stand up to the bandits.

NPCs

The Wolf Pack

The bandit gang known as the Wolf Pack is designed to be challenging for any group of Heroes. There is at least one Brute Squad in the gang for every player character, with a Threat Rating equal to the highest Trait that the Hero possesses, up to a maximum of 4. If the Hero has a Trait higher than 4, then there is a second Brute Squad with a Threat Rating three less than his highest Trait. For example, if there are 3 Heroes, Albert, Blaise, and Carlos, and Albert's highest Trait is 4, Blaise's is a 5, and Carlos' is a 3, then the Wolf Pack will consist of 4 Brute Squads, two with a Threat Rating 4 (one from Albert, one from Blaise), one with a Threat Rating 3 (from Carlos), and one with a Threat Rating 2 (3 less than Blaise's highest Trait).

Each of the bandits is armed with two pistols and a rapier. They are proficient with both weapons. If you have the *Villain's Kit*, please remember that they are Castillian Brutes, and thus they are more graceful than generic Brutes. They roll and keep an extra die (+1k1) when attacking. When wielded by Brutes, pistols do 15 Wounds per successful Hit, and rapiers do 6 Wounds per successful Hit.

El Sangriento, the Lookout

El Sangriento is one of El Lobo's lieutenants. He is not happy with El Baston's leadership, and has openly criticized it more than once. As a punishment for his insolence, El Baston has assigned El Sangriento to be the lookout for the next month. As such, he is required to remain in the dark outer tunnel of the cave, allowing only members of the Wolf Pack to pass through alive. If he feels he cannot handle an intruder, he is to give a hue and cry, alerting the rest of the bandits to the danger.

El Sangriento is a colossal man with a rotund belly and an intimidating demeanor. Although he carries a sword, he prefers to fire his pistols and then grapple with an enemy.

El Sangriento, the Lookout (Henchman)

Brawn: 4

Finesse: 2

Wits: 2

Resolve: 3

Panache: 2

Reputation: -17

Advantages: Keen Senses, Large, Night Trained

Criminal: Gambling 1, Shadowing 1, Stealth 3, Ambush 4

Hunter: Fishing 2, Tracking 3, Traps 2

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 2, Throwing 2, Swimming 2

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 2, Parry (Fencing) 1

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3

Wrestling: Grapple 3, Bear Hug 2

El Baston (The Stick)

Young Tomas grew up on the streets of Castille. He was forced to fend for himself at a young age, having to find food, clothing, and shelter wherever he could. Due to his poor diet, he was extremely thin. The other children in the area started calling him "El Baston," which means "The Stick." It has been that way ever since. This hard existence taught him many things. It was easy for people to beat him up so he was not fond of confrontation. He learned how to hide, how to avoid being followed, and how to fight dirty if need be. He learned that if you knew where to look you could pretty much find anything you might need. When El Baston was about seventeen years of age, a man by the name of El Lobo took notice of his abilities. He asked El Baston if he was interested in joining his gang.

When El Baston first saw the Wolf Pack he was quite impressed. Here was a band of men that



had been together for some time, who opposed the authorities and who took care of one another. As it turned out El Lobo was a Master of the Aldana School, and occasionally taught a few of the members of the Wolf Pack how to fight in that School's Style. One of his better pupils was a young man by the name of Ramon Torres, a very charismatic individual who also had a knack for relieving the wealthy of their worldly possessions.

Things seem to be going quite well. El Baston learned how to fence a bit and became quite adept at setting up ambushes. On his missions, He always made sure that the Pack outnumbered their victims. Then one day, Ramon was captured and tossed into prison for quite and El Lobo more or less made El Baston his second in command. He performed this task quite well for a few years, but it was clear that he lacked the leadership skills necessary to ever take control of the gang. His shortcomings became painfully clear when El Lobo was captured by the authorities. The bandit leaders was scheduled to be executed shortly thereafter, but there was still enough time for the Wolf Pack to try to rescue its leader. El Baston had the men and resources but felt it was an ambush and chose to not go in. His lack of daring cost El Lobo his life, and the rest of the Pack has never forgotten it.

Since the execution, things have started to slow down for the Wolf Pack. The bandits did not have quite the enthusiasm they once had. El Baston has tried to do his best, but he cannot coordinate the Pack's activities with the flair and bravery of El Lobo. When he heard rumors that Ramon was free and had returned to Villa de los Gordos, he set out to find him. Surely, he could replace El Lobo, leaving Baston to return to the role of trusted lieutenant. When he found him in El Pollo Rojo, however, Ramon refused to even listen to him. Now El Baston must figure out what to do next, and quickly. The authorities are beginning to look in the Wolf Pack's direction and without something big soon, the gang may begin to splinter.

El Baston is doing what he can to hold the pack together. He wishes El Lobo had not been captured but lacked the courage to free him. When fighting, he sends out a huge number of Brutes as he plans to ensure victory. He never fights unless the odds are in his favor or he is given no other choice.

El Baston is not a very physically imposing individual. He is well over six feet tall but he is very thin. He keeps his dark hair cut short so that it does not get tangled in the laces of the domino mask he wears while working. He dresses in black clothing and likes to wear a black bandana over his hair and forehead to further conceal his features.

El Baston (Villain)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 4

Wits: 4

Resolve: 3

Panache: 4

Reputation: -24

Arcana: Cowardly

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Keen Senses, Night Trained

Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sidestep 2, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1

Commander: Ambush 4, Strategy 2, Tactics 3

Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Lip Reading 2, Oratory 2

Criminal: Ambush 4, Scrounging 3, Shadowing 3, Stealth 5

Urchin: Scrounging 3, Stealth 5, Street Navigation 3, Survival 3

Aldana (Journeyman): Feint (Fencing) 4, Riposte (Fencing) 4, Tagging (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 5

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Kick 2

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 3

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3

Rider: Ride 2

Episode Two: *A Friend in Need*

Overview

The second part of the adventure occurs some time after the first, but is still set in the same area. The Heroes should still be in Villa de los Gordos. Ramon's patriotism has gotten him into trouble. He has been captured by a Montaigne patrol and now Helena comes to the PCs pleading with them to help her rescue him before he is executed.

Act One, Scene One: *A Damsel in Distress*

Read the following passage to your players:

Once again, our story begins in the tavern of the Pollo Rojo inn in the Castillian town of Villa de los Gordos. A week or two has passed since you fought the Wolf Pack. You are just finishing your dinner, when suddenly Helena bursts in, looking beautiful but dusty and out of breath. She sees you, and dashes up to your table. She begins speaking to you without catching her breath or having a chance to think carefully about the words she is saying.

"Thank Theus you're here! I need your help... Ramon... Ramon has been captured by the invaders! They're taking him to Caballos Nuevos to execute him at dawn! Please, you have to help me stop them!"

Assuming the Heroes can get Helena to calm down, she reveals the source of her consternation. After the capture of the Wolf Pack, she and Ramon decided to do their patriotic duty by harassing the invading Montaigne. They launched a brief ambush against a Montaigne patrol, and it went off so successfully that Ramon immediately set out on a more ambitious attack. The Montaigne captured him, and Helena was left fleeing for her life. Ramon's status as an ex-bandit made it very easy

for the Montaigne to sentence him; he is scheduled to die at dawn the next morning.

Helena pleads with the Heroes to help her rescue her love. She would go alone, but there are too many guards, and she fears the effort would do Ramon no good. But with the Heroes behind her, they can ride in, snatch Ramon from his captors, and ride back to free Castille before the Montaigne can react. She is certain that with them on her side, her lover can be saved.

The players should be quietly encouraged to help this damsel in distress.

Act One, Scene Two: The Journey through Enemy Lines

In order to get to Caballos Nuevos, the Heroes need to travel rapidly across the boundary between free Castille and the occupied Castille. They should be able to pass through the embankments marking La Muralla al Ultimo (Helena knows the soldiers there, and things are fairly quiet this far east). Once past the wall, however, they will encounter Montaigne soldiers

patrolling the area. If the Heroes stick to the established roads in order to make better time, they will meet four patrols. If they avoid using the roads, they will meet with one patrol.

The Patrols (Brutes)

Each Patrol is a pair of Threat Rating 2 Montaigne Brute Squads armed with muskets and bayonets. Because they are Montaigne Brutes, they get one extra attack per Round, as per the Villain's Kit. The Brutes will shout out "Halt! Who goes there?" in Montaigne. If they believe that the Heroes represent any kind of threat, they will fire on them with their muskets, inflicting 15 Wounds per successful Hit. After that, the soldiers will charge with their bayonets, doing 9 Wounds per successful Hit.

It's possible, of course, that certain Heroes can talk their way past the soldiers without violence. GMs should use their best discretion and allow the Heroes to do what they feel is best.

Act One, Scene Three: Snatched from the Hands of Death

The execution takes place in the central square of Caballos Nuevos, a small town noted for its horse trading market. No horses are there now, however, because the Montaigne army has commandeered them. To the southwest of the square lies a worn-out and somewhat beaten-up building, with a tavern on the first floor and a small inn on the second. A few shops stand to the east of the inn with the owner's meager homes right above them. Their broken wooden shutters creak as the soft wind moves them back and forth. The center of town stands to the north of the homes, occupied by a large grassy piece of land and a stone well. Two houses line the east side of town, separated only by a narrow alley paved with cobblestones, wet and moldy from the rubbish thrown between them. To the west is the tall imposing jailhouse, a stony wonder with moss finding its way up the dirty gray walls. However, the walls are much sturdier and more rigid than they appear. On the first floor is the courthouse, with the guard barracks right above it. The actual jail cells are on the third story, with tiny barred windows serving as the only source of light and air. The gallows stand in front of the courthouse

New Equipment

Bayonets (Reprinted from Montaigne)

A typical Thean bayonet is simply a long knife blade with a roughened handle designed to fit inside the barrel of a musket. When it is mounted in place, the musket can be used as a polearm (3k2 Heavy Weapon, but uses the Polearm Skill). It takes one Action to either mount or to unmount a plug bayonet. A musket fired with a mounted plug bayonet will explode, inflicting two dice of damage to its wielder.

Montaigne has recently developed the attached bayonet, which clips to the side of the musket barrel and does not prevent the weapon from firing.

Since a bayonet does the same damage as a broadsword, it is considered a Large Weapon when used by Brutes, and will inflict 9 Damage per successful Hit.



with steps leading up to the wooden platform and a noose ready and waiting for its next victim.

A large crowd of the local citizenry currently occupies the grassy central square. They have been gathered here by the Montaigne troops to witness to Ramon's execution.

Currently, six Montaigne soldiers are escorting Ramon up the stair to the platform. Three men precede him up the stairs and three follow him. Each carries a musket with a bayonet. His executioner, a large man wearing a hood, stands atop the platform by the gallows. He has a coiled whip in his hands. Ramon's hands are tied together, and he looks like he has been beaten during the night. He has taken 3 Dramatic Wounds between being captured and being beaten, so he will be Crippled during the rest of this episode.

To the north of the platform stand twenty-four Montaigne soldiers and a lieutenant. To the south stand another twelve soldiers and a sergeant. The soldiers and the sergeant stand with their muskets ready and their bayonets attached. The lieutenant stands with his rapier drawn and his arm extended. He is addressing the crowd.

"You have all seen how we have tried to treat you fairly. You have all seen how my men and I have taken no more from you than was absolutely necessary. You have seen how poorly the soldiers that we have replaced treated you. And yet you still do not seem to appreciate the mercy we have shown you."

Ramon has reached the top of the stairs and is being led toward the gallows. The lieutenant, a haughty man name Lalonde, continues speaking.

"Despite my merciful treatment, you have never shown me any gratitude. Instead, you have repeatedly undermined my authority. I have wondered how the guerrillas from Castille could make it so far behind our lines. I wondered how they knew that we were making our payroll shipment to our troops on the front lines a month ago. The only answer that makes any sense is that they were receiving information from citizens of this community.

“Well, today I have something to show you. I give you one of your so-called freedom fighters. My men captured him last night. Meet your dashing hero. His name is Ramon Torres. And before you start praising him for trying to kill my men, there is something about him that you ought to know. This man that you are so willing to glorify is in fact a former member of a notorious group of bandits known as the Wolf Pack. This man was the right-hand-man of the notorious El Lobo himself, and was caught and imprisoned by your former government. He has only recently escaped from prison returned to his home illegally. Why, if it were not for our efforts, he would be robbing from you instead of us!

“Now we are going to do for you what King Sandoval would not. We are going to eliminate this man, this public menace who steals from his community and threatens his countrymen. But before we hang him, we will make sure he learns a lesson to take with him into the Abyss. Sergeant Detmer is going to whip him, giving him one lash for each of the five soldiers that he put out of action last night, plus another five lashes for his crimes against you people. I am a very fair man. I punish him for what he has done to you as well as for what he has done to us. Sergeant Detmer, you may proceed!”

Allow the Heroes to proceed as they see fit. If they do not act by the time the lieutenant finishes his speech, then the soldiers on the gallows tie a rope from Ramon’s already bound hands to the gallows pole and tear off his shirt. The executioner stands behind Ramon and raises his whip to give him his first lash. “No!” Helena cries, and shoots the whip out of the executioner’s hand. “My aim just isn’t what it used to be,” she mutters, winking at the closest Hero.

The soldiers, including the guards on the platform, bring their arms to bear on the crowd, and the lieutenant draws his main gauche and stands behind his men. “Fire when you think you have a target!” he tells them. The crowd scatters, not wanting to get shot. Helena drops her pistol and draws her sword and dagger. The executioner goes to retrieve his whip, which he will use in combat until he can get his hands on a better weapon.

The combat may then proceed apace. The Heroes have the advantage of being (relatively) indistinguishable from the Castillian crowd, and should have enough time to reach Ramon on the gallows, provided they act with appropriate speed. Once they have him, they must escape from Caballos Nuevos without being captured by the Montaigne.

Act One, Scene Four: Escape to Free Castille

If any of the Montaigne troops from Caballos Nuevos are able to pursue the Heroes, they will chase them until the Heroes are no longer in sight. Once again, the Heroes need to make a choice between traveling by the roads or avoiding the roads in order to encounter fewer patrols.

If the Heroes go back by using the roads, they will come across four Montaigne Foot Patrols and two Montaigne Mounted Patrols. If they travel away from the roads, then they will encounter two Montaigne Foot Patrols and three Montaigne Mounted Patrols. These patrols will fire on the Heroes and attempt to close with them for melee combat. If the Heroes flee from them, then they will chase the Heroes all the way back to free Castille. Use the Chase Rules on pages 169-172 to determine the outcome (presumably, this is a Riding Chase). If you’re feeling generous, the Heroes may encounter a Castillian picket line from La Muralla, who help them get free of the pursuing Montaigne.

Once the Heroes arrive back in Villa de los Gordos, Helena and Ramon will want to thank them heartily before saying good-bye. Ramon will speak first.

“Thank you, my friends. Thank you for saving me from my death. I am now forever in your debt. I owe you my life. If you ever need me, send for me. If I receive the message, I will come to your aid, no matter what the cost.”

Helena says, with tears forming in her eyes, “Thank you so very much! Take care of yourselves! I’m sure we’ll be seeing each other again, and I’ll buy you all a round of drinks when we do.”

Ramon then says, “I think the time has come for Helena and I to go someplace else for a while. I get into too much trouble here. There are too many of my roots here, and I keep getting tangled in them. I am sure we’ll meet again someday. Take good care of yourselves. Farewell.” Then he and Helena leave.

