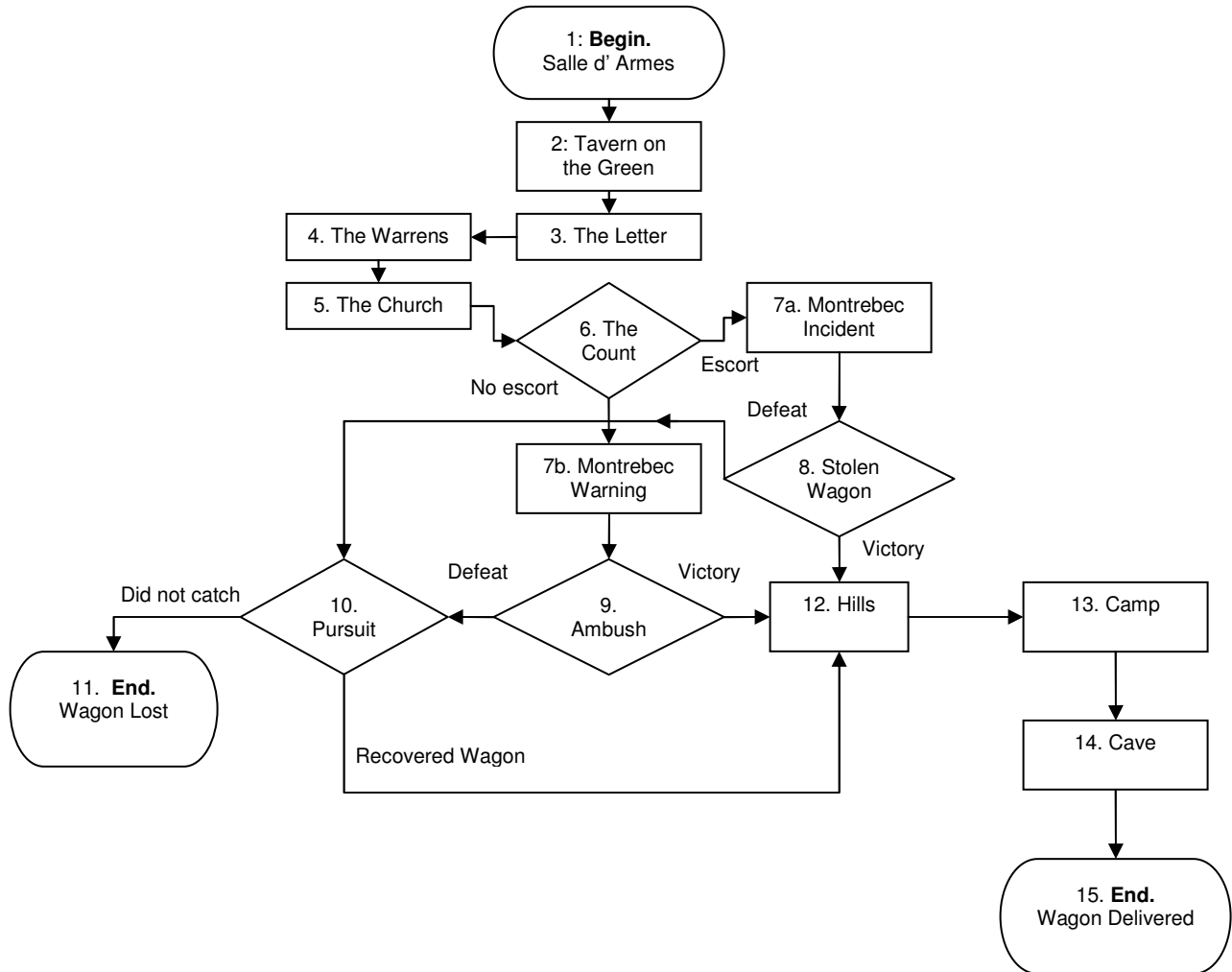


Rough Sketch Map of the Countryside Around Auvernais

Bandit Country

An Introductory Scenario for Robot's & Rapiers

Ralph Mazza, 11/01/03



Scene 1 (Fight): An Afternoon at the Salle d'Armes

The scenario opens with the characters practicing the art of defense at the school of famous fencing master Leonardo Mazzeri. The GM should use this scene to introduce new players to the mechanics of the game. The training room is a large space with roof supporting posts around the outside edge. Between the posts and the wall are weapon racks, benches, floor lamps and other accrements.

Leonardo is a short, thin, elderly looking robot who complains of aches and rheumatism but in reality is spry and deadly. He runs one of the more famous fencing schools in Auvergnais, one frequented by many of the King's Guard and the only one with a royal charter. He is merciless and scathing in his criticism of flaws and holds flamboyance and bravado in disdain. He is not above personally delivering a thrashing to students who do not pay sufficient attention to details.

If using the 4 pre-generated characters he is especially critical of Alfredo (too flashy), Burgiss (too slow), & Charles (too aggressive). He holds Devon, however, in esteem, and lavishes praise upon his favorite student. Pair the characters off and have them attack each other.

For purposes of this scene, the characters will use training weapons. Their training routine programming will automatically respond as if real damage was done (causing the robot to limp, or fall, etc) but at the end of the training their condition is automatically reset with no permanent harm. In other words, inflict the full effect of damage and injury (malfunctions, and attribute losses) but afterwards the robot characters are returned to original condition.

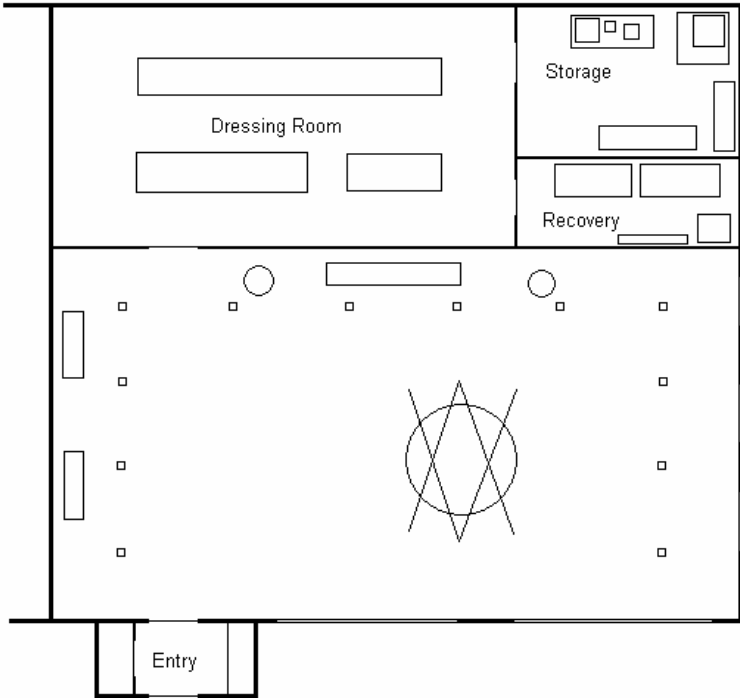
The GM should extend this scene until the players have a decent grasp of the game's basic dice mechanics: Tests and Saving Throws. The GM should demonstrate the roll over mechanics and Action Points and encourage players to develop their own combinations of moves to add extra dice to their rolls. When satisfied that the players have grasped the basics, have Leonardo call an end to the day's exercises.

Leonardo will either be pleased or infuriated with his pupils performance. The GM can judge for himself based on how cooperative and apt learners the players themselves were. But there is, of course, a built in bias towards the characters as noted above. Successes by Alfredo will often be passed off as sheer luck, while Devon's successes show a flawless mastery of form.

Leonardo: F3, D4, A6, L7, P6, M5 Core: P3, M4, S3 GP7 PW: 6 Athletics 3, Fencing (rapier) 7, Intimidate 4 Command 3

GM Tips: Use this scene to get the players comfortable with test and Saving Throw rolls and how Malfunctions work. Introduce the Turn Order and Action Point concept and point out how to use Action Points to string together multiple turns for greater effect and the danger of running out. Use Mazzeri to build some intra party rivalry by heaping praise upon Devon while criticizing the others. Don't worry about fighting the scene to the finish. Once the players seem to have a basic grasp of the mechanics have Mazzeri call the session to an end

and move on to Scene 2 where there will be ample opportunity for trying out what they've learned.



