

# The Mystery of Black Ash Island

## Location and Adventure

### Discovery

*Thud.*

*The sun beat down strongly on the white sands of the beach, while clear azure waters lapped gently against the nearby rocks.*

*Thud.*

*The captain shielded his eyes and looked up. In one of the trees on the edge of the beach the foliage rustled.*

*Thud.*

*Another heavy green fruit dropped into the sand below the tree and a gangly rigger grinned and waved down to his captain. While they had enough food supplies on board the ship to last well beyond Kirk, there was never any harm in securing some fresh fruit for the crew. Turning his attention further down, he saw the grouping of rowboats that the party had come ashore with. While most of the crew remained on the ship, the captain always liked to get some land beneath his feet before another long journey.*

*“God morgen”, called the captain to his quartermaster. “I want all the supplies on the Rig Hval before noon.”*

*The quartermaster stood near the rowboats and simply nodded. “Most of the timber has been collected, but Magnus found some vines further inland that will replace some of our ropes.”*

*The captain raised an eyebrow, he had not thought of the need for rope but then that was the job of his quartermaster and if he did one thing well it was choosing the best crew for a job. “What about fresh water?”*

*The quartermaster grimaced. “Not found any yet, captain. Hal and Edvard are looking over on the north side for a stream or something.”*

*“And Master Einersson?” the captain spoke almost under his breath while staring off at some undefined object. The emphasis on the title was very deliberately given, although most of the crew knew the situation all too well.*

*“He went off with two of his... two of the merchant marines. Don't know where though...”*

*The captain was about to make a comment when one of the marines came bursting through the tree-line. He spotted the captain and walked briskly over.*

*“Master Einersson asked me to fetch you.”*

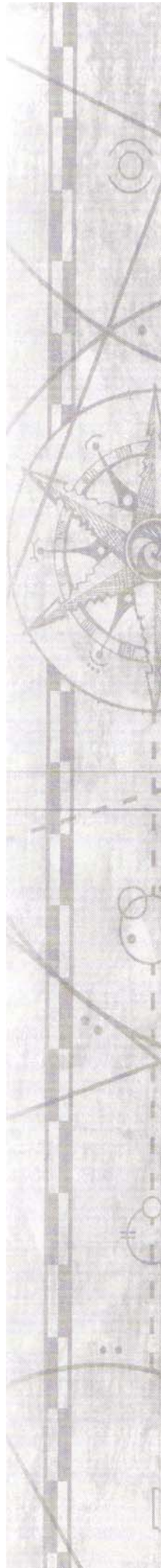
*As the captain just stood there impassive, the quartermaster stopped his work and looked about to rebuke the attitude of the marine. “Did he indeed,” said captain Sigvald Aldisson finally, holding up his hand to calm his infuriated officer.*

*“Well then you had better take me to ‘Master’ Einersson.”*

### History of the Island

On a solitary island far west of mainland Theah lies a unique puzzle. An uninhabited wooded island located to the northern edge of the Midnight Archipelago. It was found in 1645 by a group of Vendel merchants seeking new trade routes in the western oceans. Stopping to gather supplies of timber and fresh water, the crew found evidence of previous visitation. From the imposing feature of a lone ash tree rising above all the other foliage, a path led across the island through a large clearing. In the clearing, the ground showed a circular depression and an overhanging branch had a very old piece of rope securely tied to it. Believing that they had stumbled on some form of buried treasure, the captain sent to the ship for equipment to dig out the clearing. After digging for just over an hour they hit wood, unfortunately not a treasure chest but rather a wooden platform the shape and size of the former depression. Clearing this away they descended deeper only to find more wooden platforms at fairly regular intervals. After the fourth such platform, and now quite exasperated, the head digger noticed the walls were becoming damp. They had failed to notice that they had passed through a hard clay layer, when suddenly the bottom of the shaft started to fill with water. The water was no real danger but it made downwards progress now impossible without better equipment.

The captain recalled the crew to the ship and completed the otherwise uneventful voyage to Kirk somewhat



disappointed. On arrival, the head merchant went immediately into conference with the Chair of the Sailor's Guild and less than an hour later two Guild swordsmen boarded the docked ship. The agents confiscated the ships maps and rutter, over the strenuous objections of the ship captain and his navigator. The Guild did not currently have any available resources to perform another expedition with the War of the Cross continuing apace in neighbouring Eisen. Some members of the Guild were also doubtful of the financing of such a venture with no certainty of a return. Their story may have ended there, had not the Vendel ship captain had the foresight to instruct his navigator to produce a duplicate rutter for just such a situation. Unable to act in Kirk under the ever-present gaze of the Guilds, he took the prize to Avalon where it passed into the ownership of an anonymous contact with connections in the Explorers' Society.