“Good bye, everyone!” says Helena as they leave. “So, where shall we go?” she says to Ramon as they go.

“We’ve tried my hometown, now, let’s try yours next.”



Awarding Experience and Reputation

Each Hero who went to help Helena save Ramon will gain 3 Experience Points. If a Hero made a single-handed effort to liberate Ramon, he gets 1 extra Experience Point. Any Heroes who engaged Lieutenant Lalonde in melee combat gain an extra Experience Point and a 1-Point Hunted Background. Lalonde remembers their face and their fighting style, and he intends to repay his adversary someday.

Each of the Heroes gains a Connections (Ally) Advantage for no cost. The Ally is Ramon Torres. Rescuing Ramon from the Montaigne will give the Heroes 2 Reputation Points. If any of the players soundly defeats Lieutenant Lalonde in melee combat without significant assistance, then that player gains 2 extra Reputation Points.

NPCs

The Montaigne Foot Patrols (Brutes)

Each Foot Patrol is a pair of Threat Rating 2 Montaigne Brute Squads armed with muskets which inflict 15 Wounds per successful Hit, and bayonets, which inflict 9 Wounds per successful Hit. Because they are Montaigne Brutes, they get one extra attack per Round, as per the Villain's Kit.

The Montaigne Mounted Patrols (Brutes)

Each Mounted Patrol consists of two Threat Rating 2 Montaigne Brute Squads armed with pistols and sabers. They are riding horses and are trained to fight from horseback. Because they are Montaigne Brutes, they get one extra attack per Round, as per the Villain's Kit. They shoot first, doing 15 Wounds per successful Hit, then draw their sabers and close for combat, doing 6 Wounds per successful Hit.

The Montaigne Soldiers (Brutes)

There are eight Brute Squads of Threat Rating 2. Each Brute is armed with a musket and a bayonet. These are Montaigne Brutes, so they get one extra attack per Round, as per the Villain's Kit. They will fire first, inflicting 15 Wounds per successful Hit, and then use their bayonets, inflicting 9 Hits per successful Hit.

Sergeant Franz Detmer, the Executioner

Franz Detmer lived a rather uneventful life as a farmer until the War of the Cross changed everything. With the constant flow of troops moving throughout Eisen it was only a matter of time before they came to his small farm. When the Objectionist troops arrived, they needed of supplies and chose his farm and several others in the area to commandeer them from. He fought back as best he could but he was overwhelmed and left unconscious in his ruined field. When he finally regained consciousness he discovered that his house had been burned, his fields destroyed and his few livestock stolen by the Objectionists.

Luckily for him, his father taught him how to live off the land and survive on his own with little or nothing to help him. Eventually he discovered a Vaticine encampment and decided to join them in order to repay the Objectionists for the dirt that they had dealt him. When the fighting finally ended and he looked to the nation that he called home, he saw total destruction. He tried for some time to get his field to produce but he was unsuccessful. He fled his native land soon thereafter in search of a job: bartending, physical labor, anything that would keep him fed. While wondering through a town he met up with a band of mercenaries calling themselves the Giftzahne aus der Drachen (Fangs of the Dragon), and joined their ranks. The Giftzahne had been hired by the Montaigne army to help out in the war with Castille, which Franz believed had to offer more opportunities than Eisen did.

They were fighting along the border in Occupied Castille when their Montaigne commander ordered them to attack a heavily defended section of the line. The Castillians defended themselves ferociously, and all but a few of the Eisen were slaughtered. After that battle Franz found himself once again without money. This time it was due to some Montaigne commander who had no regard for the troops fighting his battles. Now he felt that he had a purpose: to avenge the lives of his comrades. During his investigations he came across Lieutenant Lalonde, who informed him that the perpetrator now held a garrison in Occupied Castille. Lieutenant Lalonde, understanding the pain Franz was going through, offered him a job and made arrangements to have him work in the same town as the perpetrator. Franz, knowing the political situation and not wanting to be broke and on the run, killed the captain who was in charge, and left evidence implicating Castillian



1 Story



2 Story



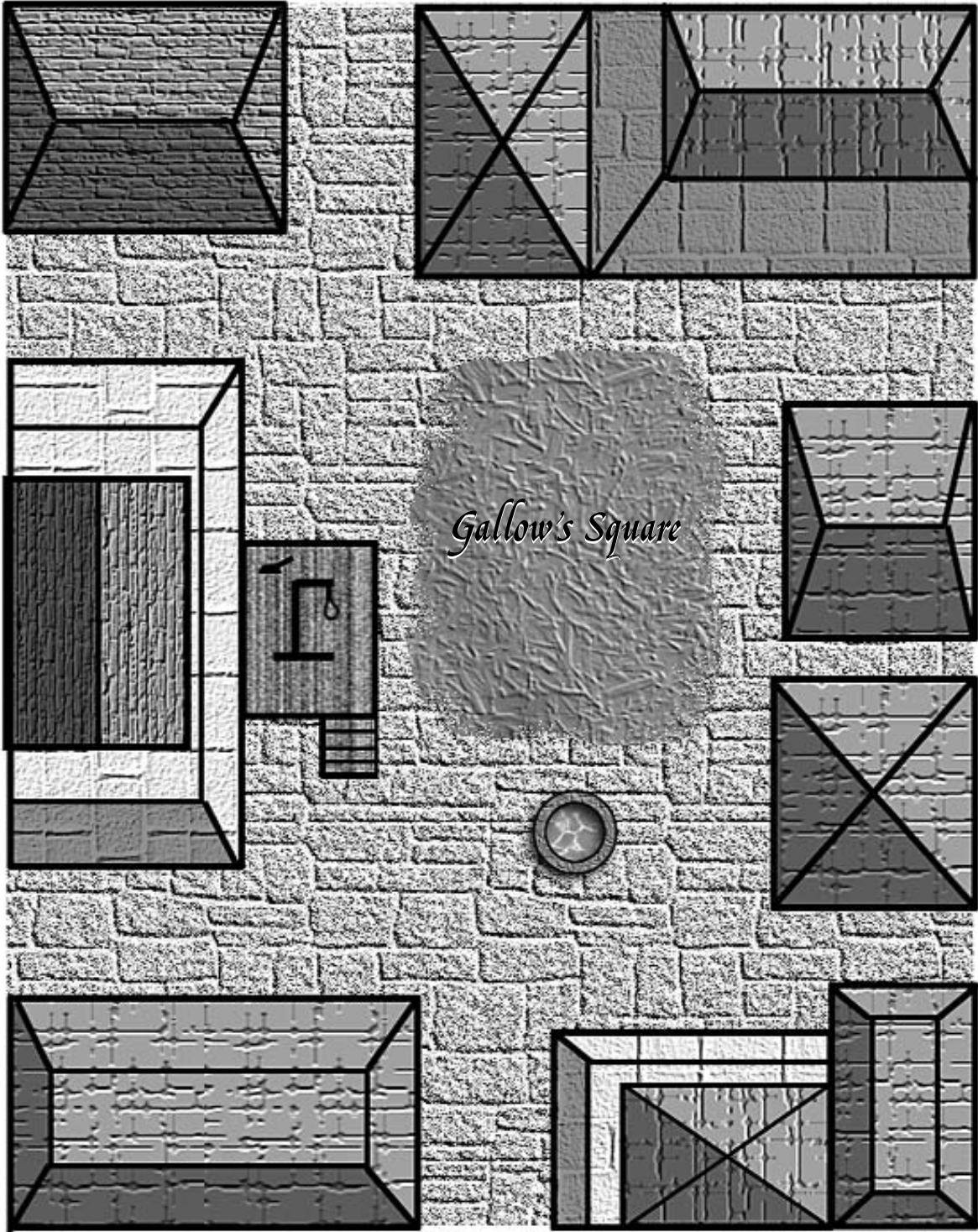
3 Story



Street



Grass



guerillas. The captain's unfortunate demise opened the door for Lieutenant Lalonde to take his place. Since this incident, Franz has found himself performing some of Lalonde's less savory duties but he no longer has to worry about being penniless.

Franz is not an evil man. It's just that he's afraid of becoming destitute again. He hates his job and the pain it causes but until he finds something else there is no way that he's leaving. When it comes to fighting, he doesn't play around. He is very straightforward and direct, and he will not back down even if the odds are fierce. His standard tactic is to charge in and take out whoever is closest. He pinpoints the greatest threats first, and will ignore wounded opponents over those more able to fight.

Detmer is tall and has very wide shoulders and a barrel chest. His frame bristles with muscles. He keeps his blond hair a bit longer than most Eisen men do. He has a tattoo of a fang over his heart, marking him as a member of the Giftzahne aus der Drachen mercenary company. His voice is a booming bass, and he often uses it to intimidate his foes before breaking them.



Sergeant Franz Detmer, the Executioner (Henchman)

Brawn: 5

Finesse: 3

Wits: 2

Resolve: 3

Panache: 2

Reputation: -13

Advantages: Castillian, Montaigne, Commission (Sergeant in the Montaigne Army), Large, Specialty (Interrogation)

Hunter: Skinning 3, Survival 3, Traps 2

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 2, Lifting 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 2

Firearms: Attack (Firearm) 2

Heavy Weapons: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 4, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 3

Specialty: Interrogation 4

Whip: Attack (Whip) 3

Wrestling: Bear Hug 2, Grapple 3, Head Butt 2

The Crowd (Brutes)

The Crowd consists of Castillian civilians who really don't want to get hurt. Unfortunately, they will panic at the first sign of trouble (such as a rescue attempt), which could make things difficult for the rescuers as they stampede out of the area. At the same time, however, their presence makes a fine mask for the Heroes activities, and the confusion they generate can help even the odds against the Montaigne. During the first three rounds of the panic, each Hero in the immediate area will take an attack from a Threat Rating 1 Brute Squad as the mob jostles and bumps him while it is fleeing past him. This attack happens at the beginning of Phase 1, before the first action that would normally occur on that Phase. However, any Montaigne soldiers who attempt to close with Heroes in such circumstances will also take an attack as if from a Threat 1 Brute Squad. Canny Heroes will use the confusion to approach the gallows and rescue Ramon without taking damage from the Montaigne.

Lieutenant Gervaise Lalonde

From an early age Gervaise was known as a lady's man. He has dashing good looks and can be quite eloquent when he chooses. He has used these traits to their fullest advantage, such as the time he convinced a young lady to give him information about her father's dealings. He blackmailed the unfortunate man with it for years, until his target finally passed away.

Gervaise joined the Montaigne army at an early age. The money was nice but the real purpose was for the power he intended to gain. He received his commission by charming several influential ladies in the Montaigne court and also by a few well-placed bribes, extortion and a bit of blackmail. Nothing was beneath him and he would not let anyone or anything stand in his way. As things turned out, the only place for real advancement was on the Castillian front. He arranged for transfer as quickly as possible; once there, he contributed very little and was not liked by his men. He had a reputation for being quite reckless with his men. In hopes of impressing his superiors, he hired a mercenary group called the Giftzahne aus der Drachen from Eisen, and turned them against a heavily-defended Castillian strongpoint. That engagement turned out to be the last for the Eisen company; only a few survivors escaped the carnage. Lalonde held his regular forces in reserve and failed to deploy them at the key point.

Lalonde knew that he was responsible for the fiasco, but somehow managed to turn it into another opportunity to advance himself. One of the Eisen mercenaries confronted him, asking who he should hold accountable for the slaughter of their unit, apparently unaware that Lalonde himself gave the order. This was just the opportunity Gervaise needed. He told the Eisen that he would check into it and notify him in a few days time. When the Eisen returned a few days later, Gervaise told him it was Captain Driant, a rather naive officer commanding a garrison near the southern front. Gervaise went to his superiors and requested a transfer to a position which better matched his skills. When word of Captain Driant's death at the hands of the Castillian resistance reached his commanders they immediately sent Gervaise in to replace him. When Gervaise entered Caballos Nuevos, he immediately set things in motion to try and capture the "conspirators" of the terrible plot to kill the Driant. As luck would have it, one of his squads was able to capture a Castillian guerrilla named Ramon Torres.

Gervaise is a rather cunning individual who desires power over all things. He will use anyone he can to manipulate the situation to his benefit. He has no sense of loyalty or honor, and hence would be happy to slaughter his own men to get what he wants. At first he fights very cautiously, but if his opponent appears to be an inferior swordsman he will employ Tagging. When the

New Equipment

Whip (Reprinted from Castille for the Game Master's convenience)

A whip is a long lash, often made of rawhide. It is a one-handed weapon that uses the Whip Skill for attacks, and inflicts 0k1 damage, but its wielder's Action dice are considered 1 lower when attacking, and 5 is always added to the wielder's Initiative Total. A whip costs 2 G.

opportunity presents itself he will also use Double-Parry. Note that if the player characters happen to either disfigure his face or blemish his record they will make an enemy. If he loses his commission then he will make it his life's goal to repay the miscreants responsible.

Gervaise Lalonde is a handsome man with light brown hair and bright green eyes. He keeps his hair and beard in the style of the latest fashion back home, and pays extra to have his uniforms made from the finest materials. He walks with an arrogant swagger. Whenever possible, he tries to make himself look better by denigrating someone else.

Lieutenant Gervaise Lalonde (Villain)

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 4

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 4

Reputation: -31

Arcana: Ambitious

Advantages: Montaigne (R/W), Castille (R/W), Appearance (Above Average), Commission (Lieutenant)

Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 1, Oratory 3, Politics 2, Scheming 3, Seduction 2, Sincerity 2

Spy: Bribery 4, Cryptography 1, Forgery 2, Shadowing 2, Sincerity 2, Stealth 2

Commander: Incitation 2, Leadership 1, Logistics 2, Strategy 2, Tactics 2

Valroux (Apprentice): Double-Parry (Fencing/Knife) 3, Exploit Weakness (Valroux) 3, Feint (Fencing) 4, Tagging (Fencing) 2

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 4

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3

Rider: Ride 4, Trick Riding 2

Sergeant Demont Vernard

Demont Vernard is the son of an innkeeper in the small town of Ringnes, Montaigne. At the age of twenty he took over the inn when his father passed away. A few years later he met a pleasant young woman and they were married. Things could not have been going better for Vernard until the war with Castille began just as his first child was about to be born. Demont was conscripted into the army and sent to fight.

While fighting in Castille, Demont ended up under the command of a Lieutenant Driant. Driant was a fine officer and did what he could to help his men. In turn, his unit lost fewer soldiers than most others. At the battle of Riaza, the Montaigne forces were suffering terrible losses and it looked as if the Castillians might win the day. Lieutenant Driant ordered about forty men to come with him and try to get in a position to at least help out their battered right flank. He chose his position exquisitely well. In the attack which followed, one of the men managed to fell the Castillian commander; bereft of leadership, the enemy was forced to fall back. As a result of this the lieutenant became a captain and Demont received the rank of corporal.

As the fighting continued, Demont's respect for the captain increased. Eventually the war slowed down and his unit ended up garrisoning in a small town on the Castillian border. About a month later, Demont received another promotion to the rank of sergeant, and Captain Driant promised him some home leave, since he had not seen his family in two years. Unfortunately, the Castillian resistance managed to kill Driant before he could process the orders. The new officer in charge, Lieutenant Lalonde, seemed to slip in very easily — too easily for Demont's tastes. The day Lieutenant Lalonde took over was also the day he found out that his leave would not be cleared. He is rather bitter about this but he has been a soldier too long to just leave.