Scene 2 (Fight): At the Tavern on the Green

Following training, the characters will head to the Tavern on the Green for drinks and commiserating on the hardships of their lesson. The GM should feel free to simply frame the characters there without bothering to ask them what they wish to do. For one, as an introductory adventure for new players, they aren't likely to have any ideas on what else to do anyway, and for two, heading to the Tavern for drinks is the usual past time of the Band of Four and most other swashbuckling types in Auvernaise. In other words, it's "what your characters would do" and therefore fully enforceable with a Role Save if necessary.

The Tavern on the Green is a famous gathering spot that sits at the far end of a long narrow park. The park itself sits at the end of High Street the road that runs from the palace and past the cathedral before splitting and encircling the Green. The Tavern is a "U" shaped building with a fountain and horse posts in the court yard between the two wings.

The left wing is the largest of the three sections. Its two stories and the barkeep Armond le Forte and his family live in the second. The first level is the nicer part of the establishment with several tables for dining and clean swept floors. The rear of this section is taken up by large square bar. The front side of the bar opens on the dining room. The left rear corner opens into a tower where there are stairs leading up to the living quarters and down into the cellar. The right side opens up onto the common room.

The common room forms the base of the "U". It is also two stories but the second floor is just a balcony that encircles the room which otherwise is open up to the rafters. There are entrances into the living quarters (typically locked) from the left side of the balcony, and entrances into the second floor of the right wing on the right side where the stairs are down to the floor. The balcony is supported by posts all around the perimeter where dim lights are mounted and small booths line the walls underneath. The center of the room is lined with trestle tables and benches which are often shoved aside when trouble starts.

The first floor of the right wing contains separate rooms which can be reserved for private dinner parties and clandestine meetings. The second floor, accessible from the stairs leading up to the balcony, contains private sleeping quarters which can be paid for by the night.

The Tavern is a rowdy and boisterous place and one of the few locales in the city where the gentry frequently rub shoulders with the common class without issue. It is frequented by soldiers and toughs, guardsmen and duelists, rascals and aristocrats; anyone who by profession or avocation makes their way with a blade. There is a certain pecking order in the Tavern; a loose hierarchy of precedence for the best tables and best service predicated mostly on one's reputation with a sword. This hierarchy shifts and swirls as duels are won and lost and reputations made and, not infrequently, the Tavern itself is host to impromptu duels, challenges, and stare downs. Rising young Turks with a reputation hold court in favorite booths, while hanger-ons, hero worshippers, and those just hoping to see a good fight mingle at the tables. Some are indifferent to the rules of precedence feeling them to be just silly vanity and come to the Tavern just to mingle with their own kind, paying little

attention to who is sitting where. The Tavern also is frequented by a certain class of lady, some openly and some who come incognito, attracted by the vitality and danger.

There are no guards or bouncers at the Tavern. Just Armond le Forte, the giant, hulking, one legged owner and hero of the last war with La Roche who keeps a large bore blunderbuss and a mono blade axe at the ready. His word is law at the Tavern and with a dozen regular patrons ready to back him up on any notice he rules like a petty king from behind the bar. His is the only gun allowed to be fired in the Tavern, and any violators of that rule are banished permanently.

The characters will take a seat where they like. They are well respected regulars granted additional consideration for being King's Guard, as was Armond le Forte. Allow them to soak up the ambiance and interact for a while if they show an inclination to do so. Then have the Cardinal's Guard show up.

"At that moment six swordsmen enter the common room, laughing and talking loudly amongst themselves. They are wearing the livery of the Cardinal's Guard and waste no time noticing you."

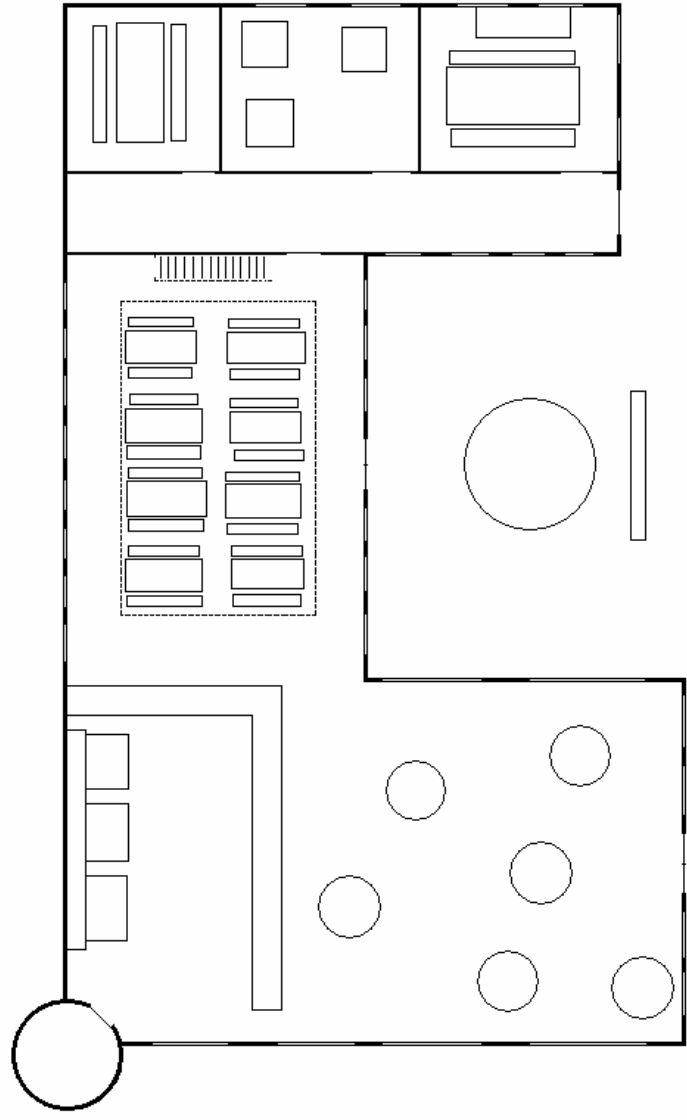
'Ha, quite a day for the King's Guard, eh' the leader sneers, taking a long swallow from a wine glass. 'What's that? You haven't heard? A whole detachment of Guard went out into the hills to roust out some bandits and were beaten to a pulp. You didn't know? Where've you been all day? Well, thank God you're here now. I surely feel much better knowing 4 of the King's finest are busy guarding their cups and bottles...'"

The Cardinal's Guard are attempting to goad them into a brawl. At 6 on 4 and with the Guard's recent defeat making them brave, the Cardinal's men are looking to get a leg up on their rivals. How the characters respond is up to them, but losing a fight or backing down in an ignoble manner would cost them some reputation.

Guards x3: F4, D3, A5, L4, P4, M3 GP 4 PW 5 Core: P4, M3, S3 Athletics 1, Fencing 2
Guards x2: F5, D4, A5, L5, P4, M3 GP 5 PW 4 Core: P6, M2, S2 Athletics 2, Fencing 2
Leader x1: F5, D6, A6, L6, P5, M4 GP 7 PW 5 Core: P4, M3, S3 Athletics 1, Fencing 3

If the characters are faring too badly, Armond will come to their assistance as a former King's Guard; wielding his Blunderbuss to end the fight.

Armond: F8, D7, A5, L3, P4, M4 GP 6 PW 3 Core: P5, M2, S3 Fencing (mass) 3, Firearms (musket) 3 Intimidate 3.



Scene 3 (Social): The Letter

Assuming the characters come through Scene 3 reasonably in tact, following the brawl, Armond will congratulate them on putting those uppity Cardinal's Guards in their place and will express concern over the news of the Guard's defeat. He will then belatedly remember that he has a letter for them.

The letter is sealed and written on good parchment by a fine hand (see letter handout next page).

404 Rue La Croix is a winding alley way that passes by a now burned out ruined old church in the heart of the Warrens. The Warrens is an area of Auvernais, primarily of commercial and residential buildings, that were heavily damaged in the service outage many years ago. With no guests and a non growing population, Auvernais had no real use for the space and aside from some initial cannibalizing of the neighborhood for material and recyclables, its largely remained abandoned by Auvernais' authorities.