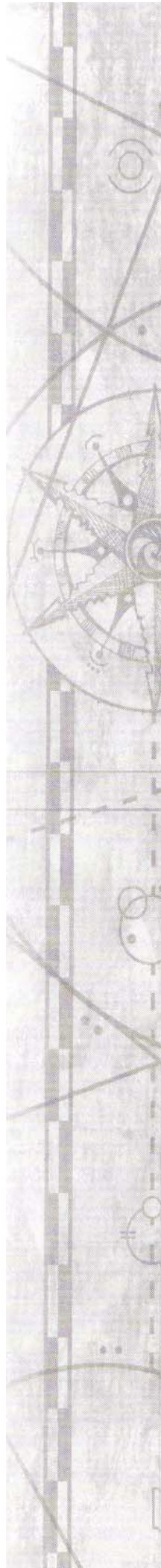
After some small amount of debate between the senior members at the Carleon house over the veracity of the find, the Society sent a porté messenger to divert one of their ships bound for the Syrne islands down to explore the site. Unfortunately the integrity of the site had been severely disturbed by the Vendel crew, so few clues to the origin of the earthworks were found. However, investigation of the wider island did uncover the "well site", a narrow shaft forming a perfect circle and lined at the top with crude clay bricks. Depth readings of this well proved to be inconclusive, possibly due to a narrowing of the shaft or blockages further down. One surprising discovery was that the water in the well was found to be salt water, suggesting an underground link to the sea. Whether it was once fresh water is unknown and if not then its purpose remained equally unclear.

Seeing that the Vendel shaft was unusable due to the water, the lead archaeologist put his team to digging a second shaft close by. When the Explorers' reached the clay layer they started to line the shaft with wooden planks, waterproofed with tar from the ships supplies. This tactic worked well for a time until they reached the level of what they calculated to be a sixth wooden platform, when the team were shocked as the shaft collapsed into a larger underground cavern and

quickly filled with sea water. Two diggers were drowned in the incident and the lead archaeologist was just about to call off the entire expedition when a second team made another discovery. On the north-west shore of the island, they had found what looked like man-made channels just below the water line. When the group cartographer plotted their likely route, they lined up almost perfectly with not only the "well site" but also the first shaft. This suggested that the sea water flooding the well and shafts was very deliberate and added to the mystery of what this cunning trap protected. Unfortunately, with no way of pumping the water out of the shafts at a sufficient rate, this information was useless.

Since the Explorers there have been a number of other attempts on the island, resulting in a few more shafts and the collapse of the underwater channels by a Montaigne noble using a modified explosive grenade. The only other useful information comes from the Montaigne team, who used a novel porté trick to retrieve a clay-covered canister they dropped into the Explorer shaft. Imprints on the returned object resembled coins and one of the scholars has claimed that blurred design is that of an Imperial senator from around the ninth century. What such a coin is doing in that watery cavern is more problematic. A number of theories and speculation have grown up as to the origin of the "money pit" of Black Ash island.

- ∞ A Vodacce scholar wrote in 1662 that only a member of the Syrne culture could have created the system, since it demonstrates too high a level of engineering. This is not a particularly popular theory and has been particularly ridiculed by church scholars.
- ∞ The building has been credited to the Poor Knights of the Prophet, whose fleet allegedly set sail from Muguet just before the arrest of the order in 1308. The theory goes that the fleet sailed far into the western ocean and the coins of the well are the legendary lost riches of the Knights.
- ∞ Another treasure story relates to the Crescents who were forced to flee Castille following the Second Crusade. Among the missing wealth is the original crown of the





Castillus dynasty and valuable Acragan jewels.

- ∞ A less grandiose idea credits the site to Avalon or Vesten privateers who raided the coastal towns of Montaigne and Castille in the ninth and tenth centuries. However, whether a typical pirate crew would be able to build such elaborate traps is open to much debate.