Demont is a caring individual, trying to find the people responsible for the death of the captain.

He is tired of war and wants only to get home in one piece, but his sense of justice cries out to avenge his superior. He keeps his head shaved so that his men can easily identify him on the field. The color of his eyes is a deep wet blue. His pain at being in the army and away from his family is obvious to anyone who speaks with him for even a minute.

Sergeant Demont Vernard (Henchman)

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 3

Wits: 2

Resolve: 4

Panache: 3

Reputation: 12

Advantages: Castillian, Commission (Sergeant)

Guide: Climbing 2, Direction Sense 2, Ride 2, Stealth 1, Street Navigation 2, Survival 3, Tracking 1, Trail Signs 2

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 4

Heavy Weapon: Attack: (Heavy Weapon) 3, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 3

Polearm: Attack: (Polearm) 3, Parry (Polearm) 3



Episode Three: The Scarred Man

Overview

The third adventure, which takes place in Porto Spatia in the section of Vodacce controlled by the Bernoulli family, involves the Heroes being hired to put an end to one of Alessandro's criminal activities. After some fighting with his Brutes and Henchmen, including his Fate Witch wife Francesca, Alessandro himself escapes.

Act One, Scene One: An Invitation

When you feel the moment is right, have the party contacted by a dark-haired messenger. He is clothed in Vodacce garments, and speaks with a pronounced accent. He bears a letter and hands it to the member of the party with the highest Reputation before departing. The letter is written in neat, compact handwriting and says (in Vodacce) :

Hello,

My name is Savino Bonidicci. I am a tailor in Porto Spatia, Vodacce. Thirty years ago, I was the tailor to the Governor of this city, but now I have fallen out of favor. My business has suffered and I have been forced to move my shop to a less expensive part of the city.

The merchants in this area are being forced to pay protection money to a syndicate of criminals. No one has ever seen their leader, but they speak of him in hushed tones as the Scarred Man. His agents come weekly and collect money from us. Those who do not pay suffer the consequences, which may vary from having some merchandise destroyed or stolen to violently losing one's shop or one's life.

The Governor of this city, Albano Bernoulli, is a corrupt hedonist. His men are too corrupt to protect citizens such as myself. A friend of mine tells me that you once stopped a vicious group of criminals in Castille, so I am writing to you to ask you and your friends to come and rid us of this terrible menace. A merchant trader who owes me a favor is willing to transport you to Porto Spatia for free. Simply show this letter to the captain of any ship belonging to Claudio Bernoulli, and he will bring you here.

When you arrive, go to the Golden Eagle inn. The owner, Stefano Salvadori, will put you up in rooms I have arranged for you until we can meet.

If you can liberate us from these payments and break the hold that The Scarred Man has over our lives, the local merchants will compensate you in whatever way we can. Please come and save us from these lampreys.

May Theus guide you safely over the waters to us.

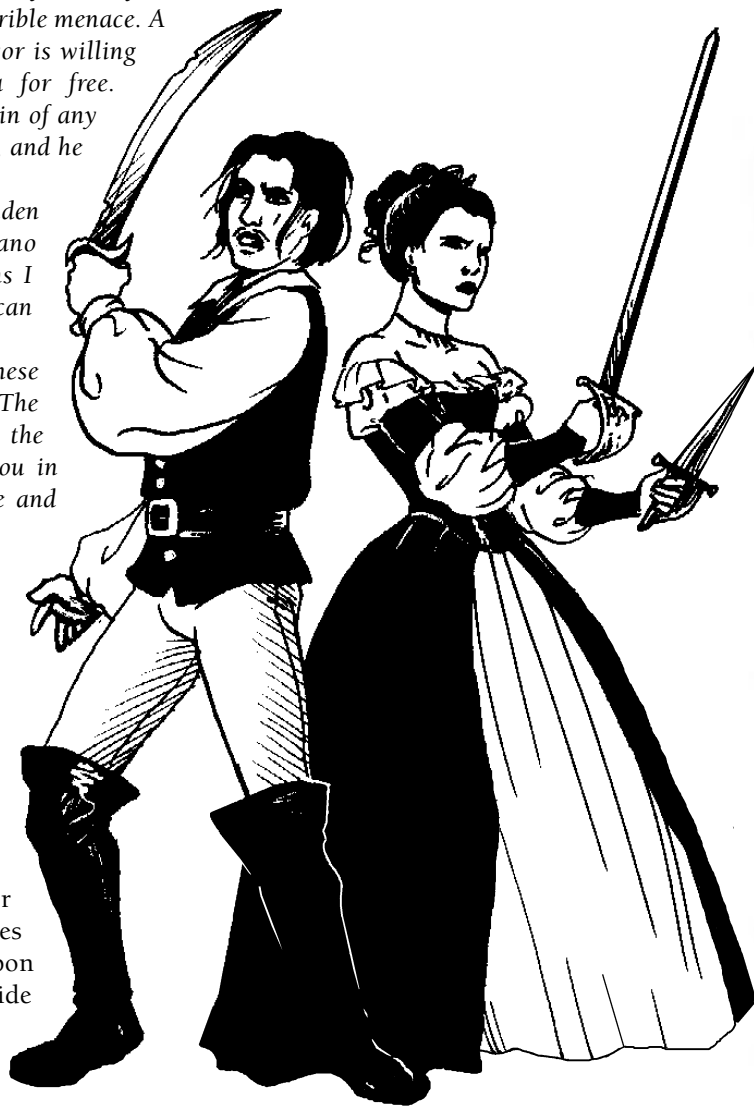
Your humble servant,
—Savino Bonidicci

It so happens that there is a ship, the Santa Rosa, owned by Claudio Bernoulli in the nearest harbor, which is set to sail for Porto Spatia on the day after the Heroes find it. It will take them to that city without any other incident. (Alternately, the Heroes can take their own ship, or rely upon previously established NPCs to guide them on their way.) You are free to make the journey as exciting or uneventful as you wish.

Act Two, Scene One: Suspicious Activity at the Docks

The Heroes arrive in Porto Spatia, the southernmost city of the Teramo region of Vodacce. The city is located on the tip of the Vodacce coast. Traders from Montaigne, Castille, and even the Empire of the Crescent Moon fill this port's docks (see *Vodacce*, page 45). On the plains to the north of the city the huge, black-walled St. Baldarrazzo monastery may be found. The city is known for its corrupt government, its profitable trade and the gangs that rule its streets.

The Heroes may have trouble finding directions to the Golden Eagle. While one of the



dockworkers tries to explain the route to take, a group of about a dozen men arrive at the dock. One of them, a blond fellow with a burly mustache, goes inside a nearby building, saying: "Wait here, boys, while I pick up my package." His Vodacce is good, but he has an Avalon accent. He does not appear to be armed. The rest of the men mill about the dock. One of them is dressed in very fine, upper class Vodacce clothing, and walks with a cane. However, he has bright red hair, which is not common in this nation. He does not appear to be armed at all, but all the other men have rapiers.

The man who has gone inside is Morgan Tavendish, one of the Scarred Man's field lieutenants. When the syndicate collects protection money from the docks, they send two teams of field agents. This week, it is Morgan Tavenish and Serk Olofsson. Each has a Squad of Brutes. Because the Heroes have arrived so late in the day, most of the dockworkers have gone home. Morgan comes out a few minutes later, carrying a small box, and the team will leave. If the Heroes start a fight with these men, they will respond with violence. Otherwise, they will leave peacefully. Serk's men do not threaten anyone while they are at the dock, but they may size up the Heroes, and may make a few snide comments about anyone who does not seem to be from Vodacce. Articles of clothing or hairstyles that strike them as odd will be their most common targets. Unfortunately, these men are rather ignorant, so they are likely to poke fun at a Vestenmannavnjar man's braided hair or a Highlander's kilt.

Should the Heroes start a fight with the Brutes, Serk will cry out "Morgan!" and he and his team will join in the fray. Morgan will come dashing out of the office on his first action to join in as

well. During the battle, Serk wields his swordcane, and the Bullies use their rapiers. Morgan stays back, using the eight throwing knives concealed upon his person to incapacitate promising targets. If he runs out of knives, he resorts to using his Dirty Fighting Skill. If the battle does not appear to be going very well, the lieutenants will flee to report the Heroes' interference to Valentino.

Act Two, Scene Two: Night at the Golden Eagle

Once the excitement at the dock dies down, read the following to the players:

After walking carefully along several blocks, following the directions you received earlier, you have found the Golden Eagle. Stefano Salvadori is a middle-aged man with a receding hairline and a wide smile. When he is shown Bonidicci's letter, he beams and he greets you very enthusiastically.

"Welcome! Welcome to my Golden Eagle! My good friend Savino told me you would be coming, and I have kept a set of rooms for you on the fourth floor. Here, let me show you the way. I will send an errand boy to fetch Savino first thing in the morning. I would send him now, but my friend is a very old man and he needs his sleep. Come, come, this way."

The inn is six stories tall. The ground level is a common room where simple but palatable fare is served at mealtimes. The chairs are comfortable but not luxuriant. The upper levels are reached by climbing a spiral staircase in the southeast corner of the building. The Heroes' rooms are located on the fourth floor, along the western edge. The windows give a good view of a set of small shops with apartments over them.

The Heroes' rooms are cozy and comfortable, but not very big. Each room provides three smallish beds; Heroes with the Large Advantage will not have a very comfortable night's sleep, though others should sleep just fine. Salvadori insists that any women stay in separate rooms from the men, unless the characters are married, in which case they get their own room with a double bed.

Later that night, the Heroes are awakened by cries of "Fire!" coming from the street below. One of the shops across the street is on fire, and a crowd of people has gathered, many of them carrying buckets of water. Stefano Salvadori is

New Equipment

Throwing Knives (reprinted from Vodacce for the Game Master's convenience)

The Vodacce use throwing knives for a variety of purposes, since they are easily concealed and quickly replaced. Students of the Cappuntina school learn to hide them up their sleeves, in their bodices, or even disguised as hat pins. Throwing knives only inflict 1k1 Wounds, but they give a Free Raise to the Attack Roll when thrown, and the TN to Actively Defend against them is increased by 5.

part of the crowd, which forms a line from the nearest well to the shop, filling buckets and passing them to the blaze where they are rapidly emptied. So far, their efforts do not seem to be having any effect.

The Chandler who owns the shop lies in the apartment above it with his young daughter; the pair have been trapped. They are considered Threat Rating 1 Brutes for all mechanical purposes. They stand at the window, hoping that someone will bring a ladder. Unfortunately, no ladder is readily available.

The Heroes may help put out the fire if they wish, or may attempt to rescue the trapped merchant and his daughter. The blaze will be very difficult to extinguish, and the building is already too badly damaged from the flames to be considered inhabitable, but the efforts of those who work with the buckets will prevent the fire from spreading to other buildings.

If a Hero decides to climb the wall of the building to rescue the Chandler or his daughter, he will need to make several rolls to do so. Scaling the wall will require a Brawn + Climbing roll against a TN of 15. A Panache roll against a TN of 10 is needed to avoid taking 1k1 Wounds per trip up or down the wall from the heat. Carrying the girl down the wall requires a Finesse + Lifting roll against a TN of 10 to pick her up without losing one's grip, followed by a Brawn + Climbing roll against a TN of 20. Getting the shop owner down will require a Finesse + Lifting roll against a TN of 15 and a Brawn + Climbing roll against a TN of 25 because of his larger size and weight. Alternately, the Heroes may attempt to run a line between the inn and the burning building, and bring the pair out that way. It requires a Finesse + Attack (Firearms) TN of 15 to strike the window with a grappling gun, a Finesse + Knotwork check of 10 to secure the line at each end, and Brawn + Climbing rolls as detailed above to shimmy the Chandler and his daughter to safety. If the Heroes do not get the Chandler and his daughter down from the building, then they will either become victims of the blaze or will jump from the window onto the hard road below, taking damage from the fall.

Once the blaze is out, the crowd disperses. If the Chandler and his daughter are safe, then Salvadori gives them a room in his inn to stay in until they can make some other arrangements. The young girl is crying, and the Chandler says "There, there, Eliza, don't you cry, we're safe now," as he takes her up to their new room.

What Happened

Alberto Casioli (*see below*) and his team set the blaze. He broke into the shop after the Chandler had gone to bed and poured oil all over the bottom floor of the shop, then threw a lantern into the room. The shop was full of candles and other inflammable items, all of which caught fire very quickly. Before anyone noticed the blaze, Alberto and his men were already several blocks away. Meanwhile, Antonio Casioli, Alberto's twin brother, was on the opposite side of town, attending an all-night party. This provides Alberto with a very good alibi. After all, several prominent members of the community saw him on the other side of town at the time that the fire was started.

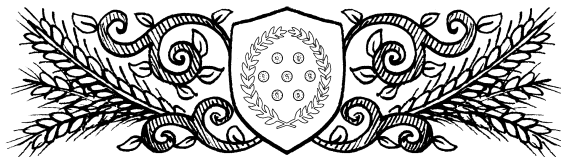
Act Two, Scene Three: Morning at the Golden Eagle.

The next morning, Salvadori explains what happened the night before.

"That shop that burned down belonged to Mateo Edinini, a man who did not pay his protection money last week. He had been out of town attending his mother's funeral. So, someone in the Scarred Man's organization decided to light every candle in the shop to teach him a lesson. It seems that some things are more important than bidding farewell to one's mother, no?"

Then he serves them breakfast in the common room. "Enjoy your meal, my friends, eat heartily. I just sent my boy to go get Savino for you, so you can meet him. Oh, hey listen, today I'm due to make my payment. I know you are here to help and all, but please don't do anything that will make trouble for me, not yet. You must talk with Savino first. Save the heroics for some other place, all right?"

As the Heroes are enjoying their morning meal, Antonio Casioli and his squad enter the room. The members of his team are all armed with rapiers, and Antonio is armed with a stiletto tucked into a sheath in his right boot.



New Equipment

Stiletto (Reprinted from *The Rilasciare for the Game Master's convenience*)

A stiletto is an assassin's knife, easily concealed, with a long, thin blade. For rules purposes, it is considered a knife and requires the Knife Skill to use effectively. However, it causes 0k2 damage and gives you one extra unkept die (+1k0) on your Attack Roll when using it.

Antonio is a dusky, clean-shaven man with long black hair. He walks up to Salvadori and says, "Hello, Signore. It is so good to see you again, and that the fire that tragically claimed the store across the street did not spread to your establishment. But then again, you are not so careless as Edinini, are you? Of course you are not. You did remember to get that thing my friend left here last week, yes? I need to take it to him. Do you have it?"

The innkeeper's smile disappears as he pays his protection money, handing Antonio a small box that looks very much like the one that Morgan Tavendish was carrying earlier. Unless the Heroes interfere, Casioli will take the payment and depart with his men. If the Heroes do interfere, Antonio runs out of the inn with the box, leaving his team to delay any pursuers. Also, if they have interfered, Salvadori will kick them out of his inn as soon as Savino arrives.

Twenty minutes after Antonio Casioli and his team are gone or defeated, Savino Bonidicci enters the Golden Eagle. He is an elderly man, whose back is stooped with age. If Salvadori has thrown the Heroes out, they must have their conversation with Savino on the way to his store. Otherwise, they will listen to him talk while he eats some breakfast.