But abandoned by authority does not mean empty of inhabitants. Most every citizen in Auvernais knows of the area now called The Warrens. It is a region of narrow, twisty, partially blockaded streets surrounded by largely ruined buildings and debris. It is inhabited largely by cast outs of Auvernais society, and desperate outlaws who can not get power to recharge from legitimate sources. The area is the head quarters of the Shadow Guild who have grown powerful enough to prevent most curiosity seekers or patrols by the watch. Periodic sweeps from the Watch or Guardsmen keep the somewhat within bounds but in general it's a area of rampant lawlessness within the city limits that has successfully stymied even the most determined attempts to wipe it out completely.

A very unusual place for a respected merchant to be.

Alternatively: If the characters were soundly thrashed by the Cardinal's men and significantly damaged; have Mazzeri send them to Beauchard for ministrations where he and Alphonse will request the character's help in person.

Good sirs,

Forgive the impersonal nature of this introduction, but I'm afraid I'm kept quite busy by the King these days. My name is Alphonse Beauchard, physician and doctor of sciences.

I bring to you a problem which my good friend and confidant, M. Leonardo Mazzeri, assures me you gentlemen will be able to render a most agreeable solution to.

My dear father, M. Aldo Beauchard, to whom I am most devoted, is a respected merchant in Auvernais of whom you perhaps may have heard. Despite the growing danger, he has taken as his calling to continue to deliver goods and supplies to those villages and hamlets in the country side which these days are becoming pressed hard by bandits and raids from La Roche.

I was concerned when my father informed me that recent run ins with bandits had caused the guards he had hired to accompany him to seek other employment, but my worry grew when he indicated that it was his intention to continue to make his deliveries without them. I fear he is exposing himself to great danger but he was adamant in his insistence.

When I expressed my worry to the afore mentioned M. Mazzeri he knew at once that you gentlemen would be eager to volunteer your services to protect my father on his latest rounds until I can arrange a more permanent escort for him. In making his recommendation to me, M. Mazzeri insisted that I say to you these words which I repeat at his direction "hopefully those four will run into sufficient bandits that will convince them to start paying better attention in my class".

I am not sure precisely what he meant by this, but I promised to pass his sentiment on to you which I have now done.

If it please you gentlemen, I beg of you to meet my father at 404 Rue La Croix on the morning of Thursday next where he will be loading his wagon before proceeding out into the countryside. Keep him safe for me, and may God reward his bravery and your own.

By mine own hand,

Alphonse Beauchard

Scene 4: Into the Warrens

It is expected that the characters will honor Beauchard's request and set out to meet Aldo at the address given in the letter. Some players may think to report in to their superior in the King's Guard, and if they do, they will be encouraged to go in order to use the opportunity to scout out bandit positions. If they think to inquire they can requisition mounts in the form of mechanical riding horses.

The Warrens, as indicated, is a bombed out region of largely ruined buildings. Early on in the rebuilding of Auvernais, the Cardinal had decided that that section of Auvernais was not vital to daily operations and the resources to rebuild it could not be spared. For expedience several blocks of the city were simply abandoned. He now regrets the decision to not simply raze the entire area when he had the chance. Now the Warrens, as they've come to be known, are home to a growing number of disenfranchised robots. The Shadow Guild has set up numerous safe houses and bolt holes in the area and have managed to tap into city power sources and other utilities. Its assumed they also have access to the old sewer and storm tunnels under the city. Weak patrols sent into the area often do not return, and stronger patrols generally find nothing.

Rue de Croix is a short winding ally opening up on the rear of a small, church near the edge of the Warrens. From the front the church looks quite intact, including steeple and LCD display windows. From the rear, however, the extent of the damage is obvious. The front stands like a façade with most of the rest of the roof and walls collapsed.

A heavy grav wagon is parked in the street behind this ruins pulled by a pair of mechanical horses which appear to have seen better days. The wagon is mostly loaded. A couple of heavily run down laborers struggle to load the last few steel crates and tie down the heavy tarp.

Aldo is a Type 3 robot of medium build with rough hewn features. His clothes are of fine material though somewhat worn, and he seems quite impatient to get going. He'll greet the character's enthusiastically saying they must be the escort his son arranged for him. He doesn't at all seem to find it unusual to be loading goods outside a ruined church in the Warrens and if asked about the cargo will only repeat "Goods and Supplies for the villages".

Aldo is very gracious and polite to the characters appearing genuinely grateful for their help; but will say little else about his career or their destinations.

Aldo Beauchard: Traveling Merchant

F5, D5, A5, L5, P6, M5 GP6 PW 4
Core: P3, M4, S3
Profession:3, Orienteering:3,
Labor:2, Drive Carriage:3,
Persuasion (convince, haggle):4
Firearms(pistol):2, Brawling:2, Sneak:
3, Conceal:2

Aldo is transporting stolen robot parts and contraband power capacitors from sources in the Shadow Guild out to bandits in the Broken Hills.

GMs may play Aldo as a spark himself who is fully involved in this scheme and intending to turn his escort over to Rork as he did with the last ones; or Aldo may be an unsparked dupe whose simply been convinced that this is all part of his normal duty as a traveling merchant, oblivious to the fact that he's being used.

During any scene involving danger, Aldo will attempt to hide, and if necessary snipe from cover with his pistol.

Mental Challenge: While the characters are standing about waiting for the wagon to be loaded, a young street urchin has been waiting for an opportunity to pick a pocket. Choose a character, preferably one with a small item of value (Charles', personal memento is a good option) to be a target.

The urchin makes a Sneak vs. Locomotion roll and uses successes to trigger a Perception Save in the target. If the characters had declared they were using a level of caution, this roll can be opposed by Observation vs. Perception. If this roll is failed the urchin is spotted and will run off. Otherwise, the urchin then makes a Sleight of Hand vs. Articulation roll opposed by Observation vs. Perception (now perhaps reduced) to pick the item. Additional successes are rolled into an Athletics vs. Locomotion roll to run away.

If the urchin wins this roll the character will still notice the crime. It was a straight up snatch and run without a lot of finesse. The real catch is what might happen if the characters chase the urchin too far. The streets of the Warren generally aren't favorable to small groups of King's Guard who stray too far. Use opposed Athletics vs. Locomotion rolls to stage the chase, and if the chase continues too far, the characters will find themselves in a dead end alley facing a number of thugs. Its possible to either talk or fight their way out.

Urchin: F2, D2, A5, L5, P3, M2 GP 6 PW 3 Core: P6, M2, S2 Athletics 2, SOH 2, Sneak 3, Persuade (convince) 2
Thugsx6: F3, D4, A4, L4, P2, M3 GP 5 PW 2 Core:P6, M2, S2 Athletics 1, Fencing (dagger) 2, Brawling 3, Dirty Fighting 3

Scene 5: At the Old Church

The Church of the Holy Rest is on a quiet street on the east side of town. It is the second largest church in Auvernaise, after the Cathedral and its priest, Father Donovan, is a highly regarded man of the cloth. The church is famed for its quaint appearance and fine wood work which makes it feel much more inviting than the cold stone and chrome of the cathedral.

Strangely, Aldo doesn't drive up to the front of the church, but instead goes around to the back to a private wing not open to the public. A door that the character's likely wouldn't have noticed opens and a male robot in deacon robes greets Aldo hastily. Aldo takes several steel crates off of the wagon and sets them at the door, while the deacon loads a number of identical crates on to the back of the wagon.

Mental Challenge: Aldo will not volunteer what's in the crates, but a successful Intrigue vs. Perception roll against a Difficulty of 3 will allow a character to find out.

What's Really Going On:

The activity probably seems suspicious and players may get a variety of ideas (like swapping out inferior goods, or some form of theft). In reality, the crates hold power batteries.

The private wing of the church was the old morgue which had cryofreeze units which held departed guests for transport back to earth. There weren't nearly enough units to hold all of the dead, but the ones that were available were used.

One of the units has been pillaged (its occupant left to rot and mummify) and the power that used to run it is now diverted into recharging black market batteries.