## Geography

The island itself forms an elongated crescent shape, with a



sandy beach on the south-western side where many of the parties anchored to explore the sites. The name of the island comes from the original Vendel crew and refers to the tall dark ash tree that dominates the tree line of the island. This tree is not native to the area but rather to parts of northern Theah, which has only added to some of the wide speculation about the island. The Explorer team spent a considerable time on the island and did an extensive survey; most of the maps that can sometimes be bought in coastal taverns are copies of this original survey.

## Using the Island

While the island is suitable for a puzzle to see if players can come up with good ideas to explore the sites, it also represents a focus for intrigue and politics throughout Theah. Many factions have tried to uncover the secret of the Black Ash treasure, even more have set themselves to making sure certain other factions do not discover such a secret. A group of players may be employed by a nation or even a rich noble to accompany a team, either to help the

recovery effort or deter others from attempts. On the mainland of Theah, rumours of secret documents and evidence prompt covert action on many fronts with many of the original maps and diaries having changed hands many times, not always with the permission of the owners.

The secret societies have their own particular thoughts on the site which go beyond the financial gains and prestige sought by the nations. The Rose+Cross understandably do not talk about the Poor Knights, but if they do know anything about the origins of the site they are very closed about it. However a few notable patrons over the years have been linked with expeditions and it is quite possible that Knights have accompanied these teams, perhaps without anyone actually realising the fact. The interest of the Explorers' Society is obvious, but they have not directly funded any attempts since the failed expedition of 1649. Recently some members of the Society have commented that they may soon have the equipment needed to mount a proper attempt, perhaps with a little assistance from the Invisible College who have shown interest in the puzzle but from a far more academic position. Of the other groups, only the Sophia's Daughters are worth mention in regards to the island. While most of Theah is completely unaware of their conspiracy, they are even less aware of their affinity with water, which could prove the breakthrough necessary to explore the underground cavern. A member of the Daughters that has worked on a number of Explorer sites, over the last forty years and under many different names, has recently acquired a number of Synchron gemstones that are capable of storing light and could be used to see in the dark watery underworld.

## Sample NPCs

Professor Adrian Harwell ( Hero )

*Brawn* : 3

*Finesse* : 2

*Wits* : 5

*Resolve* : 4

*Panache* : 2

*Reputation* : 32

*Background* : None

*Arcana* : Focused

*Advantages* : Avalon (R/W), Thean (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Castillian (acq), Vendel (acq) Membership (Explorers' Society), Published, University, Research Library, Connections (Invisible College)

*Sailor* : Balance 2, Climbing 2, Rigging 1, Navigation 2, Cartography 3

*Scholar* : History 4, Maths 3, Philosophy 3, Research 5, Natural Philosophy 3, Theology 2

*Courtier* : Etiquette 2, Diplomacy 1, Fashion 2, Oratory 4, Mooch 2, Sincerity 2

*Merchant* : Scribe 2, Accounting 2, Appraising 4

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

*Firearms* : Attack 2, Reload 2

Professor Harwell took up the chair of archaeology at Bedegrane University after a disagreement with members of the faculty in Kirkwall. While many see this as a step down given the poor reputation of the establishment, it has meant far more freedom in research and new funding opportunities. One of the few members of the Society calling for a new expedition to Black Ash, he has his own theories about the treasure that he shares with few people but hopes that his connections with inventors in Carleon will soon deliver the equipment that will allow a man to stay underwater for the length of time needed.

“Rachelle Dubois du Arrent” ( Villain )

*Brawn* : 3

*Finesse* : 4

*Wits* : 4

*Resolve* : 4

*Panache* : 2

*Reputation* : -15

*Background* : True Identity

*Arcana* : Deceitful

*Advantages* : Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Eisen (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Thean (R/W), Crescent (acq), Vendel (acq), Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters) (Explorers' Society), Connections (many), The Balm,

Poison Immunity

*Courtier* : Dancing 3, Etiquette 5, Oratory 2, Fashion 3,

Diplomacy 4, Scheming 4, Seduction 3, Sincerity 5

*Scholar* : History 3, Law 2, Mathematics 2, Occult 3, Research 2, Philosophy 1

*Hunter* : Survival 3, Tracking 4

*Sailor* : Balance 3, Navigation 2, Cartography 2, Rigging 3

*Spy* : Stealth 4, Bribery, 3, Conceal 5, Disguise 5, Read Lips 3, Shadowing 4, Lockpick 3

*Athlete* : Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Leaping 4, Sprinting 4, Break Fall 3