"Thank you so much for coming, all of you. I am Savino Bonidicci, once the greatest tailor in this city. Now, I am the worm in the beak of the mother crow, pecked apart by so many of her children. Once, I provided the clothing to the social elite of Porto Spatia. Now I make clothes for sailors and vagabonds. I cannot afford to pay extra money to keep my shop open, but my craft is the only thing that makes my life worthwhile. I need you to stop these men who prey on my business. My payment is due tomorrow, and if I can help it, it will be the last one they will ever take from me. I want you to follow

them and find out where the money goes. I want you to find the Scarred Man, and I want you to end his reign of terror over my city."

Savino is so emotional that he chokes back tears as he speaks. "I know I cannot offer you much, but I want you to know that each of my friends is willing to contribute to rewarding you, when you have saved us from the Scarred Man. Please, please tell me that you will help us!"

If the Heroes say that they will help, Savino takes them a few blocks away to his shop, where he makes inexpensive clothes for sailors and the lower class residents. Bonidicci's Fine Garments Shop, is located on the west side of a long street of merchant establishments. Savino lives above the store in a cramped, but clean apartment; a barbershop stands to the right of his store and a knick-knack shop selling inexpensive trinkets stands to the left. Bonidicci's Fine Garments Shop is crammed full of racks of clothing, bolts of fabric, and dressmaker's dummies with half-completed dresses on them. Near the door is the counter where Savino works. When he is not selling something to a customer, he is working on some article of clothing behind the counter.

Because there Savino's next payment is not due for some time, the tailor suggests that the Heroes go out and get to know the neighborhood so they will not get lost when pursuing criminals along the streets. While they are at it, the Heroes may decide to ask some of the locals about the Scarred Man and his organization. Most of the people will be very unwilling to say very much, but they do get a few responses. Feel free to weave the following tidbits into the Heroes' interactions with the locals. Each of these responses is from a different person:

- *"I don't know much. I do know that nobody ever sees the Scared Man anymore. I mean, no one has seen him and lived to talk about it, except maybe some of his men."*
- *"The Scarred Man first arrived in this city a few years ago, working as an assassin for hire. No one ever got to see him, but he had an agent who arranged his contracts. They called in some kind of special investigator to see about stopping him. The investigator was sent back in several pieces."*
- *"Yes, there was an assassin a few years ago who called himself The Scar. I don't know if he's the same person as the Scarred Man, though."*
- *"The Scarred Man murdered several prominent gang leaders around here. That's the only genuine 'protection' he has ever given us."*



- “The Scarred Man used to have a big, hair Crescent as one of his lieutenants. No one has seen him lately, maybe he tried to double-cross his boss. His name was something like Sid or Seed; I can’t remember. When he was mad, he’d just start chanting something in Crescent and advance on you. No one knew what the words meant, but it unnerved me something fierce. I paid him double that week, as I recall.”
- “I don’t think there really is any Scarred Man. I think that the little guy who picks up the money from the agents on the street is the real boss, and that he just made up this story to divert attention from himself.”
- “There is a Scarred Man. I saw him myself, just about two years ago. Came into town at night, stepped off of a boat. I can’t remember its name; the *Vivre* maybe. I had been working in a warehouse by the docks, and I saw him from one of the rafters. His face was riveted with scars. He was dressed up real rich, had gray hair, and he was walking with a cane, like he had a limp. Had a few guys with him. I saw one of them again, afterwards. He was one of the guys who came to my father’s shop and got money for The Scarred Man. See? He’s real.”
- “Oh yeah, I saw The Scarred Man once, just a week ago. He had one big cut running all the way

the right side of his face and neck. Hideous to look at, sure enough. He carried a broadsword and he had one of those Eisen steel gloves on his left hand. He was getting off of a boat from Castille. Haven’t seen him since, but he’s got to be the Scarred Man.”

(Note: This person has not seen the Scarred Man. Instead, he saw Ludwig Hauser, one of the survivors from the Giftzahne aus der Drachen mercenary company. Hauser is still in town, and will be coming out of the barbershop next to Bonidicci’s shop when the Heroes return there after gathering rumors. If they try to start anything, he will defend himself; (his stats can be found below.)

Act Two, Scene four: Trouble at Bonidicci’s Shop

On the day Bonidicci’s protection money is due, the Scarred Man’s second lieutenant, Lorenzo Perdini leads his team into the shop to collect the payment. Whether or not the Heroes have attacked any of the other teams in previous encounters, there will be one extra Brute Squad in each team of Bullies for the rest of this episode. This is because Francesca (*see below*) has seen the

Fate Strands connected to her husband becoming more tangled and frayed, indicating that trouble is coming.

Lorenzo is a nondescript man. He looks like the archetypal average Vodacce man, dressed in black and carrying a rapier. His men all have similar weapons. They will not try to cause trouble, but are more than willing to get into a fight if provoked. The Heroes have a choice to make. They can wait and follow Lorenzo Perdini to Valentino, or they can start a fight with the gang, then try to subdue them and get the information out of them. Savino would prefer that they follow the bullies, but he cannot stop the Heroes if they wish to follow another course of action.

“Hello, Bonidicci,” says the young man who comes up to the counter. “Do you have enough to pay our fee this week? You do? Wonderful! Give it to me. Did you know that Edinini’s candle shop burned down? Yes? — because of that, we’ve decided that this neighborhood is more dangerous than we had originally estimated. Oh, my yes. So we’ll be increasing our fee to all shops in this area that are full of things that can catch fire, like cloth. Twenty-five percent sounds like a fair amount, don’t you think? Be sure to remember to pay that next week, or you’ll lose our protection, and you wouldn’t want that, now would you? Of course you wouldn’t. I for one would particularly miss your business. Let’s go, my friends, we have to take this to the bank.”

Once he has the money, Lorenzo and his men leave. If the Heroes try to stop them, the Brutes will fight and Lorenzo will examine the odds. If there is more than three Heroes present, he will flee down an alley while his men clog the entrance. If the Heroes are able to follow him, he will lead them to a tavern called the Drunken Griffon. If the Heroes manage to defeat the Brutes but lose Lorenzo, some of the Brutes know that he was going to a place called the Drunken Griffon later that night.

If the Heroes manage to capture Lorenzo, he will refuse to speak unless someone makes a successful Intimidation attempt on him. If he becomes intimidated he will give some very interesting information.

“I was taking the money to my boss, Valentino. He’s kind of the go-between here. He takes the money from us to the big boss, the Scarred Man. Valentino meets with all of us lieutenants once or twice a week, he picks up our money and gives us any special instructions for the week. He’s spooky. Knows things

before they happen, almost like he had a Fate Witch helping him out. This week, for example, he says that trouble is coming, and wouldn’t you know it? It did. Anyways, I was supposed to meet my boss for dinner at the Drunken Griffon tonight, and give him the money then.”

If the Heroes ask him anything about the Scarred Man, Lorenzo says, “I’ve never seen him, never met anyone who claims to have seen him except for Valentino. I know a lot of people who say that they knew dead people who’d seen him, though. When Valentino was offering me a job, five or six other gangs just sort of disappeared, in less than a month. One by one, these guys wind up dead in a dark alley, leave town all of a sudden, or something like that. Word on the street was that it was the Scarred Man. That was a few years ago, though. Nobody’s made him mad enough to work that directly in a while. I’m just glad I’m on his side, instead of being part of the competition.”

Act Two, Scene Five: Dinner at the Drunken Griffon

The Drunken Griffon is a run-down dive located on a small cul-de-sac in the southwestern part of the city. The sign outside depicts a Griffon guzzling beer from the hole in a large beer barrel. Some of the tiles on the roof are missing, some are cracked, and some are dangling in place. The chimney is partially blocked, making the inside slightly smokier than most people find comfortable. Currently, the only customers in here are Valentino and his lieutenants. They are eating a hearty dinner of pasta, rice, and fish. Valentino has brought his own wine to go with the food, and there is enough of it for all of his lieutenants. The Heroes would be recognized quickly if they went inside, but they can spy through a window if they wish. There is not much traffic in the area, so they are not likely to be noticed.

All of the Scarred Man’s lieutenants are present, at the dinner except Sayid Amir Ahmad and anyone the Heroes have incapacitated. Sayid has special orders to follow Valentino for several blocks on his way home and to see if anyone is following him. No Brutes are present at the meal, although Sayid does have his Brute Squads set up along Valentino’s path, with instructions to act

like drunken revelers. Valentino is there, and he collects all of the protection money and asks for a situation report from each lieutenant. Each lieutenant gives his report in turn.

Valentino says, *“All right now gentlemen, please. We’ve enjoyed the dinner and the company, but I’m afraid that the time has come now to get to business. Let’s begin, as we always do, with each of you telling me about how things have been going for you since the last time we met. Oh, and in case you’re wondering, Sayid is not with us tonight because I had a very special assignment for him, straight from my employer. Let’s begin with you, Morgan.”* (Note: if Morgan was defeated at the docks, he is not here now, so the reports will start with Alberto instead).

If any of the following lieutenants is missing, then skip over their report. If Morgan is present but Serk isn’t, then Morgan only gives his report. If Serk is present but Morgan is not, Serk will give Morgan’s report as part of his.

Morgan Tavendish, the blond man from the docks, says in his lower-class Avalon accent:

“It was all business as usual except for that incident down at the docks a couple of days ago. There were some fellows there that some of the boys started to hassle, and the foreman was giving me some lip about making payments, so I had to spell things out for him again. I think that we need to up his payments just for his attitude problem.”

If the Heroes did fight at the docks, then Morgan adds:

“Then the boys got into a fight with those strangers, and everything got very hairy, very quickly. I am glad I got clear of it, because those guys were good. I think they may cause trouble for us. Maybe the Scarred Man could deal with them, but I don’t think that I’d be happy to do it again.”

He then proceeds to describe each of the Heroes in great detail, including any names that they may have called each other in his presence.

Alberto Casioli, who looks just like the man who took Salvadori’s protection money, says:

“I had a very good time, no trouble from the merchants, except for the one who wasn’t there and didn’t leave any money behind for me. I already talked to you about that, and your instructions have already been carried out. The place isn’t standing anymore. And Antonio provided me with an alibi, as usual.”

Antonio Casioli, the man who took Salvadori’s protection money, says:

“Got all my moneys in, no problems.” If Morgan is here, Antonio will also add, *“I saw some people that looked a lot like the guys Morgan was talking about. They were having breakfast at the Golden Eagle when I picked up Salvadori’s contribution. I guess we should raise his fees now?”*

Serk Olofsson, the redheaded Vendel who dresses like an upper class Vodacce, says:

“Just that incident at the docks, the rest of my collections went without a hitch.”

Lorenzo Pedrini, the man who collected Savino’s money, says:

“It all went pretty well, but there were some mighty suspicious characters in that tailor’s shop. They made me nervous, that they did, especially what with you sending me a note last night asking me to double my team’s size. That many new men, without much of a chance to get them all coordinated with each other.. it’s not the kind of thing that sets my mind at ease, I have to say. So anyhow, the whole time I’m in that shop, I can feel these people keeping their eyes on me without making it look like they’re watching me. I just wanted to get the money and get out of there, and then I was worried about being followed.” He then describes each of the Heroes. If another lieutenant has already described them, Valentino will point out that the descriptions match, and Lorenzo looks sheepish and says, *“Ah, yeah... I guess you’re right.”* If none of the other lieutenants described the Heroes, Antonio will now say that he saw them at the Golden Eagle having breakfast.

Valentino now says to his lieutenants:

“All right, my friends, I have noted your observations and suggestions. I’ll let you know what my employer decides to do. Now, there are a few things I need to tell you all, so please listen up. First, there’s the matter of an increase in our rates. Effective the week after next, all rates will be increased by 5%, wherever they currently stand. Second, for those of you who haven’t heard, my employer states that each of you needs to increase his team in size. You are to go from having six men subordinate to each of you to having twelve men. Third, we are going to be expanding our operation soon, trying to offer our services to another part of town. We want you to think of any gangs or members of gangs in the neighborhoods just to the north of our area of operation. Next week, give me a list of any of them that you think would be worth recruiting into

our organization. After all, we're going to need twice as much manpower to cover twice as much ground. Well, that is all I have to say for now. Be careful, keep an eye out for anything suspicious, and we'll all keep making money. Good night, gentlemen."

With that, the lieutenants file out of the building and go their separate ways. None of them go by the hiding place from which the Heroes are spying on Valentino. After about fifteen minutes, Valentino will leave the restaurant. He takes a route west from the Drunken Griffon.

Act Three, Scene One: Finding the Scarred Man's Headquarters

In order to find the Scarred Man, the Heroes need to follow Valentino. Of course, the whole time that they are shadowing Valentino, Sayid is shadowing them. Each Hero needs to make a Contested Perception roll against Sayid's Finesse + Shadowing. If they beat him, they notice him. Otherwise, he will catch up with them, and choose an opportune moment to attack. A dozen Bullies are scattered throughout the area, acting like drunks on their way home from a fete (see above). At some opportune point, Valentino will stop to chat with one of them, and Sayid will attack from behind. Though initially surprised, the Brutes will quickly recover and charge against the Heroes, while Valentino will dash away toward his employer's home.

If the Heroes capture Valentino, he will not tell them where his master lives. However, after Valentino is missing for more than six hours, the Scarred Man will leave his home and come looking for him. When he finds that the Heroes have defeated Valentino, he will return home and gather all of his household staff except for his kitchen crew and the one Brute Squad (which he will leave to protect Francesca). He will gather as many of his lieutenants together as possible, and get their men together as well. They will seek out and attack the Heroes en masse in the middle of the night. If the Heroes manage to Cripple the Scarred Man during this fight, he will flee, to fight again another day. Before he leaves Francesca at home, he will have her give him a Swords Blessing using her Sorte magic.

The Scarred Man lives on the ground floor of a four-story building. The other floors are full of

upscale apartments. The walls are made of marble, and the curtains to most of the windows are shut. If Valentino has arrived unmolested., enters through a set of ornate double doors on the front of the home. Any Hero who can make a Perception check against a TN of 30 will be able to see the faint shadow woman with a veil on her face cast against one of the doors.

Inside the home, Valentino tells the Scarred Man and Francesca about the recent incidents.

Act Three, Scene Two: Raid on the Scarred Man's Home

Since the Scarred Man does not come out of his home unless something is seriously wrong, the Heroes will have to either kidnap Valentino when he comes out or try to storm the home in order to capture Alessandro, the Scarred Man.