Deacon Frye can be played as a profiteering Spark out to make a buck, or as a victim of some elaborate extortion by the Shadow Guild. The GM should keep him in mind for future complications

Scene 6: The Count Offers Assistance

The troop has just left Auvernaise heading north on the King's Highway when a squad of 6 soldiers overtakes them. The soldiers are dressed in the private livery of Count de Grasy a high ranking noble close to the King. The soldiers are led by Captain Morris, a foreign mercenary in the employ of de Grasy.

The soldiers warn the characters about bandits and repeat the report of the recent Guards defeat. Captain Morris indicates that they are performing a scouting sweep through the country side, and suggests that the wagon would be safer if they were to escort it to its destination.

de Grasy is known to the characters by reputation only as a strong supporter of the crown, although his soldiers, being mostly mercenaries, have a reputation for cruelty, and avarice. The Captain will always be polite in the manner of a soldier rather than a gentleman, but clearly leaves the impression that his men can protect the wagon better than the characters.

Social Challenge: This scene offers the characters a choice which can be played out with as much role-playing or dice rolling as desired. The choice is a simple one, to accept Morris's offer of escort or refuse it. If declined, Morris will react as if the characters are making a mistake but will not press the issue beyond polite boundaries. He and his squad will ride on ahead, quickly outpacing the slower wagon.

What's Really Going on?

de Grasy was not programmed to be loyal to the king, he was programmed to be loyal to Auvernaise. As a Spark, he has come to his own conclusion about what is best for Auvernaise; one that doesn't involve the king.

He does not really realize he's a Spark. Programmed to be intensely practical, he has little time or use for introspection. To him, he simply weighed all of the options and decided that Auvernaise would be better off with him as King. He is, as yet, oblivious to the fact that ordinarily he shouldn't have even been capable of making such a decision.

He believes the King hasn't done nearly enough to rebuild the defenses of Auvernaise and thwart its growing enemies. He sees the rising discontent of the commoners (dissatisfied Sparks), the reemergence of La Roche, and the growing boldness of the bandit gangs as being dangers that should be dealt with firmly and decisively.

He knows that the Cardinal exercises much power in Auvernaise (too much) but has no idea of the Cardinal's true nature. It is his desire to gain supporters through convincing argument or bribery, launch a coup, execute the king and gain legitimacy by marrying the queen (a former lover).

His network of informers tipped him off about the wagon's contents. For a man trying to build up a private army to challenge the King's authority, a wagon full of robot parts and power supplies is too big a gift to pass up.

If Captain Morris can convince the characters to allow him to escort them, he will attempt to steal the wagon fairly "bloodlessly" (scene 8) or if not, he'll strike from ambush hard and without hesitation (scene 9)

Captain Morris: F6, D6, A5, L5, P4, M3 GP 6, PW 4 Core: P5, M3, S2 Command 2, Fencing (saber) 3, Riding 2, Pistol 1, Dirty Fighting 1, Athletics 1, Intimidate, 1

Lt. Mathews: F4, D5, A7, L6, P3, M4 GP 8, PW 6 Core P3, M3, S4 Command 1, Fencing (saber) 3, Riding 3, Musket 3, Athletics 1, Etiquette (genteel) 2

Dragoons x4: F5, D4, A4, L5, P3, M2 GP 4, PW 5 Core P6, M2, S2 Fencing (saber) 2, Riding 2, Musket 2, Athletics 1, Dirty Fighting 2

Scene 7: Entering Montrebec

Montrebec is the largest town north of Auvergnais other than La Roche. It serves as a central market for all of the region's villages, hamlets, and homesteads and is a frequent site of farmer's markets and country fairs. The village system of Auvergnais served two purposes. First, Athalon was self sufficient and, when there were guests, there needed to be actual food production. Most of the villages then are oriented to farming, maintaining dairy and beef herds, and fishing. Even though the guests are no longer present, the robots continue to go about their duties. Their numbers are dwindling, however, as more are recruited into various forces of soldiers or bandits, or damaged beyond repair in raids. Second, Auvergnais required places to go and visit, and be from, and do things at both for guest's entertainment and as part of the many adventurous story lines. So the villages served not only a practical purpose but were modeled on period villages complete with peasants and provincial charm.

Montrebec is a fair sized town with the King's Highway running through it, broadening into a large plaza in the center. In that plaza it would seem an army field hospital has been set up. Several tents and pavilions have been established and a number of robots can be seen, many shut down and being worked on by technicians.

These are the remnants of the company of King's Guard ambushed by bandits. Of the 25 guardsmen who rode out, only 10 rode back, and not quite as many more were carried or dragged back. Most of those who could ride were severely damaged, and this field station was set up to get as many robots as possible functional for the return to Auvergnais.

There are maybe 5 robots in decent functional condition, and 5 more who are beyond help and being cannibalized for parts. 8-10 more are in various stages of reassembly, stretched out on trestles like operating tables or standing immobile as they're worked on.

7a: With de Grasy's escort

When Captain Morris sees the hospital he calls his men to a halt. Two of them pull out some small portable power capacitors they were carrying and deliver them to the head technician. The Captain begins mingling with the surviving guardsmen complimenting them on their bravery, passing around a flask of strong wine, and pinning small medals of valor with the de Grasy crest on them to their tabards.

The characters can pick up snatches of comments like "the Count told the King he needed to send a larger army", "If de Grasy only had more men himself he would have ridden with you", "take these with the Count's compliments", "the King doesn't yet realize he's at war", "this wouldn't have happened if the Count's advice to double the size of the army had been taken", and other such things.

de Grasy's largesse:

The Count is a cunning and patient intriguer. He rarely passes up the opportunity to win the favor of military men, and if he can undermine the King at the same time, so much the better. If any hard nosed loyalists reports Captain Morris's words, the Count is fully prepared to feign horror and order the Captain hung; reactivating him a short time later, of course.

He knows that one day the King's Guard will oppose him in his bid. He'd rather arrange it so that the greatest part of the Guard joins him, or if not, offers only token resistance. After all, he will need all of the fighting men he can get once he's king.

The guardsmen take the attention well. Their only contact with the capital was a scornful letter written by Colonel Trebone commander of the Guard regiment expressing his embarrassment over their shameful defeat. Soon cries of “vivent de Grasy” are heard throughout the square.

Social Challenge: A character can pick up on the Captain’s activity with an Intrigue vs. Processor roll with a difficulty of 1

7b: Without de Grasy’s Escort

The guardsmen will be sullen and depressed when the characters travel through the plaza. They will look with suspicion on the characters traveling with a civilian.

Social Challenge: A character may make a roll such as Persuade or Command or the like to win the soldier’s over. Difficulty here is 2 as the soldiers are somewhat resentful of guardsmen from another company who didn’t take part in the fighting.

While this shouldn’t come to open blows, failure here may well result in jeers, resentment, and a loss of reputation for the characters.

With success, the soldiers will be more inclined to treat the characters as comrades. The characters may hear the following:

“Heading out to scout are you? With only 4? You’re mad. Those bandits smashed an entire company, you wouldn’t have a chance.”

“We gave as good as we got, that’s for sure. There were just too many of them. I’ve never seen so many bandits in one place. They struck us from ambush, it was like they knew right where we’d be”

“de Grasy’s men rode through here a few hours ago with some ministrations for the boys, god bless him. They was going out to scout as well, you’d best be careful not to shoot each other by mistake out there”

Scene 8: Stolen Wagon

Later that evening the troop has passed through Montrebec and is establishing camp for the night. Despite being machines, the robots of Auvernais are all programmed to respond to the normal human sleep cycle. Staying awake more than 16 hours each day requires a Processor Save every 4 hours, with temporary losses replaceable only through rest (1 point per 2 hours). At Processor 0, the character drops from exhaustion. Alternatively 1 point of power can be spent to avoid 1 save. Robot's with Self Awareness can make a Self Awareness Save which delays the need for a Processor Save (or another Self Awareness Save) by 4 hours for every Success.

Camp consists of few actual elements. Tents are unlikely. Aldo sleeps in the wagon, and there simply is a lantern to sit around instead of a fire.

Assume the characters have been up for 16 hours and will be departing in 8. Let them decide how they want to keep watch and split any watch with de Grasy's men. Captain Morris will not suggest a watch though his men will fully comply with whatever schedule the player's set up. Secretly all of Captain Morris's men have orders to remain awake and will spend up to 2 points of power each to do so. If the players set a schedule where the Captain's men have time for sleep, they will feign sleep but in reality be instantly alert.