*Knife* : Attack (Knife) 5, Parry (Knife) 4

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

The woman currently known as a demure Montaigne scholar and a finds specialist for the Syrne Island team is certainly not what she appears to be. Like many personas before, this one is a fraud although what her real name and identity was is not recorded and she is loath to mention. Having imbibed the Balm of Westmoreland now twice, Rachelle is actually over a hundred years old and in that time has journeyed much of the western ocean. The Daughters are very concerned about what the Explorers' may find and so many agents have infiltrated sites over the decades, either to observe or in some cases take more drastic action. For example, the leader of the last dig Rachelle was on died when a ten-second beetle somehow found its way past the netting and into his sleeping tent. While the Daughters have watched a number of attempts on Black Ash fail, they may mount their own attempt simply to find out what is there and make it safe before someone else actually manages to figure it out.

## Sample Adventure

This small adventure is set in a coastal Montaigne town and uses the legend of the Island to prompt intrigue and a classic chase sequence. The setting can be either before or after the Revolution, since the Musketeers serve a similar role in both periods although the GM may want to change the feel depending on how much they want to emulate the chaos of the new order in the country. The style outlines the basic plotline, but leaves the descriptions and dialogue to the GM to use their particular style and to suit the type of group



carrying out the adventure. As written it is well suited to a low-level group, but can be made more difficult throughout with the inclusion of more brutes.

## In The Beginning

The heroes are resting in a small coastal tavern after whatever adventures they have recently found. Slightly further away from the docks than most taverns, the clientele is just that bit more refined. After a few drinks a man detaches himself from one of the shadowy corners of the tavern and approaches the group. He believes them to be people of means and therefore a potential market for an item he has for sale, that being a battered old book which he keeps within the folds of his cloak. Constantly looking around he will explain that he has come into possession of the route to a genuine treasure hoard, but currently does not have the resources to exploit the find and so is looking to sell the book to a group that does. The book is a Rutter, that is the set of instructions by a ship's navigator that serve in place of accurate maps and allow any other ship to follow the same route to the places they have found.

The Rutter in question is a genuine copy of that made by the navigator of the *Rig Hval*. The amount of money he asks for it depends on how much the players can afford, but will be a substantial amount of their combined wealth. He will show the book to the heroes but snatch it back if they seem to be reading it too closely, not because it is a fake but in case they remember too much. If the heroes are undecided, the tavern owner will come over and chastise the man for bothering good customers with silly ideas about treasure. Regardless of whether the heroes purchase the Rutter or not, the man will leave after about an hour and nothing else will happen that night unless the GM wishes to throw in a traditional bar brawl. Assuming the heroes need lodgings, the tavern has a number of clean and inexpensive rooms upstairs.

At noon the next day, once the heroes have left the tavern, they are confronted by a row of Musketeers (one for each hero and then two more). The most senior Musketeer steps forward and addresses the heroes. They are to be arrested on suspicion of the murder of Michel du Crieux, if they resist it

will be taken as a sign of guilt. If they deny knowing the person, the Musketeer will point out that numerous witnesses state that they were seen with the deceased last night. The Musketeer does not know much more than that and if any of the heroes argue about the accusation, they will be told to speak to the Captain back at the compound. If they draw weapons, the Musketeers will follow suit and the extra two will level pistols at the heroes. So long as the heroes do not draw firearms or kill anyone, the Musketeers will try to overpower the heroes and reinforcements will arrive if the heroes start to get the upper hand. Any hero stupid enough to draw a firearm will get shot in the shoulder by one of the marksmen, if any Musketeer dies then the fight goes to the death.

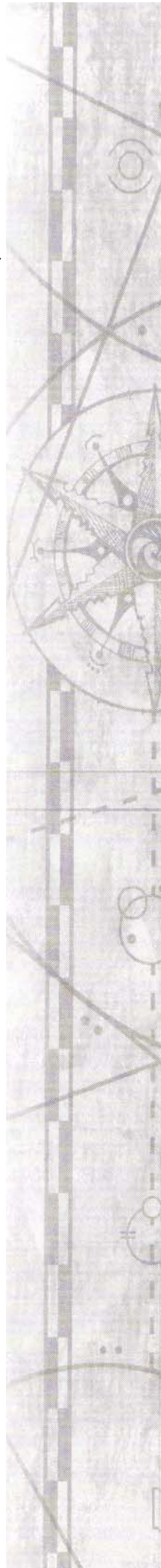
Unless the heroes manage to get themselves killed in this