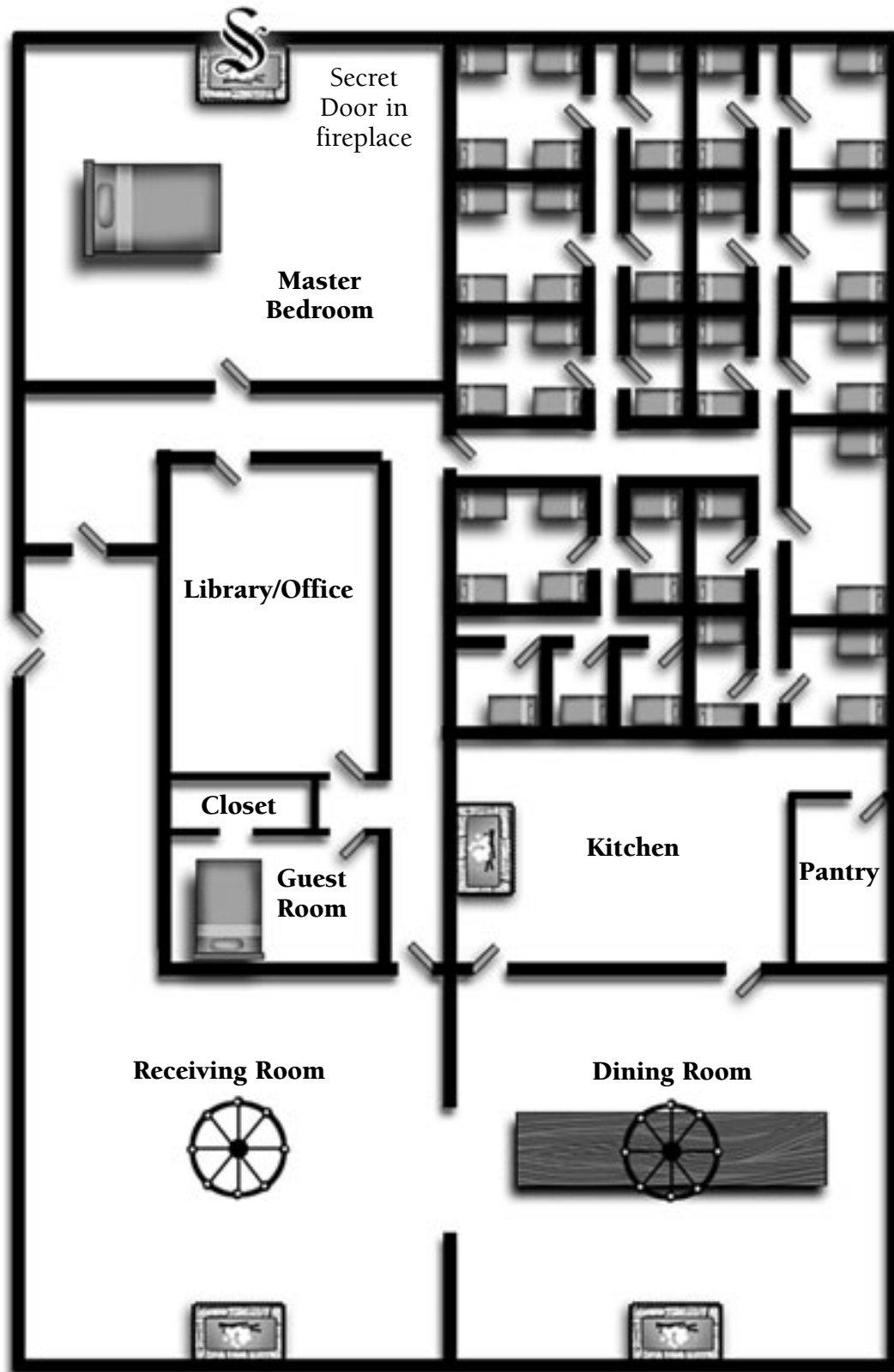
The interior of the house is ornately decorated. The carpets are luxurious and expensive. In each room, a faint trace of perfume wafts through the air. It smells faintly of roses and lilacs. The ceilings of each room are divided into panels, each of which is painted with an image from a Sorte Deck. The master bedroom lies on the far left side of the house. The walls are deep red with an intricate gilded design embossed onto the crimson fabric. A large, lavish and commodious bed fills up one half of the room. A grand fireplace is installed on one wall, concealing the secret exit behind its masonry. On either side of the hearth are two small stone fierce looking gargoyle heads. When either is turned, the entire structure rotates, revealing an opening to the dark and dingy alley beside the house. The other head will then begin emitting a cloud of sleeping gas into the room. Alessandro and anyone else who escapes with him, such as Francesca and Valentino, know about the gas and hold their breaths before the trap is activated.

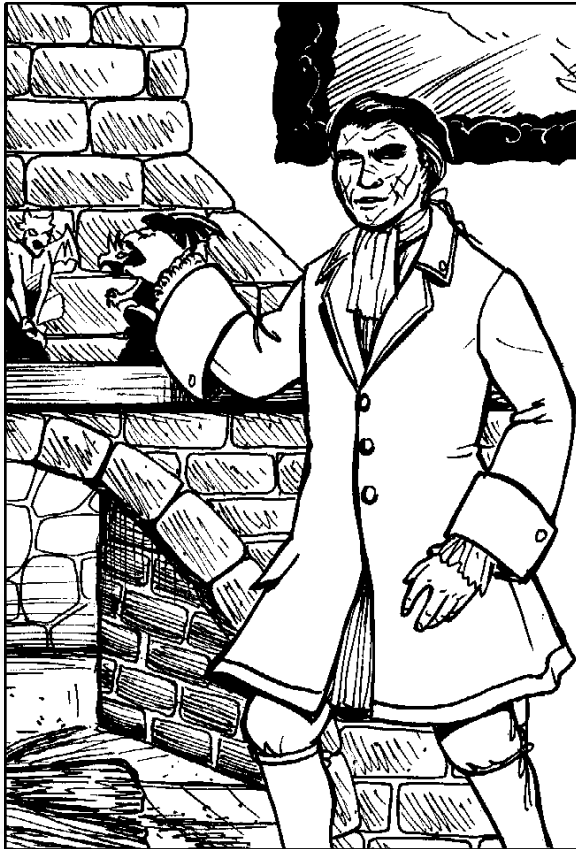
Sleeping Gas

Unconsciousness / 2 Phases / 3 Rounds

This poison does not cause damage, but it will put its victims to sleep. It is odorless and colorless. Heroes may avoid falling asleep on a given interval by making a Brawn Check against a TN of 25. Success indicates that the character is

Alessandro's Home





still awake, at least for another 2 Phases. Failure means that the character has lose consciousness.

Across the hall from the master bedroom stands a large library, which doubles as Alessandro's office. All four walls are lined with dusty bookshelves filled with leatherback editions and maps. In the center is a massive, heavy mahogany wood desk with two candelabras on each side and a large high-backed leather chair. On the desk, to the right, there is a small wooden box, resembling a treasure chest, covered in intricate design. It bears a magnifying glass and some papers that were scrawled on a bit, a quill and some ink. Inside the first drawer to the right, hidden well under the shadows lies another box, more straight-edged and narrow. It possesses a green interior, which brilliantly beholds a small gun, along with a couple of bullets and some small glass tubes containing measured amounts of powder.

To the right of the library is the guest bedroom. It is furnished only with a simple bed, not nearly as cozy as the master bed, a small round table and a wooden chair. There is a relatively large closet, which contains a few linens and offers some space for those who stay in the guestroom. On the right side of the main double doors is a spacious receiving room that opens up to the spacious dining room. The walls are lined with mounted

candelabras, the ceiling with a magnificent chandelier. A colossal fireplace also lights the dining room. A lengthy dining table, elegantly dressed with fine silverware and china, runs parallel to the fireplace and seats about twenty.

A small door leads from the dining room to the kitchen, with the pantry on its far end. The kitchen provides ample space for function. To the opposite wall of the kitchen from the door is a large wood-burning brick and iron oven. A wooden counter graces the center of the room, perpendicular to the oven. On the other side of the room stands a large pantry, filled to the brim with breads, cheeses, and other food.

The servants' quarters lie in the area of the house between the kitchen and the master bedrooms. Servants' rooms have between one and six beds in them. Valentino lives in the single bedroom farthest from the kitchen. If there is any kind of a fight in this house, Alessandro will try to keep Francesca safe while he and Valentino escort her along with three of the household Brute Squads to his chambers so that they can make a getaway through the secret exit. This will leave the Heroes with five Threat Rating 3 Brute Squads to deal with inside the house, plus the kitchen staff, a Threat Rating 2 Brute Squad.

With this kind of a disruption in his affairs, Alessandro will have to lie low for a while. He flees for the docks to get to the safety of his private vessel, *The Silver Fox*, and leave town for a while. Rather than continue his criminal activities elsewhere, he will re-focus himself on finding his missing sister. If the Heroes manage to capture him, he is handed over to the authorities. Some time later, after the Heroes have left town, he escapes from his jail cell, rescues his wife and Valentino, and flees to his ship.

If the Heroes manage to put an end to the Scarred Man's protection racket, the local merchants will give the group (not each member of the group) one thing from each of their stores. The pertinent businesses include one inn, one tailor's shop, a barber, a brewer, three food merchants, a cutlery shop, a spice dealer, a cloth merchant, a clockmaker's shop, a cooper, a storage warehouse, two bakers' shops, a wine seller, and a pair of fair-to-middling courtesans. The cutlery shop has daggers and knives of all kinds, including stiletos and throwing knives, but no other weapons. Savino Bonidicci is especially thankful, and promises to aid the however he can in the future. If he manages to restore his business to its former prominence, that may be a hefty promise indeed.

Awarding Experience and Reputation

At the end of this episode, the Game Master should award Experience Points and Reputation to the Heroes. Any Hero who comes to Porto Spatia in order to aid Savino Benidicci receives 3 Experience Points. Anyone who fights Alessandro in melee combat will receive 2 extra Experience Points. Putting an end to this syndicate will give the Heroes 3 Reputation Points each. Fighting one or more of the gangs of Bullies in public will give the Heroes 1 extra Reputation Point each.

NPCs

Savino Bonidicci

Savino is the merchant who asked the Heroes for help. He is a frail, elderly tailor who refuses to allow this criminal operation to continue. Savino has worked hard for the last forty years to reach the height of his profession, and now his body is beginning to fail him. He is losing money due to his frailty, and cannot afford to continue to pay protection money. Therefore, he has written to the Heroes, asking them to come to this place and eliminate the problem. Savino's back has become stooped from hunching over garments. His hair is white and thin, but kept neat. His ears are very large for his head and stick out to the sides. He still has all of his teeth, and he is very proud of it. He is over sixty years old now, and wants to spend his remaining time operating his little shop in peace.

Savino Bonidicci (Henchman)

Brawn: 1

Finesse: 2

Wits: 3

Resolve: 2

Panache: 1

Reputation: 22

Advantages: Age and Wisdom (2), Connections (2 Confidants, 4 Informants), Indomitable Will

Background: Vow (2)

Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 1, Fashion 4, Oratory 1

Merchant: Accounting 2, Hagglng 3, Sail Maker 2, Seamstress 2, Spinner 1, Tailor 5, Weaver 1

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 1, Parry (Fencing) 1

Stefano Salvadori (Brute)

Stefano Salvadori is the friendly, outgoing owner of the Golden Eagle. In the event that he gets involved in any kind of combat, he is considered a Threat Rating 1 Brute. He has no special combat skills, so he can be considered a generic Brute instead of a Vodacce Brute. If he does fight, he will use any handy small object, which will be considered a Light Weapon, inflicting 3 Wounds per successful hit.

Ludwig Hauser

Ludwig Hauser is an Eisen man with a large scar running down the right side of his face and neck. This wound is the result of a glancing blow from a cavalry trooper's saber. Hauser was a member of the Giftzahne aus der Drachen mercenary group, which suffered a terrible fate in service of the Montaigne Army in Castille. Like all members of that organization, he has a tattoo of a fang over his heart.

Hauser comes from a family with a long military tradition. His ancestors have served in all of Eisen's wars, and have served with honor if not with great distinction. Ludwig followed in this tradition, and escaped the mess that his hometown had become by joining the Giftzahne aus der Drachen. One of the leaders of the outfit saw great potential in him, and began to groom him for promotion. He started to teach Ludwig in the arts of the Eisenfaust School.

After the disaster in Castille, Ludwig fled the country and eventually wound up in Vodacce. He is trying to make his way back to Eisen, but he does not have much money. He is currently looking for work as a bodyguard or dockworker. He hopes to get enough money to be able to afford the journey north to his homeland.

Ludwig Hauser (Henchman)

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 2

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 2

Reputation: 9

Advantages: Castille, Vodacce, Vendel, Indomitable Will

Backgrounds: Defeated 2, Mistaken Identity 1

Merchant: Miller 2

Athlete: Climbing 1, Footwork 2, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1, Lifting 2

Commander: Strategy 1, Tactics 2, Artillery 2, Leadership 1

Eisenfaust (Apprentice): Beat (Heavy Weapon) 1, Bind (Panzerhand) 1, Disarm (Panzerhand) 1, Exploit Weakness (Eisenfaust) 1

Heavy Weapon: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 3, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 2

Panzerhand: Attack (Panzerhand) 2, Parry (Panzerhand) 3, Uppercut 2

Alessandro's Bullies (Brutes)

Alessandro sends his bullies into shops to scare the merchants into giving him protection money. Each group of Bullies is a Threat Rating 2 Brute Squad. These are Vodacce Brutes, as per the *Villain's Kit*, so they always roll at least 3 dice, even when they have fewer than 3 members standing. At the head of each group of bullies is a field lieutenant, who does the talking for the outfit. They are armed with rapiers that do 6 Wounds per successful Hit.

Alessandro's Field Lieutenants

Valentino has found six men to lead his bullies in the field, and organize their activities. These men do most of the talking for their units. They do not know the identity of their employer. All they know is that they are working for someone called "the Scarred Man," and they know the person who gives them their instructions and collects their money only as Valentino.

Morgan Tavendish

Morgan was a conscripted sailor who jumped ship in Vodacce and eventually found his way under Valentino's wing. He's found he has a knack for criminal work, and has been working on saving money so he can return to Avalon. Unfortunately, every time he gets close, something happens to divest him of his funds: a gambling debt, an increase in rent, the occasional official in need of a bribe, and the like. He isn't too worried about it, though; it's better than working on the docks and he has become fond of Vodacce.

Morgan is a tough individual who enjoys drinking, gambling, fighting and as he puts it, all of the finer things in life. He does not especially like taking money from the merchants but he does like the money and it is much better than dock work. When fighting, Morgan uses every dirty trick in the book. He likes to send his gang in to rough up the weaker adversaries, while taking the toughest opponents on by himself. If they appear to be swordsmen he sends in several of his men to take them on so he can slip behind them and kill

them with his knives. Morgan keeps eight concealed throwing knives on his person at all times. He is trying to find a Master of the Cappuntina school who is willing to teach him the technique.

Morgan is a blond man with blue eyes and an unkempt bushy mustache. He is not especially large or short, and he speaks Vodacce with a noticeable lower-class Avalon accent.

Morgan Tavendish (Henchman)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 2

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 2

Reputation: -11

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Able Drinker, Debater, Toughness

Criminal: Ambush 3, Gambling 4, Lockpicking 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

Fence: Appraising 3, Socializing 2

Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 2

Knife: Attack: (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 4

Alberto and Antonio Casioli

When Alberto and Antonio were five years old their father left and their mother was forced to raise them on her own. She took a job as a barmaid, and the boys were left alone much of the time. As a result, they started stealing anything that interested them. By the time they turned sixteen, they were very skilled in the profession of thievery. They soon left home for Porto Spatia, where they set about applying their trade. They made it appear as if they were only one person, and were never seen together in public. Their actions saved them on several occasions as one merchant would accuse them of stealing while the other would be talking with a guardsman or other reputable people within the town. When accused they always have an alibi to speak on their behalf.

Eventually, they stole a small sum of money from a rather short individual by the name of Valentino. Valentino tried accusing the culprit, who was actually Antonio, but the brothers once again used their technique and Valentino came up short-handed. Valentino subsequently had a couple of men follow Antonio at a distance and they discovered that there were two identical twins and reported back to Valentino. A small ambush was set up to catch both of the brothers.