The Captain's plan is to pick a time when the characters are off guard, get the drop on them, have two of his men grab the wagon and drive it off (pitching Aldo over the side) while the others simply disarm the characters and then ride off. Ideally, the Captain would like to do this without coming to blows or humiliating the characters, and would hope that they would honor a promise to not go after them.

If necessary though the Captain will use violence, preferably a round or two of EMP fire from the muskets to put the character down with minimal damage.

Use the stats given in Scene 5. Unless circumstances prevent, Mathews and 1 dragoon will steal the wagon, leaving the Captain and 3 others to deal with the player's characters. How this plays out depends on how alert the characters were and how unwilling to surrender peacefully they are. If by some chance they manage to win, drive off de Grasy's men and prevent the wagon from being stolen, by all means let them, and proceed to Scene 12. If the wagon gets away, proceed to Scene 10.

Scene 9: Ambush

Later that evening the troop has passed through Montrebec and is establishing camp for the night. Despite being machines, the robots of Auvergnais are all programmed to respond to the normal human sleep cycle. Staying awake more than 16 hours each day requires a Processor Save every 4 hours, with temporary losses replaceable only through rest (1 point per 2 hours). At Processor 0, the character drops from exhaustion. Alternatively 1 point of power can be spent to avoid 1 save. Robot's with Self Awareness can make a Self Awareness Save which delays the need for a Processor Save (or another Self Awareness Save) by 4 hours for every Success.

Camp consists of few actual elements. Tents are unlikely. Aldo sleeps in the wagon, and there simply is a lantern to sit around instead of a fire.

Assume the characters have been up for 16 hours and will be departing in 8. Let them decide how they want to keep watch.

Since Captain Morris failed to convince the characters to let him come along so he could steal the wagon peacefully, he plans on doing it the hard way. Do not tell the characters right away who is attacking them. If they ask they may make Perception Saves to notice with 2 successes indicating "it looks like they're in uniform", and 3 successes confirming they're de Grasy's soldiers. If a character spends an action to carefully observe them they can boost their TN for this Save accordingly. If locked in hand to hand at close range a Perception Save with a single success will confirm its de Grasy's men.

The Captain's plan is to pick a time when the characters are off guard. Lt. Mathews and 2 dragoons will then fire a volley of musket fire into the most alert characters. Morris and the other 2 dragoons will charge into the camp on horse back and try to sabre down any characters whose durability has been reduced by the EMP fire. Following this initial action, the 2 musket wielding dragoons will head for the wagon looking to drive it off, while Lt. Mathews continues to provide covering fire against the most dangerous character from the bushes.

Be prepared to utilize the Ambush rules to the fullest. For purposes of perception, it is semi dark out (full moon, clear night). If these are new players and this is their first game of R&R the GM should volunteer that this is a very dangerous encounter and the players will need to use their wits and look hard for ways to generate some additional rolls and to think of clever ways to spend the successes.

Morris will accept a surrender honorably as a soldier, and is even willing to parole the characters on their own word (unless they've given Morris reason not to trust them as gentlemen). However, he will not hesitate to be ruthless until he has won.

Use the stats given in Scene 5. If by some chance the characters manage to win, drive off de Grasy's men and prevent the wagon from being stolen, by all means let them, and proceed to Scene 12. If the wagon gets away, proceed to Scene 10.

Scene 10: Pursuit

Characters will reach this scene if they were not victorious in either Scene 8 or Scene 9. It is likely that those scenes will simply run into this scene without any noticeable break depending on how the action in those scenes play out.

The characters have a choice. They can choose to attempt to chase after the wagon or they can yield and return to Auvernais. If they are in heavily damaged condition they may have no choice but to limp back to the hospital in Montrebec. If they are incapable of even this, then a patrol of Guardsmen from Montrebec will happen upon them, perhaps brought by Aldo if he escapes. In any case proceed to Scene 11.

Pursuit can happen if the characters manage to drive off de Grasy's men, but not before the wagon is taken; or if the party split up and some went after the wagon right away. In any event the pursuit can be handled as follows:

Judge how much of a head start the wagon got: Slight, a good while, or quite a while. Award the wagon 1, 2, or 3 dice accordingly. Roll these dice and sum them. This is the number of "successes ahead" the wagon is. Arrange the dice in order from highest to lowest (left to right) and use them to count these successes. Place 1d10 adjacent to the left most die with the number 1 showing for each character involved in the pursuit.

As the characters gain on the wagon rotate their character die up 1 number for each success they close the distance by. When this count exceeds the number showing on the adjacent wagon die, move the character die right to the next wagon die and rotate it back to 1. Continue to count up from there and so on. If the characters fall back and the wagon extends its lead, count down the character die and when it counts below 1, drop it back to the next wagon die on the left and rotate the die to match the wagon die.

When the character die is next to the third die (left most), then the wagon is far ahead and all the character can see are signs of its passing, maybe some dust in the distance, and possibly hear some noise. If the character die drops below 1 here, then the character has lost the wagon, cannot continue the pursuit and must resort to tracking. When the character die is next to the second die, then the wagon is within clear visual range although still far ahead. When the character die is next to the first (right most) die the wagon is very close. If the character die increases above the wagon die here, then the character has pulled in front of the wagon. When the numbers are equal the robot is along side of or immediately behind it (able to jump across if desired), and for each number less the robot is 10 yards back for purposes of range of any gun fire.

The rolls for the pursuit are as follows:

The wagon will make Drive Carriage vs. Horse's Speed rolls during the chase. The wagon's horses are not in the best condition and have Locomotion scores of only 4 instead of 5.

The wagon is being driven by a dragoon who has no Drive Carriage skill but does have Riding 2. Using the Related Program rule the dragoon must roll his Riding vs. Horse's Speed, and roll any successes over into the Drive Carriage roll.

Since the dragoon is pressed for time this extra roll will cost 1 point of power. There are likely to be several Drive Carriage rolls, so, not wanting to spend a point of power for each, the dragoon will use the x1/2 Persistent Modifier.

The characters in pursuit will roll Riding vs. Horse's Speed.

The side with the net successes will count up or down on the pursuit dice accordingly.

Each set of rolls the GM rolls 1d10 for Hazards. Both wagon and pursuers must make Saving Throws accordingly

Horse Rule Summary:

The two horses pulling the wagon are draft horses. All other horses in the scenario are medium.
 Draft: SZ 14, F24, D10, L4, M2, GP 4, PW 4, Core: 2
 Medium: SZ 12, F16, D8, L6, 2, M3, GP 4, PW 5, Core: 3

A horse can carry a load equal to 1/2 of its Force, or pull a load in a wagon equal to its full force without difficulty. Each point of load above this reduces Locomotion by 1 until the horse can no longer move. Load is measured in points with a robot's load equal to its Size. Each point is roughly 55 pounds (25 kg).

The wagon team can pull a load of 48 without effect. The cargo is 30 points, and 2 Dragoons come to 10. There is 8 points of free load available for additional passengers before the horses start to slow.

For robot characters, Speed is equal to Locomotion. For 4 legged Horses, Speed is equal to 2x Locomotion.

Horses have only a single Core Program which is to provide dice for any horse related rolls the horse performs on its own. None of the horses in this scenario have any additional skill Programs.

When damaged use the standard Malfunction table with the following modifications. Treat all Articulation hits as Locomotion hits. Memory is the horse's programming to behave like a horse. At 0 the horse simply stops. Horses don't have free thinking Processors the same as robot characters and so don't have a Processor Attribute. Instead, on any Processor Malfunction, the horse becomes more difficult to control adding a cumulative +1 difficulty to all rolls involving the horse. Perception Attribute hits also give +1 control difficulties to motion based rolls. None of the horses in this scenario have any external slots. Apply those results as damage to cargo.