### New Rules

Anyone with the Cartography skill can attempt to use a Rutter or make a new one for a ship's voyage. Making a new Rutter is a straight-forward process of recording the heading and speed of a ship, requiring only a check at a difficulty TN 10 (15 in rough weather) each time the ship changes course. Reading an existing Rutter is more difficult and assuming it is not encoded or in another language requires a check at difficulty 20 on each course change. Failures mean that the ship is not quite on the correct heading and add together so that the ship is a certain distance from the eventual destination. For every five points that the navigator fails by, the ship will be 10 miles out on a distance of 100 miles. So for example, a navigator that makes two failures ( rolling 12 and 18 ) will find the ship 30 miles out for every 100 miles that it travels.

A Rutter follow the exact route of a ship, so anyone re-tracing a route must start from exactly the same place. If the route goes wrong, the only real solution is to sail back to the start and try again.

encounter, they will be taken to the Musketeer compound in the centre of town. This is a sturdy two-storey building with a single entrance at the front. The group will be taken down



to the cells in the basement and joined there by the Captain of the local force. Jacques du Mugeut is a honourable man who has the absolute loyalty of his men and rose up through the ranks to Captain by his skill and hard work. If the heroes came willingly they will be treated well and given some food and water as they are questioned, otherwise they will awake with Jacques standing on the other side of the cell bars. The heroes will still have any belongings on them apart from their weapons and their satchels or other bags. The Captain will question the heroes about the murder of Michel and their relationship to him. If they continue to deny knowledge, he will beckon to one of the guards who will bring over one of the heroes packs and reaching in draw out the Rutter. If the heroes did not in the end purchase the book from Michel, they should be somewhat surprised and may even accuse the Captain of planting evidence. In truth, the book was put into their belongings by Michel himself who feared something might happen to him and hoped to refer any attackers to the new owners of the Rutter. The Captain dismisses any talk of a frame-up and depending on how the heroes reply to his questions will either calmly discuss the situation or get angry and warn them not to try the patience of the Musketeers. At the end of the discussion, he will tell the group that the Magistrate has been sent for and will arrive tomorrow morning to rule in the case, if they can afford it a lawyer could be summoned or they are free to defend themselves. He then leaves them and goes back upstairs with all but one of the guards.

## Act One - Prison Break

The heroes are left in the small cell for the arrival of the Magistrate. By now it is early evening and the only other occupants of the cells are four scruffy-looking vagrants. In an adjacent cell a young woman sits on her own and occasionally glances over at the heroes. If the heroes try to strike up a conversation with her, she will smile demurely but not reply. As the sun starts to set the guard will change and some food will be brought for the inmates, which the four vagrants will quickly devour and then hawkishly watch the heroes. If the heroes decide to wait until the next morning for action there are adequate bunks for them to sleep, although if at least one of them does not remain awake they will find that they are slightly poorer when they

wake up in the morning and the guard will just laugh and shrug his shoulders if asked about it.

Sometime during the night, one of the heroes (the one left

### Musketeers

**Threat Rating :** 3

**Usual Weapons :** Muskets, Fencing ( Medium )

**TN to be hit :** 20

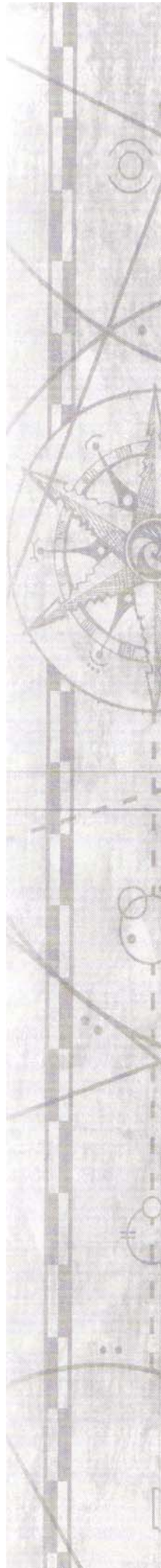
**Skills :** Attack ( Firearms ) 4

Attack ( Fencing ) 4

**Special Abilities :** Considered to have a Panache of 4 instead of 3.

awake or one at random) will be called by the woman from the other cell. She speaks in a whisper and sits close to the bars so not as to appear to be talking, suggesting that the hero does the same. She introduces herself as Helene and tells the hero that their group will be found guilty tomorrow and likely hang for the murder. If questioned, she will admit to knowing of the murder although she states she does not know who really committed the crime. She says that she has a way out of the cell, if the heroes are willing to help her to recover an item of property taken from her when arrested. If asked what crime she committed, she will say that she is a merchant and a rival with political connections has accused her of theft. Only if pressed will she say that the items are private letters from the Comte du Riche Paroisse that cannot be allowed to get into the hands of the magistrate, who is obviously in league with her enemy.