When they were captured, Valentino stepped forward and offered them a job. If they refused he would have their kneecaps removed. Given the option, they both decided it was in their best interest to take Valentino up on his offer of a job.

Alberto and Antonio will not be seen together if other people are around. They are very polite and cunning individuals and enjoy the fact that they can trick people. When fighting, Alberto and Antonio like to lead the enemy in a chase through the city. One person is sent to notify the other brother and the two of them work together. Their goal is to isolate and have the Brutes take out their pursuers one by one until there are only a few remaining. It is then that they are ready to stand and fight. If it looks as if they are going to be defeated they will retreat and make plans to attack their adversaries under conditions they deem more favorable.

The Casioli twins have long black hair, dusky skin, and brown eyes. They make sure to keep their hair cut to the same length and they make sure to shave their faces daily in order to keep themselves as indistinguishable as possible.

Alberto and Antonio Casioli (Henchmen)

- Brawn:** 2
- Finesse:** 3
- Wits:** 4
- Resolve:** 3
- Panache:** 2
- Reputation:** -8
- Advantages:** Vodacce (R/W), Debater
- Arson:** Architecture 1, Conceal 2, Mathematics 2, Natural Philosophy 1, Street Navigation 3
- Criminal:** Ambush 3, Gambling 1, Lockpicking 2, Pickpocket 3, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3
- Fence:** Appraising 3, Socializing 2
- Streetwise:** Socializing 2, Street Navigation 3
- Athlete:** Climbing 1, Footwork 3, Sprinting 4, Throwing 1
- Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2
- Firearms:** Attack (Firearms) 2
- Knife:** Attack: (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 2

Serk Olofsson

Serk's parents were part of the merchant guild in Vendel. They taught Serk the importance of trade and instilled within him a rivalry against the Vodacce. At an early age Serk was working to undermine the prices of Vodacce goods. He was good at his job; so good in fact, that a prominent Guildsman named Magnus contacted him with an offer. Magnus had made arrangements for Serk to work as an enforcer with a Vodacce criminal named Valentino. While serving under Valentino he was to send word of Vodacce merchants in Porto Spatia.

Serk is a fairly dignified individual trying to stay abreast of the current fashion in the middle

class. When not extorting money, he is quite cheerful and boisterous. He also has a tendency to brag about his native land and this has gotten him into a few fights. He is careful not to speak openly in the presence of swordsmen. When confronted with a fight, Serk prefers to have his gang take the knocks for him while he fires his pistol from a distance. If the Brutes are overwhelmed he will run and if captured is willing to deal using information in order to gain his freedom.

Serk is a redheaded, blue-eyed man from Vendel. He has adopted the garb of the local Vodacce upper class, and carries a swordcane for good measure. He speaks Vodacce without a trace of accent, and has even begun affecting Vodacce mannerisms in an effort to “blend in.” His braggart tendencies put a dent in what might otherwise be a fine disguise.

Serk Olofsson (Henchman)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 2

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 3

Reputation: -15

Advantages: Vendel (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Debater

Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 2, Fashion 3, Oratory 1

Criminal: Ambush 3, Gambling 1, Lockpicking 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

Fence: Appraising 3, Socializing 3

Merchant: Appraising 2, Haggling 3, Tailor 3

Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 2

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 2

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 2

Lorenzo Pedrini

Several years ago Lorenzo set up a small shop in Porto Spatia. He sold mostly textiles with a few baubles he picked up along the way. His business seemed to be going fairly well for a while; unfortunately, some of the other merchants became upset by his higher sales and more profitable bottom line. They decided to take care of the situation by intimidating his customers and spreading lies about the quality of his merchandise. In the end he was forced to close his shop and might have had to leave the city had Valentino not made him an offer. As a member of the Scarred Man’s enforcement team, he could still

make money, and also exact revenge on the merchants that forced him out of business.

Currently, Lorenzo is seeing to it that each and every merchant involved in the loss of his business pays for his actions. If the merchants are late in making a payment, Lorenzo starts destroying merchandise and roughing them up. He accepts no excuses. He has been known to increase fees anytime they are late or anytime that a merchant stands up to him. Lorenzo prefers to use a knife in a confrontation hidden behind his leg or sleeve until he unexpectedly lashes out.

Lorenzo is smaller and thinner than most Vodacce men are. While he may not be as physically imposing as some of the other lieutenants, he is the least recognizable field lieutenant in this organization, which makes it very hard for his victims to give valuable descriptions of him to the authorities.

Lorenzo Pedrini (Henchman)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 3

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 2

Reputation: -19

Advantages: Vodacce (R/W), Debater

Criminal: Ambush 3, Gambling 1, Lockpicking 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

Fence: Appraising 3, Socializing 2

Merchant: Weaver 2

Spy: Conceal 3, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 2

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 2

Sayid Amir Ahmad

Sayid is tall muscular man from the Crescent Empire. After arriving in Vodacce, he served as a dockworker for several years until he learned a bit of the language. He used to frequent a local tavern in his off hours, and one day, someone started a fight there. It was Sayid that stopped the fight and was offered a job at the tavern as a bouncer. Anytime some appeared ready to cause trouble he would step in behind the patron while the bartender took care of the complaints. Valentino, upon seeing how the Crescent worked, decided that he would be a great asset to the business.

Sayid, despite his appearance, is a rather gentle individual. He prefers to intimidate merchants

instead of actively harming them, shouting at them in his native Crescent tongue (which can be quite intimidating as long as no one realizes that he's shouting out old campfire tales instead of threats). On the rare occasion that he does have to fight, he prefers to throw knives at his targets. His Brutes work to get Sayid's next target into position for the next attack. For the most part, Sayid would prefer to talk and come to an agreement.

Sayid is not only tall and muscular, he is bald except for a long tail of hair flowing down from a patch on the back of his scalp. He often provides security for Valentino when Valentino takes the protection money to The Scarred Man, and has performed his duties well. He is easily Valentino's most trusted lieutenant.

Sayid Amir Ahmad (Henchman)

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 2

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 3

Reputation: -21

Advantages: Crescent (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Debater, Large

Criminal: Ambush 3, Gambling 1, Lockpicking 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 2

Fence: Appraising 3, Socializing 1

Streetwise: Socializing 1, Street Navigation 3

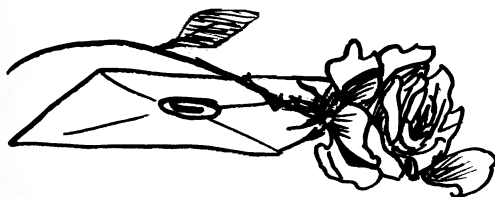
Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 2

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 4

Alessandro's Household Staff (Brutes)

Alessandro hires the best Brutes he can find to keep his home safe. His kitchen staff consists of a Brute Squad (Threat Rating 2) armed with kitchen knives, which do 3 Wounds per successful Hit. The rest of the staff consists of five Threat Rating 3 Brute Squads, armed with rapiers, which inflict 6 Wounds per successful Hit. These are Vodacce Brutes, so they always roll at least 3 dice, even when they have fewer than 3 members standing.



Episode Four: Family Reunion

The fourth episode comes a few months after Episode Three. The Heroes have another run-in with the Scarred Man as he attempts to abduct his sister — Helena di Lucani. Ramon Torres is in hot pursuit of his kidnapped love, and enlists their aid in rescuing her. During this episode, the Heroes learn the dark secrets that connect Alessandro to Ramon and Helena.

Act One, Scene One: An Unexpected Return

Read the following passage to your players:

It is late at night in the city of Guarre de Puertofino in Vodacce. This is the closest Vodacce city to Castille, and many Castellians have come through here seeking escape from the Montaigne invasion. You are staying in a suite of upstairs rooms in a local inn, and have fallen asleep after a long day of travel.

Note: the GM may wish to insert details from his or her own campaign here, such as where the Heroes have been and where they may be going.

A faint noise comes through the window and you begin to stir in your sleep. The sound of breaking glass causes you sit bolt upright as you awake. Your window is still intact, but a light shines from across the street. From your vantage point, you can see a broken window on the inn across the street. The curtain hangs out of it, with some sheets tied to it to form a makeshift rope. As you watch, you can see a man in the room pick up a limp woman's form and slings her over one shoulder. With his other hand, he grabs the curtain. He then turns and leaps out of the window, swinging and sliding down to the ground below. The man's face is hideously scarred, and his hair is gray (Note: Heroes who have faced Alessandro immediately recognize him as the

Scarred Man). He reaches the ground and enters a waiting carriage, which quickly disappears around the corner.

As the carriage leaves, another man appears in the broken window above. He is hunched over, and clutches his midsection with his left hand. He looks up and sees you staring at him, then drops his sword and beckons to you just before his legs begin to fail him and he topples out of the window. He barely manages to grab the sheets on the way down, before landing awkwardly on the streets. Now that the light is shining upon him instead of behind him, you recognize his face. The wounded man is Ramon Torres, who you met in Castille while dispatching the Wolf Pack so many months ago. He gets up and walks to the front door of your inn.

Ramon has been stabbed in his right side with a dagger, which means that he will have one Dramatic Wound for the rest of this adventure unless the players have some method of removing it. As the Heroes provide first aid for Ramon, he tells them what has just happened:

“Helena and I had come here so that she could visit her parents’ graves. She’s from this city, originally, and has not been back in quite some time. We’ve been here for a couple of weeks. We were going to be leaving on a ship back to Castille in two days. Tonight, however, Legion has sent one of his servants to snatch her away from me. I know this one. His name is Alessandro. He is an assassin. I saw him in the hall, heading to our rooms. I fought with him, but he stunned me with his rapier’s pommel and stuck his dagger in my side. I think the blade may have been poisoned because I blacked out for a time. By the time I regained my senses, he had grabbed Helena and vanished out the window. Then I looked up and saw you across the street: like angels of Theus in my hour of need. You must help me save her from him. There’s no telling where they have gone, or what he is going to do to her!”

Some time will pass as the players search for Alessandro. They can find the carriage he used quite easily, abandoned near the docks with its door hanging open. If they think to check, the port



master's logs indicate that the only ship that left was a yacht named *The Silver Fox*. Alessandro has left the city on his private yacht and is making his way back to Porto Spatia. Ramon deduced this if the Heroes do not. At some point, a clever Hero may ask Ramon to talk about how he knows Alessandro. If this does not happen, then Ramon tells the Heroes this information on the journey to Alessandro's home:

"I told you some time ago, did I not, that my days as a bandit led me to a period of incarceration? My cellmate there was the most feared man in prison: Alessandro, who had killed his last cellmate simply because he snored. By the time I arrived, he had already killed every prisoner, and at least one guard, who had gotten on his nerves. There were never any witnesses or accusations, but the other prisoners all knew he was behind it. Sharing a cell with him was like being locked in a room with a creature from the Abyss. I talked back to him one time, and he gave me this scar on my cheek.

"We needed him, though. Without him, we would never have been able to escape our cells. We could never have done it without his natural talent for violence. He was imprisoned for assassinating an ambassador, and he merely became more dangerous

when he was taken to prison and forced to fend for himself. He killed two guards in our escape and helped us capture a supply ship docked nearby. We were hoping to join the Brotherhood of the Coast, but in the midst of the journey, Alessandro stole the ship's lifeboat and left us.

"I had hoped that he would be dead by now, that someone would have killed him. I wish it had been so. Instead, he arrives her out of the blue and steals my love away from me. He must have been after her all along, but I cannot imagine why! What in Theus's name does he want with Helena?"

The journey from Guarre de Puertofino to Porto Spatia will take a few days if the Heroes go by ship, or weeks if they travel along the roads. If the Heroes try to take roads, Ramon will point out that they may not get there in time to save Helena from whatever fate Alessandro has in store for her. He is willing to pay for space aboard a small ship heading for Porto Spatia. During this journey, the seas are calm and the winds are favorable, so the Heroes make the journey in less time than it took Alessandro to travel. Consequently, Alessandro has had Helena in his home for just a little less than a day when Ramon and the Heroes arrive in Porto Spatia.

Act Two, Scene One: Saving Helena

In order to save Helena from Alessandro, the Heroes must get into his house. Alessandro has beefed up his home security in the months since their last encounter. He now has seven Brute Squads in his home, and one of them is constantly stationed outside his guest bedroom, where Helena is being kept, tied to a chair by her bed. When the Heroes arrive, Francesca is attempting to speak with Helena while her husband plots out a strategy for dealing with Ramon, in case he has survived his wound. Valentino is in the receiving room, giving the staff their instructions.

When the Heroes come in, there will be a huge battle royale in this house. Francesca's personal guards will run inside the guest bedroom with her. Alessandro and his two personal Brute Squads will join with the Squad guarding the door to the guest bedroom. Valentino will coordinate the rest of the squads to attack the Heroes in the dining room or the receiving room, if possible. The whole staff has been kept on alert ever since Helena arrived.



Here is a table giving a quick summary of where the house's troops will be when the Heroes make their way into the building.

Location	Occupants
Kitchen	Kitchen Staff
Receiving room	Valentino and four squads of Household Staff
Hallway	Alessandro and two squads of Household Staff
Guest bedroom	Helena, Francesca, and one squad of Household Staff

This time, Alessandro will fight to the last ounce of strength in his body. He is expecting trouble, so he is armed with a rapier and a dagger. Valentino will fight until he is one Dramatic wound away from being Knocked Out, and then he will flee to wherever Alessandro is. Once he is there, he will fight until he is Knocked Out. Francesca, on the other hand, will surrender as soon as her Brutes have been defeated. During the combat, she will use her knife to defend herself and to prevent anyone from freeing Helena from her bonds.

Act Two, Scene Two: Helena Tells Her Story

Once she is free and the fighting is over, Helena explains to Ramon and the Heroes why Alessandro has kidnapped her. She becomes very emotional while doing so. Tears begin to stream down her cheeks.

"Alessandro. I thought he was dead. I feared I never would see him again. I haven't seen him since I was nine. He's my older half-brother. I used to worship him when I was young. He was daring, dashing, everything our father was not. He studied the Ambrogia style under Fiora Ghioletti, and he used to show me some of the tricks he'd learned. I'd practice them myself, but with a dagger I'd found. I kept it hidden, so mother wouldn't take it from me.

"One day, he asked me to come with him in the dead of the night. We went to this big mansion; he said he needed to get inside and challenge someone to a duel, but the guards wouldn't let him in. So, he wanted me to walk around the grounds, wailing and weeping, pretending I was lost and wanted my mother. A man came up to me and told me not to cry, that

he'd see me safely to her. While he was talking to me, Alessandro left the mansion. The man heard him, and turned, drawing a pistol. I wanted to save my brother's life, so I pulled out my dagger, which I'd hidden under my dress, and I stabbed him. I was only trying to keep him from shooting my brother, but I killed him.

"Alessandro tossed me over the fence, but the guards caught him before he could make it over himself. The man I killed was a Castillian ambassador; the Governor handed Alessandro over to the Castillians to face trial for killing the King's ambassador. I haven't seen him since then, and it's all my fault that he got sent there!"

"He told me he's been looking for me ever since he escaped from prison. And when he found me, he found Ramon. He told me that they used to be in prison together, and Ramon was not to be trusted. He doesn't want us together, so he brought me back here to show me how big a mistake he thought I was making, being with him."

"I don't know what happened to him in prison, or since... I do know that he is not the person I worshipped as a child. He is not brave, nor is he dashing. The brother I had is gone, and I am ashamed of the man who has taken his place. I also resent his inability to understand that I am not the little girl he knew so many years ago. I can make my own mistakes now, and I'm wise enough to know that Ramon is not one of them. Ramon, my darling, I think that we are right for each other. I love you."