1d10	Hazard	Effects
1-5	None	
6	Low Branches	Save vs. Perception. Lose 2 counts on the pursuit table per failed die. Total failure = dismounted
7	Tight Turn	Save vs. Horse's Locomotion. Lose 2 counts on the pursuit table per failed die for slowing down. Total Failure = horse falls / wagon overturned
8	Malfunction	Save vs. Horse's Durability. Horse takes 2 Malfunctions per failed die. Total Failure = Horse shuts down (same results apply to both wagon horses for simplicity).
9	Slippery Road	Save vs. Horse's Locomotion. Temporary Attribute losses to Locomotion count against Speed. Total Failure = horse falls / wagon overturned
0	Road Obstacle	Save vs. Perception. Apply Temporary Attribute loss to Horse's Locomotion. Immediately Save vs. Locomotion. Lose 2 counts on the pursuit table per failed die. Total Failure = horse balks / Wagon blocked lose 1d10 more counts.

Scene 11: End. Wagon Lost

This scene is only ever reached if de Grasy's men succeeded in stealing the wagon in scene 8 or 9 and the players were unable to get it back in scene 10 or were unable or unwilling to try.

The player characters will suffer a loss of 1 reputation die as well as a loss of 1 Favor with both Alphonse Beauchard and Leonardo Mazzeri. However, they may have gained 1 Favor with Count de Grasy if they comported themselves well and honored any agreement made with Captain Morris. The Count respects and appreciates honorable soldiering. Any broken promise or particularly unchivalrous act (as judged by the Count's sense of chivalry which he applies rigidly to everyone but himself), however, will lose 1-3 points of Favor with the Count.

The characters will likely wish to report de Grasy's actions to either Colonel Trebone (head of the Guard Regiment) or to the King. The initial reaction will be disbelief, neither Trebone nor the King is Sparked, and, in the Tapestry, de Grasy is known to be devoutly loyal. At first the issue will be brushed aside, but if the character's persist, de Grasy will defend himself by suggesting that likely they were bandits disguised in de Grasy livery captured from his men, in much the way that several King's Guard uniforms are now in the hands of the bandits.

The players may make any combination of Oratory, Intrigue, Etiquette, or Persuasion (Convince) rolls they like. With victory they may even cause de Grasy to have to offer up Captain Morris as a scape goat which would cause them to lose 3 Favor with de Grasy. If they press the point and fail then they've embarrassed themselves. They are not of high enough rank to comport themselves poorly in court and get away with it. They'll lose a point of Favor with the King, Trebone, and Mazzeri.

The Cardinal will back de Grasy's story. His agents keep tabs on robots who've likely sparked, and de Grasy has come to his attention as a potential source of trouble. However, revealing such a highly regarded nobleman as a traitor would be a big blow to the Tapestry, and he is not willing to risk the consequences on such flimsy evidence. He may well, however, invite the characters to a private interview to discuss the matter. Depending on those proceedings the characters might make the Cardinal's list of likely Sparks, either as potential trouble makers or potential agents. Characters may come out of such an interview with +1-2 or -1-2 Favor with the Cardinal.

Favor and Reputation:

The Favor and Reputation mechanics are not fully developed at this time. As a rough guideline, rolls for Favor will be made in the same way as Tests using the character's Reputation for the number of dice and the character's Anthropoid Class for the Target Number (if dealing with robots of lower Class), or 1/2 Anthropoid Class (if dealing with robots of equal or greater Class).

Instead of using Anthropoid Class, the character can substitute Favor as a Target Number in any situation where the other party is likely to be impressed, fearful, or helpful towards the party with whom the character has Favor. Use 1/2 Favor if the other party is of equal or higher Anthropoid Class than the Favor granting party.

If Favor is negative, it works the same way using the absolute value as a Target Number against the character in question.

Assume the pre-generated characters start with Reputation 4, Favor (King) 2, Favor Trebone 5, and Favor Mazzeri 3

Scene 12: Into the Hills

Following the events of Scene 8, 9, and/or 10, the characters will need to regroup. If they've arrived at this scene they must still have the wagon, largely intact. Aldo will rejoin them. If the character's don't return to collect him, he will make his way to them. He is quite resourceful.

Aldo will insist on continuing on his route. After all, he still has his wagon and goods and is closer to his destination than to Auvergnais. It is impossible to talk him out of proceeding, although characters are free to try. If necessary he is fully prepared to proceed without them; or the players may actually physically force him to return. This would not be part of the normal scenario (as far as the Tapestry is concerned) and so the characters will either need a Self Awareness save, or be so heavily damaged as to trigger self preservation routines to choose it. In this case proceed to Scene 11.

Note: no matter how damaged the characters are, Aldo will not offer to share parts or power from his cargo with them (nor would he to the soldiers in Montrebec). Depending on how Aldo is being played, this is either because he is a true dupe and doesn't really know what the cargo is, or because he's a greedy profiteer and not about to share. If the players have guessed or otherwise determined the cargo, the GM can role-play out this scene as desired.

Reporting the wagon's contents to the Crown will earn 1 Favor with the King, and 1 with Trebone. However it will lose 1 with Mazzeri and 3 with Alphonse as Aldo will likely be arrested and hung. It will certainly lose 2 with the Shadow Guild and Rork's Gang. The characters may lose 1 Reputation depending on how they finesse their own involvement in the scheme.

When the party is ready to move on, Aldo will continue the drive down the King's highway for a distance before turning off and heading down a small, winding dirt track leading up into the Broken Hills. If questioned, Aldo will explain that there's a small village and a number of refugees hiding in the hills away from the bandits deprivations. Aldo's best excuse as to why the refugees don't seek shelter in Montrebec or Auvergnais is "they don't care for the city life".

Characters who take the time to look around can make an Observation vs. Perception roll to notice that there are signs that a number of travelers have passed this way not long ago. The track is freshly scuffed and rutted, and here and there are bits and bolts, gears and springs laying in the dirt.

After several hours winding higher into the hills, the track makes a sharp turn and empties into a shallow valley. The grass in the field is quite torn up, and there are even more scraps and larger pieces of what were obviously robots lying about. A deactivated horse lies on its side nearby, its belly already opened and power supply removed. There are a handful of shabby tents under the tree line at the far end of the field.

4 strange looking robots come out to meet the wagon and after a brief and hushed conversation with Aldo will begin to unload some of the crates from the wagon (assuming the characters don't take any action against them). They will look somewhat suspiciously at the characters but not do anything threatening towards them. A couple have only 1 eye. A couple are missing access plates covering up important components. At least one has mismatched arms and legs and walks with a pronounced limp as a result. A more sorry lot of patched together robot's the characters have never seen.

What's Really Going On?

This field is the very site of the recent defeat of the Third Company of the King's Guard Regiment just a few days before.

The robots who are here are part of the bandit gang who ambushed the Guard. Only a few of the more severely wounded bandits are left plus a few left behind to scavenge. Most have returned to the main camp for Rork's Gang (and Aldo's next stop).

Aldo is detouring from his normal trip to drop off a few necessary odds and ends and a power supply in order to get these last robots operational again.

This site is essentially the dirty, cobbled together, run down equivalent of the Guard field hospital in Montrebec.

Characters who make an Observation vs.

Perception roll will get the sense that there are several more robots about then just these 4. Should they try to attack or take hostile action, most of the robots will simply run away. Use stats for the Thugs from Scene 4. There are some musket armed robots who will fire from the tree line, but resistance will not be very strong. These are the dregs of Rork's Gang.

Mental Challenge: Characters who search around the field and make Observation vs. Perception rolls will find scraps of uniforms and a squad pennant identifiable as belonging to Third Company of the King's Guard Regiment. Those making Strategy vs. Perception rolls will be able to piece together the rough events depending on how many successes they get.

The Guard Company proceeded in column up the trail into this valley when fire poured down on them from the low hills lining the valley. The valley was too constricted for horses and the guard dismounted, forming a square with the horses in the center and attempting to move in good order through the valley. There are signs that at least 1 squad attempted to charge up and clear one side with some success. Before the Company could escape the trap, however, musket fire erupted from the tree line. From the size of some of the scorch marks on the grass, the bandits also had at least one cannon. Under such heavy fire, the Guards withdrew leaving any who couldn't walk or be dragged, pulling out down the hill.

Scene 13. Rork's Camp

By now the players should be mighty suspicious about what's going on. They're probably even thinking they don't really want to go to whatever the next destination is (and they'd be right). Problem is, the programming of a King's Guard is such that abandoning a mission unfinished, or a civilian to their fate just isn't done. Their programming insists they go on.