Assuming that the hero agrees to her terms, she will gently lift her hand to show an iron key that will open the cell doors and secure their escape. She states that she does not know how to fight and so needs the heroes to overpower the guards. Allow the heroes to discuss the plan between themselves, but remind them that there is a guard sitting nearby although he does not appear to be concentrating much on the occupants of the cells. A canny hero will work out that the best time to break out would be mid-watch, anyone with at least 4 in Wits and Criminal or Spy skills should figure this out or it can be suggested by Helene. The current guard on duty is near retirement and so should not





prove to difficult to surprise and subdue, so long as he is prevented from calling out he can be safely locked in the cell and no other guards will arrive. The guard had one sword and a pistol on him, no other weapons are on this floor although a small storeroom contains bags of grain and some rope if the heroes care to look. The other prisoners can woken up and released as a distraction, but this will lead to the alarm being raised and the Captain will be ready for the heroes later with two brutes to accompany him.

As mentioned earlier, the building has two floors above

## The Truth

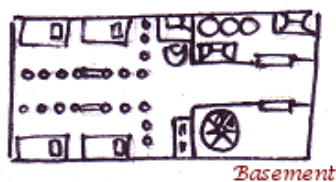
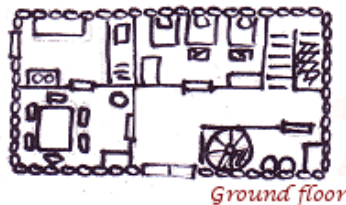
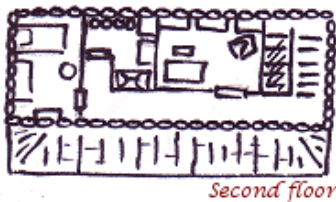
The woman calling herself Helene is in fact the Daughter agent listed earlier as Rachele Dubois du Arrent. The story of the love letters and the rival merchant were complete fallacies. Although it is true that she was arrested for theft, it was all set up to get her into the cell with the heroes. The item she was actually after was the Rutter, which she was unable to find in Michel's lodging after she killed him and framed the group. She has followed a number of leads for the past few months to get the book as unlike many of the copies known to the scholar community, this one appears to be authentic.

ground, the first contains the kitchen, mess hall and quarters for the Musketeers. Two men are in the mess hall, although if the heroes are quiet

they can be avoided as they proceed further up.

The top floor has the Captain's office and a secure storeroom with a single guard standing outside. The other Musketeers are all out patrolling the town.

The Rutter is stored in the storeroom and the heroes will have to subdue the guard to get it, this will attract the



attention of the Captain who will grab his sword and run down the hall to the storeroom to find out what is happening. In the narrow confines, only one person can fight at a time so the heroes should note who is walking where. Again, if any Musketeer is killed the fight will pull no punches and the Captain will use any method he can to get the upper hand. While the heroes are busy, Helene will open the storeroom and enter. She quickly finds and grabs the Rutter before climbing up and out of the single window of the room. By this time more Musketeers will have arrived downstairs, so the best course of action will be to follow the escaping thief out of the window and over the rooftops. The heroes belongings are also found here, but anyone spending too much time collecting them risks the arrival of more guards. They should however have time to grab at least their weapons.

## Act Two - The Chase

The chase will proceed through the early dawn of the town, the map in the Rose+Cross sourcebook can be used if available. Helene has a good start on the heroes and seems to be quite adept at leaping across the rooftops and then down onto the streets. Behind the heroes will be a number of Musketeers and Captain du Muguet if he is still conscious. Try to make the chase exciting, throwing in various challenges such as upturned market stalls, pedestrians and surprise encounters with other Musketeers around town.