Ramon whispers, "I love you too, Helena."

She brightens a bit, dabs the tears from her face, and says, "Let's go, I believe I still owe you all a round of drinks from the last time I saw you."

Awarding Experience and Reputation

At the end of this episode, the Game Master should award Experience Points and Reputation. Each Hero who participated in this adventure should receive 3 Experience Points. The Hero who frees Helena from her bonds gets 1 extra Experience Point. Any Hero who gets involved in an individual combat with Alessandro gains 1 extra Experience Point. If that Hero did not fight Alessandro in Episode 3, then he gets 1 more Experience Point. Because much of the action in this episode takes place out of the public eye, no Reputation Points will be gained from it. However, Ramon and Helena will spread the word



about how the Heroes saved her. Should the Heroes succeed in saving Helena from Alessandro, then they will get 2 Reputation Points each for saving a lady in distress.

NPCs

Kitchen Staff

The kitchen staff is one Brute Squad, with a Threat Rating of 2, armed with knives, which do 3 Wounds per each successful hit the Brutes inflict. Remember that these are Vodacce Brute Squads, so they always roll at least 3 dice, even when there are fewer than three members of the Squad standing.

Household Staff

The household staff has expanded to become ten Brute Squads, with a Threat Rating of 3, armed with rapiers, which do 6 Wounds per successful hit the Brutes inflict. The Brutes in the hallway and the guestroom are also each equipped with one pistol. When the Brutes fire their guns, they do 15 Wounds per successful hit.

Recurring NPCs

Helena di Lucani

Helena was born twenty-three years ago to a Vodacce courtier. Her mother was from Avalon and

she inherited the woman's fair complexion. Helena's father died of food poisoning when she was five, leaving her mother to provide for the family. Working hard enough to care for the children made her worn, weak, and weary. Helena had an older half-brother, Alessandro, whose brash style caused the young girl to idolize him. He studied to be a swordsman of the Ambrogia style, and Helena was enraptured by the stories he would tell her about his skills with a blade. Helena used a dagger to emulate some of the tricks he performed, and kept it hidden under her clothing so that her mother would not confiscate it.

When Helena was nine years old, Alessandro had her provide a diversion so that he could get past some guards and deliver a challenge to the owner of a mansion. Alessandro instructed her to run through the mansion's yard crying and sobbing. He told her to pretend that she was lost on the grounds of the estate and wanted her mother. The distraction gave Alessandro enough time to get into the mansion and deliver his challenge. It also allowed him time enough to win the duel. It did not give him enough time to get away from the building before the guards were alerted to his intrusion.

Helena's cries had attracted the attention of a man dressed in rich clothing. He spoke with a strange accent and he had some difficulty understanding her words. He tried to tell her to calm down, that he would help her find her mother, when he heard Alessandro's footsteps behind him. He turned and, spotting the intruder, started to draw a pistol. Before Alessandro could do anything, Helena drew her concealed dagger and buried it deeply in the man's chest. Guards were rapidly approaching them from the mansion; Alessandro pushed Helena over the wall with instructions to run home and wait for him. He never came home.

The dead man was a Castillian ambassador, and all of the evidence pointed to Alessandro, who was captured by the guards. The Vodacce turned him over to Castille for trial and imprisonment. Soon afterwards, Helena received a letter from Alessandro who apologized for ever getting her into this trouble, and told her to take up instruction from Fiora Ghioletti, his fencing instructor, who would keep her safe and teach her the Ambrogia style. Less than a year later, Helena's mother passed away, and Helena decided to follow Alessandro's advice.

Fiora was a Master of the Ambrogia school. Many years before that, she had been one of the

most sought-after courtesans in the city of Guarre de Puertofino. As Helena blossomed into womanhood, Fiora recognized her great potential both as a courtesan and as a swordsman. She taught Helena the skills needed for both professions, and Helena was an apt pupil. She also learned to read and write, and Fiora suggested that she take up training as a courtesan. By the time she was fifteen, she was quite skilled as both a swordswoman and an entertainer. Unfortunately, she struggled to establish regular clientele, and soon turned to her other, more martial professions to pay her bills. She became a bodyguard, hired out to anyone who needed a sword.

At one point she was hired to protect an archaeologist from the Explorer's Society on one of their expeditions. Pirates attacked the ship. While Helena and the others were able to drive off the pirates, the ship had sustained extensive damage and was left crippled and foundering. Before the ship sank, its crew was rescued by a vessel belonging to the Brotherhood of the Coast. Ramon Torres was on board the ship as a member of the crew, and Helena quickly caught his eye. When the ship reached port to drop off the Explorers, Ramon left with her. In the time since, the two have traveled and adventured with each other, travelling throughout Castille and Vodacce in search of adventure.

Helena is a Vodacce woman, trained as both a courtesan and a swordsman. She is quite beautiful, in an elfin kind of way, with a button nose and a gleam in her eye. She keeps her long, dark hair up in an elaborately braided bun.. She dresses provocatively but not elaborately, preferring clothing that she can duel in. She prefers basic colors (white and black) to those with a lot of flash.. Helena prefers to use Dirty Fighting, simply because there will always be something on hand to use as a weapon. However, when fencing, she favors the Pommel Strike.

Helena di Lucani (Hero)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 4

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 3

Reputation: 15

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Castille (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Appearance (Stunning), Combat Reflexes, Dangerous Beauty, Left-Handed

Background: Lost Relative 3 (Alessandro)

Arcana: Star-Crossed

Courtesan: Acting 4, Cold Read 2, Conceal 2, Dancing 3, Etiquette 3, Fashion 2, Seduction 4

Courtier: Dancing 4, Etiquette 3, Fashion 2, Oratory 1, Lip Reading 2, Seduction 4

Ambrogia (Apprentice): Feint (Fencing) 3, Pommel Strike (Fencing) 3, Riposte (Fencing) 3, Exploit Weakness (Ambrogia) 1

Athlete: Climbing 1, Footwork 4, Side-Step 1, Sprinting 2, Swimming 3, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 2, Throat Strike 2

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 4

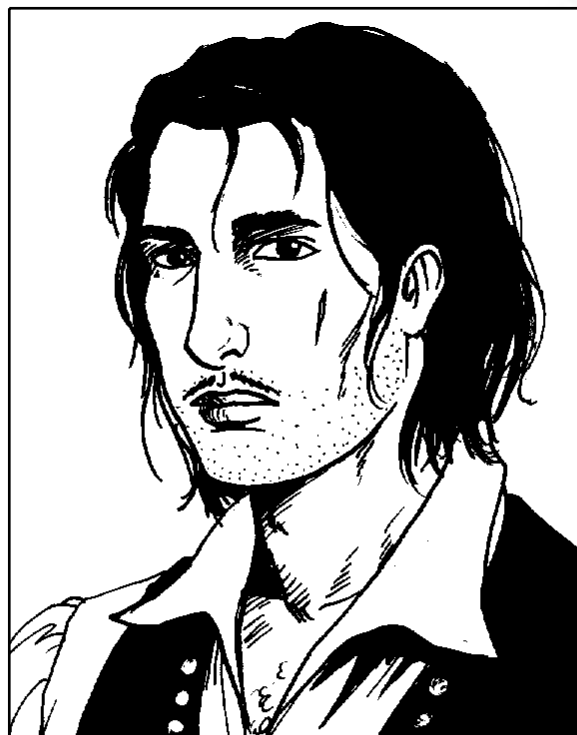
Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 1

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 4

Rider: Ride 2

Ramon Torres

Ramon Torres was born in a small fishing village, the sixth child in a family of twelve. His parents struggled to make ends meet, and Ramon was always jealous of the few rich people he saw. He had to accompany his father and brothers out to sea to try to catch enough for his family to eat, and the merchants to whom they sold the majority of their catch seemed to have money to spare. Ramon grew into a handsome young man, graceful in his movements, but greedy and envious of others. It did not surprise anyone when he left home and joined a gang of bandits.



Ramon soon fell in with the infamous Wolf Pack, and quickly became recognized as one of El Lobo's most dangerous men. While Ramon did not enjoy killing, he did enjoy the sensation of holding money in his hands, and he was willing to do anything to feel it. El Lobo taught him the secrets of the Aldana School, and Ramon discovered his natural aptitude for swordsmanship. El Lobo made Ramon one of his lieutenants by the time he was eighteen.

Ramon's luck ran out soon thereafter. He was captured while fleeing from an ambush because he refused to drop the loot he was carrying. He was sentenced to serve a lifetime in prison on a small island off the Castillian coast. His cellmate there was a man from Vodacce named Alessandro. The two hated each other instantly, and Alessandro bullied Ramon constantly. On one occasion, Ramon offered more than token opposition to Alessandro's attacks, and Ramon still bears a scar on his face from the brawl that ensued.

After four years in prison, Alessandro and Ramon organized a breakout. The prisoners escaped and captured a nearby vessel, then set out to join the Brotherhood of the Coast. On the way, Alessandro stole the ship's lifeboat and left. Ramon spent a year with the Brotherhood, and received instruction in the Rogers School while he was there. He left just after he first met Helena. He was smitten with her from the moment he laid eyes on her. Since then, the two have been traveling together constantly, and Ramon has finally found something he wants more than wealth: his lady love. He feels unworthy of her affection because of his criminal history, and wants to reform himself, making her someone that she can be proud of.

Ramon wears a thin mustache but no beard, although there may be some stubble, depending on how recently he has remembered to shave. His hair is medium length but scraggly and tousled. He has a small, straight scar about 3/4 inch long (from the point of a rapier) on his left cheek. His habitual outfit is a deep red shirt with a black vest. He has a habit of stroking his scar with his left hand when he is uncertain. He can be incredibly charming when he tries. He can also slip back into his old ways very easily. He has quite a road ahead of him in his road to reformation, but he is doggedly determined to make it. He currently is trying to atone for his crimes against the people of Castille by stopping the Wolf Pack and interfering with the Montaigne

army invading his country. Although he is a stubborn man, he is forcing himself to bow to Helena's wishes whenever they disagree. He may argue with her for a moment or two, but he always caves in.

Ramon Torres (Scoundrel)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 3

Wits: 2

Resolve: 3

Panache: 3

Reputation: -6

Advantages: Castille (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Able Drinker, Dangerous Beauty, Scoundrel

Background: Wanted 2

Arcana: Stubborn

Courtier: Dancing 4, Etiquette 2, Fashion 3, Oratory 1, Seduction 3, Sincerity 3

Criminal: Cheating 3, Gambling 2, Lockpicking 2, Shadowing 2, Stealth 2

Sailor: Balance 4, Climbing 2, Knotwork 2, Leaping 2, Pilot 2, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 2

Aldana (Apprentice): Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 2, Feint (Fencing) 1, Riposte (Fencing) 2, Tagging (Fencing) 1

Rogers (Apprentice): Bind (Fencing) 2, Corps-a-Corps 2, Disarm (Fencing) 2, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 1, Pirate Trick: Sea Legs

Athlete: Break Fall 3, Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Leaping 2, Sprinting 3, Swimming 3, Swinging 3, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 2

Rider: Ride 1

Francesca

Francesca was born to a small family of nobles whose ancestors squandered away their fortune and lands. Francesca was the only child in her family, and there was no financial or political advantage to marrying her instead of some other noble woman. Francesca was not unattractive, but she was never beautiful either. She did have two things that made her desirable: her razor-sharp mind, which she keeps hidden from all but a few confidants and her powerful Sorte magic.

When Francesca was fourteen, she met a handsome young swordsman-in-training named Alessandro. She flirted with him and he flirted back. They became childhood sweethearts, but he lacked the noble blood necessary to marry her. He disappeared when she was sixteen, and she

married a slightly richer nobleman as her family desired. She was not deeply in love with her husband, and his apathetic treatment of her led Francesca to habitually overeat.

Three years ago, Francesca's husband was assassinated by agents of his political enemies. Her fate magic had failed to protect her husband and her reputation. One year later, she met Alessandro once more, and he asked her to marry him. She agreed. Since then, she has worked diligently to ensure that he has every advantage her magic can provide him. He has provided her with one of his Brute Squads to protect her.

Francesca dresses in the usual plain black attire and veil associated with Fate Witches. She overeats and does not get much physical exercise, so her body has grown quite corpulent over the years. Her veil does not quite cover her second chin. Francesca genuinely loves Alessandro, and enjoys the attention and affection he shows her. He married her not because she is a fate witch, but because is one of the few people who have ever loved him. She is a willing accomplice in her husband's crimes, which allow her to live in more comfort than she has ever experienced in her life. She created the Twisted Blade that Alessandro carries.



Francesca (Henchman)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 2

Wits: 5

Resolve: 4

Panache: 2

Reputation: -11

Advantages: Eagle Eyes, Thean

Background: Ridiculed (3)

Sorte (Adept): Arcana 4, Coins 4, Cups 4, Staves 4, Swords 4

Fortune Telling: Cold Read 4, Occult 4, Omens 2, Oratory 3, Palm Reading 3

Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 3, Fashion 2, Oratory 2

Spy: Conceal 4, Interrogation 3, Lip Reading 3, Poison 4, Shadowing 2, Stealth 2

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 2

Alessandro di Lucani (alias The Scarred Man)

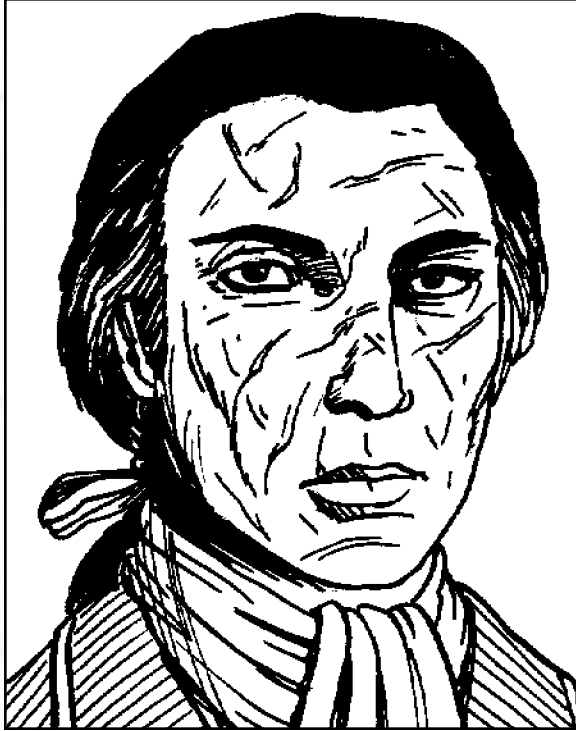
Alessandro was born thirty-two years ago to a Vodacce courtesan and a courtier. His mother died when he was very young, and his father married a woman from Avalon, who bore him Helena. Alessandro's brash style quickly earned his little sister's admiration, and he parlayed that flair into

a talent for swordsmanship. He studied the Ambrogia School, becoming an Apprentice by the time he was seventeen years old.

One of Alessandro's first duties as a Swordsman was to challenge a diplomat to a duel. However, the diplomat rarely left his heavily guarded estate. In order to confront him, Alessandro needed to break into the home, then create a diversion to distract the guards. He took his young sister Helena, then a child of nine years old, and instructed her to run through the yard of the diplomat's mansion. He told her to pretend that she was lost and wanted her mother.