If the players start thinking "that's really dumb", perfect. They're starting to think like Sparks. A Spark doesn't usually like it when their programming makes them do stupid things, or even just things they don't feel like doing. Neither should the player. Tell them there's only one solution, and it's the same for the player as it is for their character. Increase Self Awareness.

Increasing Self Awareness (and decreasing Role) makes it harder for the GM to force the player's character to act according to its programming, and easier for the player to have the character refuse to listen.

At any rate, unless the players have earned a bunch of Inspiration and spent a good bit of it buying up Self Awareness there really isn't anything much they can do at this point but go along. If they have, then by all means let them make Self Awareness saves to do something else. Don't offer any suggestions about what else to do, however. That sense of confusion is the down side for a robot forced to think for itself for the first time. If a Sparked character is every *really* at a loss for what to do, have other Sparked robots give them the suggestions. This is why many newly Sparked robots wind up in service to (or at least orbiting around) those Sparks who do have a plan. Even if it isn't a very good one and even if its not really in their own best interests, it at least restores a certain comfort zone of not having to decide what to do for themselves.

The final destination is even farther to the north, continuing on a number of winding tracks deeper into the Broken Hills. Any character with a relevant Familiarity will know, and any character who passes an Observation vs. Processor Test at Difficulty 2 can figure out that these tracks were not originally built for the resort but are new paths and routes traveled by robots making their own trails.

It takes one more day of camping but other than the howling of wolves, screeching of owls and other night noises which are largely unfamiliar to the characters, the night passes uneventfully. GMs may wish to go through the motions of setting up camp just to see if any of the players want to burn power to stay awake (as per Scene 8 and 9). Keeping characters short on power gives effective leverage to rope them into the schemes and plots of major Sparks who have easy access to supplies of it.

By early afternoon on the next day the wagon will reach its final destination. They will be traveling up a gradually steepening slope that eventually flattens out onto a modest sized plateau; a shelf of land carved from the shoulder of a hill. Farther back and to the right the hill continues in a steep bluff. In the side of that bluff character can see the mouth of a cave. Piles of crates and boxes sit near the cave entrance to the left. A hitching post for horses is to the right with several mechanical animals waiting there in standby mode. Farther back are several large trees, among and to the left of these trees some military style tents have been set up.

There are quite a number of robots actively milling about, First count makes it in excess of a dozen. They are heading to and fro back into the trees or into and out of the cave mouth. Several are sitting around performing repairs on equipment or on themselves. It has all the appearances of a regimental campaign camp, although not nearly as organized or disciplined as a Guard Regiment camp, but at least as well maintained as one of the lesser regiments. The only thing missing from completing the picture is any sign of regimental colors and the complete absence of regular uniforms. Whoever's camp this is it isn't a camp of soldiers from Auvernaise or La Roche, or even any lord's private force.

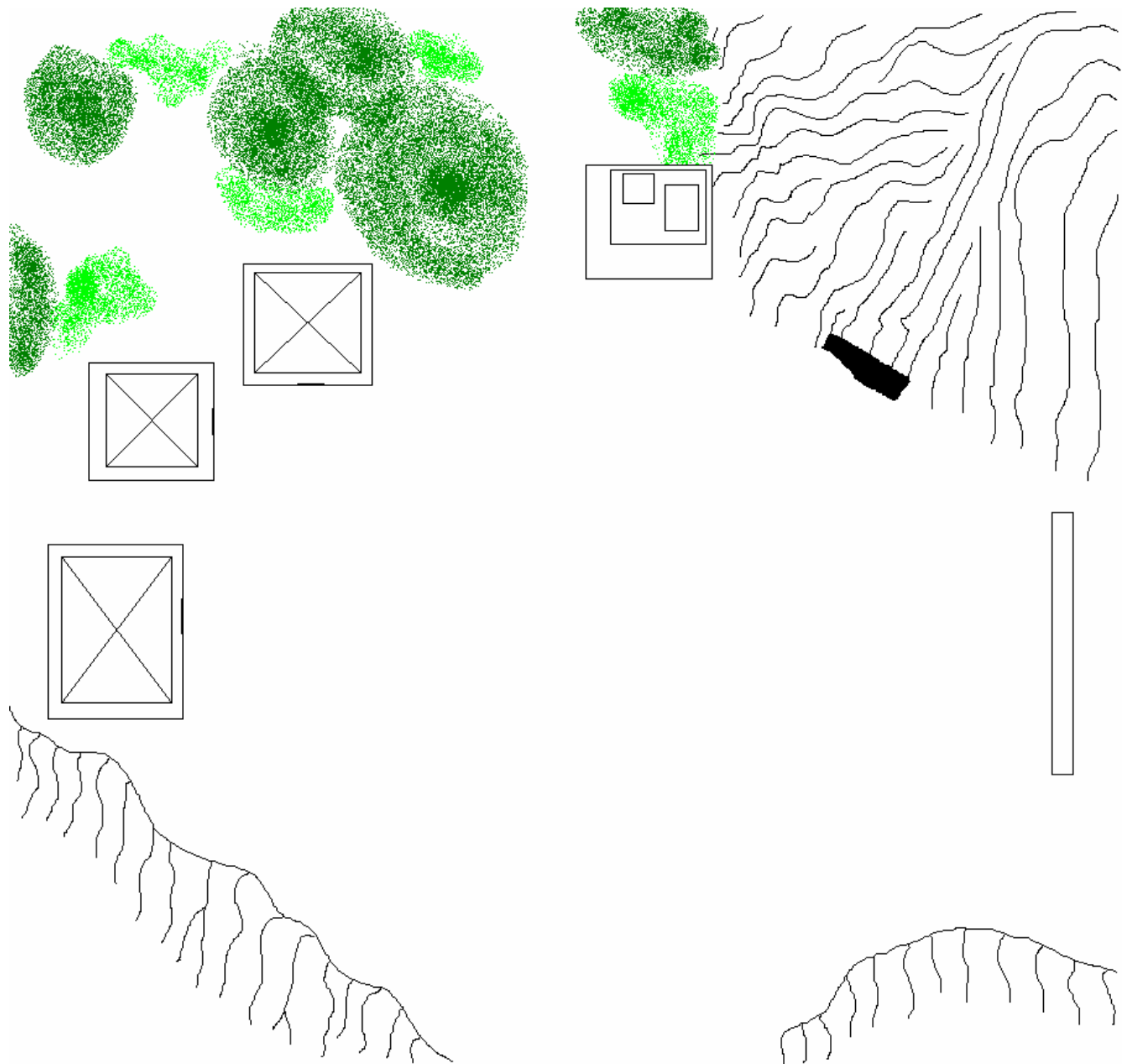
The robots don't look a bit disturbed by the character's arrival, although some will glare at the Guardsmen suspiciously. Any robot with Strategy or similar will know that if they don't seem alarmed by their arrival, its probably because they've been watching their approach for some time from hidden sentry positions.

Aldo will pull the wagon around to a point near the cave entrance, and a couple of the robots who've been heading in and out of the cave will begin unloading the wagon's contents and carrying it inside.

The characters are largely ignored at this point.

There is no clear dividing line between Scene 13 and Scene 14 (the cave). If the characters largely do nothing, then when the wagon has been completely unloaded they will be summoned into the cave. On the other hand, depending on the actions the characters take they may completely invalidate (and essentially force the GM to ignore or rewrite) Scene 14. Remember, while the robot's programming does force them to act in a manner consistent with their role in the Tapestry, they are not scripted puppets. Scripted puppets don't make for good entertainment with a high "replay" value, so the robots were programmed to decide many actions for themselves so as to make the story lines surprising and non repetitious. How the characters react at this point is completely up to them, and would be even if they weren't Sparked at all.

Between the robots the characters can see, and those they can't there are roughly 2 dozen robots at the camp. Characters making an Observation vs. Processor test can keep track of robots they've seen and then see again and can obtain a fairly close count. By and large the robots here look to be in functional if not pristine condition and reasonably competent and organized.