If any hero gets too close to Helene, she will utter a stream of Montaigne curses and then grab a vial from deep in her clothes. Drinking the vial she will start to blur and eventually completely disappear from sight, leaving the heroes standing with nothing to follow. The concentration should now be on escaping any pursuit, which they should be able to do so long as none of the heroes really messes anything up. Once they do make it to relative safety a voice will call out to them. A single figure in a black cloak will step from a doorway and address the heroes. His hands out he will not threaten them and try to assure them he is not a threat. Clearly stating his intentions, he draws back the cloak to partially show the symbol of the Rose+Cross on a blue tabard underneath. He introduces himself as Wandering

Andre and says he can help the heroes. He knows of their escape from the Musketeers and his Order can help clear their name of the crime they have been framed for.

The woman they have been chasing is known to him as Rachele Dubois du Arrent and was the real killer of the unfortunate former owner of the Rutter. He knows where she is now, but they are unable to act against her themselves due to connections she has in the local government. If the heroes agree he will lead them to a small inn outside of town where he will produce the rest of the heroes belongings which they have secured for them as an act of good faith. He can also arrange for horses to take them to the manor where Rachele is known to be based, if they do not want to follow this lead he will say that he understands and depart giving no further assistance to the group.

## Act Three - Beast in its Den

The current home of Rachele Dubois du Arrent is a large rural estate set near woodland. While not as glamorous as such houses in the centre of Montaigne, it suits its current needs and does not attract unwanted attention. The two-storey main building has a number of outbuilding, including stables, and is enclosed by a high wall with a set of gates facing the main road to the town. Rachele has hired a number of mercenaries to guard the estate during her stay and at least two patrol the grounds at all times. One further soldier oversees the horses in the stable block. The rest, including their Eisen commander, are housed in the main building. Unless the heroes can think of some way to get across the main house unnoticed, such as using porte or other sorcerous trick, they will have to deal with the guards and more importantly their guard dogs.

Once into the house, the heroes will finally catch up with

### Guard Dogs

Brawn 3, Finesse 1, Resolve 1, Wits 1, Panache 1

**TN to be Hit** : 15

**Attack Roll** : 4k1 Bite

**Damage** : 3k2 Bite

**Skills** : Footwork 2, Tracking 2

the rather annoyed Rachele. After a tirade about the futility of heroes and various slurs on men, she will allow her mercenaries to deal with them as she runs upstairs to gather her things. There is at most one mercenary for each hero plus their commander Heinrich Leichtmann, a no-nonsense Eisen with a full beard and massive iron panzerhand at the end of an impressively muscled arm. He will speak little during the skirmish, but if the fight turns he will curse his men in strong Eisen terms and if all his men are defeated and he is reduced down to a near unconscious state he will submit to the superior skill of the heroes.

Upstairs Rachele is in one of the further bedrooms

### Mercenaries

#### Henchmen

Brawn 3, Finesse 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Panache 2

**TN to be hit** : 25

**Attack Roll** : 5k3

**Damage** : 5k2 ( Heavy Weapon )

**Skills** : Footwork 3

gathering together papers and various other items to be burnt, the first hero to enter the room will get a pistol shot directly at them. She has a number of loaded pistols on the desk and will use them to try and keep the heroes at bay long enough to finish her task. All the while shouting about how she has not lived this long to be upstaged by lucky amateurs. If the heroes figure out some way to get in the room or she runs out of shots, she will throw a small bronze globe towards them and run into the next room. A high-pitched whine will fill the room and the globe starts to glow. A hero can throw the globe out of the window if they act quickly enough, taking 2k1 of damage unless they cover their hands with something. If the item explodes everyone in the room takes 4k4 of damage and the rutter and everything else are completely destroyed. Either way, Rachele has escaped once again, there being no-one in the next room and the open window looks out on an ornamental lake and lots of empty fields.

### Aftermath



Unless it was destroyed, the Rutter should now be back in the possession of the heroes. The Eisen commander will not have attempted to escape, if questioned he will state to being a mercenary in the pay of the Lady du Arrent and know nothing of her activities or any murder. When the heroes leave the estate, a horseman will approach from the road, it being the Rose+Cross Knight introduced as Wandering Andre accompanied by two other mounted Poor Knights. He will congratulate the heroes and offer to purchase the Rutter from them, pointing out that it is mostly of scholarly value and only makes them a target for people such as Rachele. He will also offer the regards of the Order and can become a useful contact for players in the future.

Please now take the time to fill out the feedback form on the Rose+Cross site, which gives your thoughts on this module and also relates the outcome of your group. The combined responses will appear in a fiction on the site in the future.