Helena's distraction allowed Alessandro to deliver his challenge. It also allowed him the time needed to win the duel. It did not, however allow him to get out. As he was leaving, he spotted Helena talking with a richly dressed man. The man heard Alessandro's footsteps, and started to draw a pistol. Before Alessandro could do anything, Helena drew a concealed dagger from her dress and plunged it into the man's chest. Guards were rapidly approaching from the mansion, and Alessandro pushed Helena over the wall with instructions to run home and wait for him. He never arrived.

The richly dressed man was an important diplomat from Castille, and all evidence pointed to Alessandro. He knew that the only reason that Helena had killed the diplomat was that he had dragged her into this business, so he took full



responsibility for the crime. He was captured by the guards and sent to Castille for trial. Before he was shipped, he sent a letter to Helena, apologizing for getting her into trouble, and telling her to take up instruction from his old fencing instructor, who would keep her safe.

On Alessandro's eighteenth birthday, the Castillian judicial system found him guilty of assassination and crimes against Castille. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, and shipped to a small island. There he made many enemies and few friends among the other prisoners, and was subjected to frequent attacks from his fellow inmates.

Life in prison was very stressful for Alessandro. His hair turned gray within a few years, and one vicious gang attack left his face and arms covered by knife scars. A week later, one of the gang was found dead. The next day, a second assailant had suddenly perished. Two days after that, another one had died. Within three months, every prisoner who had ever laid a hostile hand on Alessandro was deceased, and the bullying stopped, or rather, it reversed. Suddenly, Alessandro was the one doing the bullying.

Six years ago, Alessandro got a new cellmate, a young Castillian bandit by the name of Ramon Torres. Alessandro tormented him ruthlessly. Once, Ramon tried to stand up to him, so Alessandro beat him into submission. When a guard came into their cell to stop him, Alessandro

killed the guard with his own rapier, then walked over to a barely conscious Ramon and cut his cheek open.

Two years ago, Ramon and Alessandro organized an escape, and the prisoners succeeded in freeing themselves. They captured a ship and set sail for La Bucca, to join the Brotherhood of the Coast. Alessandro wanted nothing to do with this, and left in the ship's lifeboat in the middle of the night. He secretly returned to Vodacce, where he met Valentino and hired him as his valet. He wanted to look for his sister, but he could not find Helena. He did, however, find an old childhood sweetheart, Francesca, who had become a disgraced widow. They renewed their romance and eventually married. Soon, desperate for money, he began a career of assassination, blackmail, and robbery.

During this period, Alessandro did not let anyone know his name. Because of his gray hair and scarred face, he was not easily recognizable. He adopted a nom de guerre, the Scarred Man, and proceeded to earn a reputation as a ruthless criminal. In time, he decided that he did not want to have to work for other people any longer. He wanted to be the man in charge, not the one taking orders. He single-handedly eliminated five rival gangs, then instructed Valentino to recruit several men to work for him as his field lieutenants. Thus, he created a small criminal syndicate, which currently specializes in protection rackets, assassination and arson. Because he risks losing his life if he is found within Vodacce's borders, he rarely leaves his home now, allowing Francesca and Valentino to deliver his instructions to his lieutenants, and to keep him abreast of any new developments. He does pay attention for any word of his sister.

Alessandro's his face (and most of the rest of his body) is covered with many interlacing scars. He keeps himself clean-shaven, and takes great care to keep his hair neatly styled. He dresses in the finest clothing that his ill-gotten money can afford, and is often seen with a cane. If not for the scars, he would be devilishly handsome. When he walks with a cane, he affects a limp in order to make people believe that his old injuries are troubling him. In fact, the cane is a swordcane, and Alessandro has trained in its use.

When Alessandro expects trouble, he has a rapier, which is a Twisted Blade created for him by Francesca, a pistol, and a dagger. When he is not, he has a swordcane. In combat, he will fire the gun first, if given the opportunity, and then draw

and fight with his melee weapons. His favorite trick is to make a Pommel Strike with his sword. He is a calculating Villain, and only three things motivate him now. The first is his love for Helena, and the guilt that he feels over endangering her. The second is his love for his wife, Francesca, who can look past his scars and see the man beneath them. The last is his thirst for revenge: revenge against anyone who ever crossed him. This list is quite long, and includes Ramon Torres.

Alessandro, has led a very unhappy life, and the only thing that gives him pleasure is causing others to suffer for his benefit. On the other hand, he never abuses those whom he holds dear: Francesca, Valentino, and Helena. Helena is something of a special case for him. He loves her, but he still sees her as a child. So he thinks that he must save her from her mistakes, like her romance with Ramon. Alessandro knows that Valentino is skimming money off the top, and he does not mind. In fact, he expects Valentino to supplement his wages as much as possible, and turns a blind eye when he does it.

Alessandro (Villain)

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 4

Wits: 5

Resolve: 5

Panache: 4

Reputation: -56

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Evil Reputation, Pain Tolerance, Toughness, Twisted Blade (3 Destiny Dice), Unnerving Countenance (Below Average), Vodacce Valet (Valentino)

Background: Exiled 3

Arcana: Recurring

Criminal: Ambush 5, Gambling 1, Shadowing 3, Stealth 5, Underworld Lore 4

Doctor: Diagnosis 3, Examiner 4, First Aid 4, Surgery 2

Fence: Appraising 4, Socializing 1, Underworld Lore 4

Sailor: Balance 1, Climbing 2, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

Spy: Bribery 4, Disguise 4, Interrogation 5, Poison 4, Shadowing 3, Stealth 5

Ambrogia (Journeyman): Feint (Fencing) 4, Pommel Strike (Fencing) 5, Riposte (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Ambrogia) 4

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 5, Lifting 2, Side-Step 3, Sprinting 4, Swimming 2, Throwing 2

Dirty Fighting: Attack 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Eye-Gouge 4, Kick 3, Parry

(Improvised Weapon) 3, Throat Strike 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 3

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 4

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 4, Reload (Firearms) 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 4, Parry (Knife) 4, Throw (Knife) 3

Rider: Mounting 2, Ride 3, Trick Riding 2

Swanson (Journeyman): Conceal 4, Double-Parry (Swordcane and sheath) 4, Pommel Strike (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Swanson) 2

Apprentice: The Apprentice is able to use the swordcane's sheath as a Fencing Weapon that does 1k1 damage, but it suffers the same penalty to parrying as an Active Defense as a swordcane. The penalty for using the sheath in the off-hand is negated. The student does not suffer the swordcane's penalty to parry when performing a Double Parry with the swordcane and its sheath.

Journeyman: The Journeyman has learned the Swanson School's signature maneuver, nicknamed the Wooden Horse. The Swordsman holds his sheath in between his enemy's thighs, restricting his mobility. To perform this maneuver, you must declare that you are performing it and roll an attack with the sheath with one Raise. If you succeed, you inflict no damage but have placed your sheath in between your opponent's legs. Decrease the Swordsman's TN to be hit by 5 because his arm is left exposed to attack while the sheath is in between his opponent's legs. However, while the sheath remains there, the opponent may not run away and cannot use Footwork, Balance or any other Knack that depends upon being able to move one's legs as his Defensive Knack. The sheath may be held there as long as the swordsman likes, but he is easier to hit as long as it is there.

More on the Swanson School will appear in the upcoming *Swordsman's Guild* sourcebook.

Valentino

One might not know it today, but when he was younger, Valentino lived the life of a servant. The nobleman that he worked for traveled quite extensively, which afforded Valentino the opportunity to learn numerous foreign languages. He also learned how to conduct himself through the various social functions. Because of his small size his Lord would use him to listen in on many important business dealings and on occasion would even have him acquire a few important documents when the need presented itself. He also developed an impressive knack for forgery, although he saw to it that no one knew of this ability.

New Equipment

Cutlass (Reprinted from *Pirate Nations* and slightly reworded for the Game Master's convenience)

Cutlasses are Fencing Weapons. They are weighted like meat cleavers to cut easily into flesh and bone, but subsequently suffers from inaccuracy. Therefore, a Hero's Attack Roll is at a penalty of one unkept die (-1k0), while his Damage Roll is at a bonus of one unkept die (3k2 total) when using a cutlass.

Swordcane (reprinted from *Vendel*Vesten* for the Game Master's convenience)

A swordcane is a light fencing blade hidden in a cane. The sword's grip is the cane's handle, and the remainder of the cane is the sheath for the sword. There is usually some sort of locking mechanism to prevent the sword from coming out of the cane accidentally. It takes a Wits roll against a TN of 30 to notice that a sword cane is not an ordinary cane. When wielded, the swordcane is treated as a fencing weapon, with the exception that it's lack of a guard gives a penalty to its user of +5 to all TNs for using Parry (Fencing) as an Active Defense.

Upon the nobleman's death, Valentino set out to make it on his own with a tidy sum of money. Of course the fact that Valentino was left a large sum of money in the nobleman's will seemed rather odd to some people, but the will had been written at a time when he was very sick. He found a position as a translator, something that he performed quite well. Another bonus to this type of job was that he was able to continue to travel throughout the civilized world. He continued to do this up until he reached the wizened age of forty-eight. An acquaintance of his, Javier Cabellos, tracked Valentino down and asked if he was interested in a more permanent position. Javier informed him that he met a man in prison and that he had a plan that would quite a bit of money. In order to do this he needed someone who was adept in many languages and who knew how to find other people with talent. When Valentino met with Alessandro he found a man in a very delicate situation and who was willing to pay well but also informed him of the risks involved in this career. Sensing a golden

opportunity, Valentino jumped at the chance. He has since become the only person who knows the whereabouts of Alessandro or who sees him with the money that he has collected.

In order to perform his new job efficiently, he has found several individuals with varying skills to carry out the necessary jobs he assigns them. Having hired Alessandro's lieutenants, sent them out to collect the appropriate fees. These fees, it turns out, are a little more than what Alessandro has requested. Valentino has decided that since he has a lot to risk he might as well make a little bit more. At this point Valentino has a sizable sum of money and is prepared to leave Vodacce if his employer ever finds out.

Valentino is a very intelligent, aggressive and manipulative individual, even as he advances slowly towards old age. He has a presence about him that can make the largest Vestenmannavnjar step back. In combat, he prefers to manipulate the situation so that other people have to handle it. His deals sound as if they are in your favor but, beneath it all, he will always come out ahead. If he feels that someone is after him, he will slip into the shadows, hide among the crowd or do whatever to escape confrontation. He also has enough friends to help him wriggle out of any bind he finds himself in. Valentino's hair used to be black, but has faded to a light gray. His eyes retain the same hazel sharpness that they did when he was in his physical prime. Valentino has always been much shorter than the average Vodacce, which he has learned to use to his advantage. During social events not dedicated to him, he tries very hard not to be noticed, but to eavesdrop as much as possible.

Valentino, Alessandro's Valet (Henchman)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 3

Wits: 3

Resolve: 3

Panache: 3

Reputation: -23

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Crescent (R/W), Eisen (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Ussuran (R/W), Vendel (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Linguist, Small

Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 1, Oratory 3, Diplomacy 2, Gossip 2, Memorizing 3, Scheming 2

Criminal: Ambush 3, Cheating 3, Gambling 3, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Lockpicking 3, Pickpocket 3, Prestidigitation 3, Quack 3, Scrounging 3

Forger: Calligrapher 2, Forgery 3, Paper Maker 1, Research 1

Servant: Drive Carriage 3, Etiquette 3, Fashion 1, Gossip 2, Menial Tasks 2, Unobtrusive 3, Valet 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Eye-Gouge 4, Throat Strike 4

Knife: Attack (Knife) 2, Parry (Knife) 2, Throw (Knife) 3

Ideas for Using the NPCs in Future Adventures

El Sangriente

El Sangriente is put in prison for a very long time. There is a possibility that the Heroes could wind up sharing a cellblock with him in a Castillian prison someday.

El Baston

El Baston escapes from prison and disappears for some time. He will leave the area to join the Vendel Merchant Marines. There is a chance that he could wind up on a ship with the Heroes, or encounter them in a port city some day.

Franz Detmer

Franz Detmer is still trying to find the person responsible for the decimation of the Giftzahne aus der Drachen. He will remain in the Montaigne Army long enough to find the officer who sent so many of his friends to their deaths. When he finds him, he will try to kill him.

Gervaise Lalonde

Lalonde's superior officers are concerned about the intensity of his ambition. They feel that he may one day threaten their positions. When Ramon is snatched from his hands in such a public spectacle, Lalonde is humiliated. He is stripped of his

commission and drummed out of the service. He goes searching for the Heroes, and will do everything that he can to make their lives miserable when he finds them.

Demont Vernard

When the Heroes rescue Ramon, Lalonde is stripped of his command and replaced with another officer. In a few months, this man will be capable enough to handle the men while Demont finally gets to take leave and visit his family in Montaigne. He returns to his post dutifully.

Savino Bonidicci

Sadly, Savino does not live much longer. A few months later, he is found dead in his shop. There is no sign of foul play and he seems not to have suffered. Another tailor moves into the shop.

Stefano Salvadori

Salvadori will keep running his inn, the Golden Eagle, for many more years to come. He will always remember the Heroes and gives them a discount whenever they want to stay there.



Ludwig Hauser

Hauser is trying to get back to Eisen. He has heard that there are opportunities for young men such as himself in Freiburg, and he is eager to go there.

Morgan Tavendish

Tavendish suffers one misfortune after another. He never manages to get back home again. If he boards a ship bound for there, it will be not be able to make the journey safely. Morgan will spend the next few years being attacked by pirates, joining their crew, being marooned on an island, and eventually finding a niche with the Brotherhood of the Coast.

Alberto and Antonio Casioli

The Casioli twins will continue their criminal activities, offering their services to anyone who can afford them. Eventually, they work exclusively for a devious Bernoulli nobleman. There is a good chance that they will cross the paths of the Heroes again someday, if they are in Vodacce again.

Serk Olofsson

Serk returns to Vendel and becomes a very wealthy trader, putting his criminal days behind him.

Lorenzo Pedrini

Lorenzo attempts to form his own gang in the city of Porto Spatia to fill the vacuum of power left by the collapse of the Scarred Man. He is nowhere near as successful. Instead of running a profitable racket, he and his men are mere thugs.

Sayid Amir Ahmad

Sayid returns to the Crescent Empire and is not seen again by any of the parties concerned, unless they go there.

Ramon Torres and Helena di Lucani

Ramon and Helena travel Théah and the seas, looking for adventure and romance. Their next stop will be Avalon, because Helena is anxious to see the land of her mother's birth. They will remain good friends of the Heroes, and could show up to help them every now and again (they owe the Heroes big time). There is a good chance that they will join the Explorer's Society simply for the challenges that that organization's expeditions present.

Alessandro di Lucani and Francesca

Alessandro will never give up on looking for Helena, and Francesca is sticking to her plan to make Helena less important to him than herself. Alessandro will bear a special grudge against the Heroes, and may come looking for them, not just for revenge, but also to try to pry information about his sister's whereabouts from them. Francesca will stand by her man in these endeavors. Alessandro's years of criminal income have made him wealthy enough to live in his current lifestyle for decades to come. He will spend this money on keeping Francesca comfortable, finding Helena, and avenging himself.

Valentino

Valentino retires from Alessandro's service shortly after the adventure ends. He feels that he is getting too old to keep up with the physical demands of such a job. He takes the money that he has saved up over the years and travels to Freiburg, where he sets up a business as a translator and forger.