## Non-Player Characters

### Captain Jacques du Mugeut

*Brawn 3, Finesse 3, Resolve 3, Wits 4, Panache 3*

*Reputation : 31*

*Advantages : Montaigne (R/W), Thean, Castille, Commission ( Captain ), Membership ( Musketeers ) ( Swordsman's Guild ), Combat Reflexes*

*Arcana : Inspirational*

*Commander : Strategy 1, Tactic 2, Leadership 4, Ambush 2*

*Courtier : Etiquette 2, Oratory 3, Politics 2*

*Spy : Stealth 2, Shadowing 3, Lockpick 2*

*Athlete : Climbing 2, Footwork 4, Leaping 3, Sprinting 3*

*Valroux ( Journeyman ) : Double Parry 4, Feint 4, Tagging 4, Exploit Weakness ( Valroux ) 4*

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

*Knife : Attack ( Knife ) 1, Parry ( Knife ) 3*

*Firearms : Attack ( Firearms ) 3, Reload 2*

Jacques du Mugeut is an exemplary Musketeer, fully embracing the code of the corps. Without the noble family and political support, that he has attained the commission of Captain is a mark of his natural ability to command and

inspire. It is the action of him and his guard that have spared the town much of the crime and trouble usually associated with a rural coastal location. He is not party to the conspiracy that has led to the arrest of the players although he realises that the tip that led him to finding the Rutter in their possession was somewhat convenient.

### Wandering Andre

*Brawn 3, Finesse 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Panache 3*

*Reputation : 28*

*Arcana : Insightful*

*Advantages : Montaigne (R/W), Castille (R/W), Avalon, Thean, Membership ( Rose+Cross ) ( Swordsman's Guild ), Rose+Cross Vow*

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

*Spy : Shadowing 2, Stealth 2, Disguise 1*

*Streetwise : Socialising 2, Street Navigation 3*

*Athlete : Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 2*

*Valroux ( Journeyman ) : Double Parry 3, Feint 4, Tagging 3, Exploit Weakness ( Valroux ) 3*

*Desaix ( Journeyman ) : Double Parry 4, Feint 4, Lunge 4, Exploit Weakness ( Desaix ) 4*

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

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

The young Andre Riche du Paix is the disenfranchised youngest child of a minor noble Montaigne family, having left before his arrogant elder brother could give him his *chaffe-finch*. Before joining the Order he acted as a sword for hire in the southern city of Paix, where his reluctance to accept certain commissions brought him to the attention of a local Sergeant Knight. His skills at subterfuge have been used in a number of missions over the last few years and have also attracted the interest of certain members of the Order who may call on his services soon. The last three months he has been tasked with watching the activity of Rachel Dubois du Arrent, while the Order are unaware of her affiliations they were alerted to her activities following the death of a Knight participating on an Explorer dig.

### Heinrich Lechtmann

*Brawn 4, Finesse 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5, Panache 3*

*Reputation* : -12

*Arcana* : Arrogant

*Advantages* : Eisen (R/W), Montaigne, Castille, Academy, Toughness, Membership ( Swordsman's Guild )

*Commander* : Ambush 4, Incitation 3, Leadership 3, Strategy 2, Tactics 3

*Streetwise* : Socialising 2, Street Navigation 4, Scrounging 3, Underworld Lore 5

*Hunter* : Stealth 3, Survival 2, Tracking 3, Traps 2

*Eisenfaust ( Journeyman )* : Beat ( Heavy Weapon ) 4, Bind ( Panzerhand ) 4, Disarm ( Panzerhand ) 4, Exploit Weakness ( Eisenfaust ) 4

*Heavy Weapon* : Attack ( Heavy Weapon ) 5, Parry 3

*Panzerhand* : Attack 4, Parry 5, Uppercut 3

*Firearms* : Attack ( Firearms ) 3, Reload 2

The burly Eisen mercenary captain would on first sight certainly not appear to be a graduate of a prestigious military academy, the last of a line of noted Eisen generals or a former member of the Roaring Drachen. However, all these statements are true although Heinrich is loath to discuss what lead to his exile to the life of a mercenary in Montaigne. Although he does not know the true affiliation of Rachele, he has served her on a number of different occasions and with different the different identities she has taken. He sometimes wonders why she does not appear any older as he notices fleck of grey appearing in his own hair and beard.

## Credits

### Writing and Layout

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### Special Thanks

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