Bandit "Officers" x6: F5, D6, A6, L6, P5, M4 GP 7 PW 5 Core: P4, M3, S3 Athletics 1, Fencing (cutlass) 3, Command (bandits)1, Intimidate 3, Firearms (pistol) 2, Brawling: 1, Strategy 1
 Bandits x6: F6, D5, A5, L5, P2, M3 GP 4 PW 3 Core: P6, M2, S2 Athletics 2, Fencing (cutlass) 2, Brawling 2, Dirty Fighting 2, Intimidate 1
 Bandits x6: F4, D4, A5, L4, P3, M3 GP 5 PW 4 Core: P4, M3, S3 Athletics 1, Fencing (cutlass) 2, Firearms (musket) 2
 Thugsx6: F3, D3, A4, L4, P2, M3 GP 4 PW 5 Core:P4, M4, S2 Athletics 1, Fencing (cutlass) 2, Brawling 3, Dirty Fighting 3
 Other skills scattered throughout the individual bandits: Riding, Drive Carriage, Familiarity (Broken Hills), Mechanic, Firearms (cannon), etc.

Scene 14: The Cave

Assuming the players do not raise any ruckus they will be summoned into the cave. Aldo will go willingly seeking his payment. The players will be “encouraged” to go. If it looks like the players will come to blows over entering the cave, than Rork himself will come out, and the scene will progress outside in largely the same way, except Rork will not be at all pleased.

The cave is not very impressive, being little more than a mine shaft held up with a mix of wooden and scrap metal bracings. There is a single main shaft with a handful of “rooms” to either side. These rooms are little more than side shafts that terminate after a short distance. There are no doors. Some seem to be used for storage, others for shelter from the elements, and a few seem to have more specific purposes, like a recharge station or repair shop. What is most impressive about the construction, however, is this is not a mine shaft built as part of the Tapestry. This was designed and dug by free thinking robots with a little bit of programmed engineering knowledge and a lot of trial and error.

The main shaft ends in a wider room. This room resembles a small barn, and, in fact, was once just that, a small prefab metal barn, taken from one of the villages they’ve raided. As the space was dug out, the barn was rebuilt inside the cavern, serving the dual purpose of making a large clean room, and holding the cavern ceiling up.

At the far end of this room, a makeshift dais has been set up, with a large heavy ornamental chair stolen from some country manor serving as a throne. A large chiseled robot wearing an ill fitting crown lounges on the throne. The characters know immediately who this must be. There is only 1 bandit king...Rork.

If the characters haven’t figured it out by now, they will be treated to a view of robots beginning to unpack many of the crates that were unloaded from the wagon, revealing an assortment of gears, pistons, valves, chip boards, even entire limbs and subsystems. A veritable cornucopia of robotic parts. Parts of uncertain, but almost certainly unsavory, origin.

“Excellent work, Aldo. You’ve delivered everything on time once again” Rork will say.

At this point GMs should play up Aldo’s reaction. If the GM is playing him as a dupe, than he should seem confused with a distant look and twitching as if trying to read through his own code to figure out what’s going on. “Don’t hurt yourself thinking too hard about it Aldo. Just take your payment and go until we need your services again”.

Or, if the GM is playing Aldo as a greedy profiteer, he should be snickering and bobbing in an irritatingly ingratiating fashion, with a smirk that suggests “suckers” when he looks at the characters.

In any event, Rork will eventually turn his attention to the characters. “And look at these fine extras you’ve brought us. Whatever shall we do with them?”

At this point there are many possible directions for the scenario to go. Since these are pre-generated characters and a sample scenario, it is not entirely necessary for the characters to survive. A wrong turn, depositing them into the “tender mercies” of the bandit king can go along way toward introducing Auvernais and its various plots and troubles before creating new characters for regular use.

The Tapestry is no help here, because it assumes the goods were delivered to their final destination and the characters will simply return home.

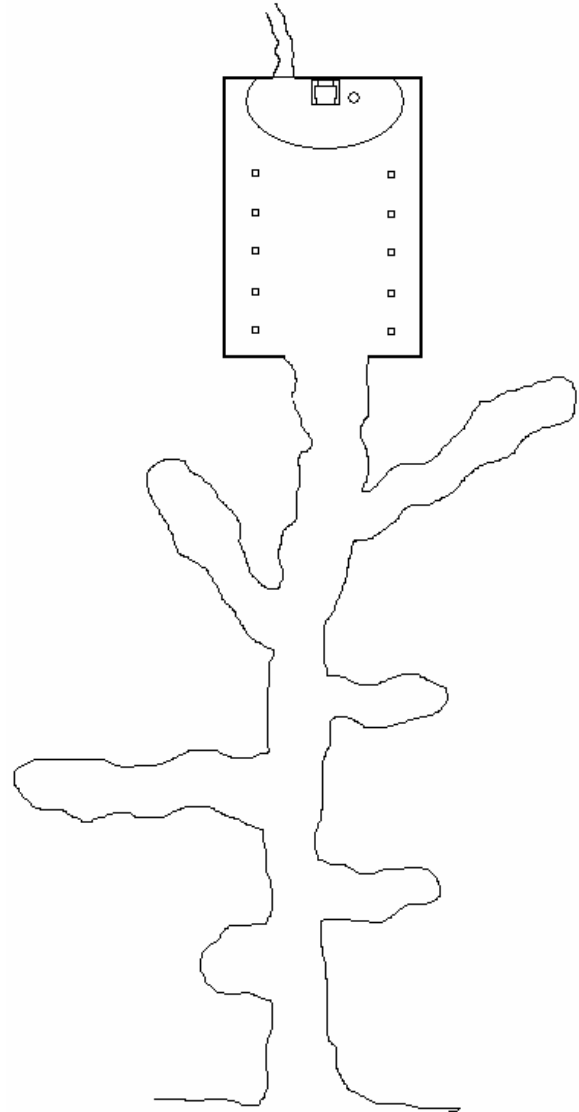
Some possibilities include:

- 1) Rork simply declaring that they are to be taken and dismantled for parts, ending the scenario in a final desperate (and likely hopeless) battle against impossible odds.
- 2) The players engaging Rork in conversation such that he becomes favorably inclined towards them, perhaps requiring them to perform some mission for him to prove their loyalty (perhaps one generated on the scenario generator using “Enemies of the Bandits” as the foe.)
- 3) Perhaps a death match against some of Rork’s men for amusement. Winner gets a reward (like going free), the loser becomes spare parts.
- 4) The characters may be taken prisoner until Rork can think of a good use for them, giving the classic opportunity to escape.
- 5) A rescue: If Aldo has been portrayed as a dupe, than perhaps this final encounter is what causes him to actually Spark. Realizing what he’s done, he rushes off to find help either finding the Guardsmen at Montrebec, or even de Grasy’s men.
- 6) An inside rescue: One of Rork’s key lieutenants might well be an agent for the Cardinal who’s infiltrated Rork’s Gang. He has some valuable information to get to the Cardinal, and the characters might just provide the means to deliver it.
- 7) A plea: If Rork recognizes the characters as Sparks, he may characterize himself and his gang as freedom fighters. “The King and the Cardinal call us bandits because they represent the forces of oppression. But we, we are revolutionaries”. He may determine that planting the seed of doubt about the wrongness of persecuting him into the minds of a few Guardsmen may be potentially more valuable in the long run than simply 4 more robot bodies to cannibalize. Whether Rork actually is honestly a



revolutionary, or whether he's simply a cunning bandit looking to add a veneer of legitimacy to his depravations are entirely up to each GM to decide for themselves for their own campaigns.

- 8) de Grasy Rides again: A final option is to have Count de Grasy himself with a full company of his own troopers ride into Rork's Camp. After an initial sharp defense, the bandits withdraw in good order, melting into the hills but forced to leave behind most of their loot and supplies. de Grasy seizes the parts he wanted from the wagon and then some. His men continued to shadow the wagon, figuring that it would lead them right to Rork's hideout. de Grasy now gets to play the part of the hero triumphant, raising his star in court above that of his rival Trebone of the Guard. He will ask the characters to conceal how many soldiers he actually had (more than he's supposed to) and to conceal his taking of the parts and supplies. In return he'll spin the character's role in delivering those supplies as being an equally heroic and harrowing bit of infiltration and intelligence gathering. After all, its better for the Count to have the parts than the bandits.



Scene 15: End. Wagon Delivered.

The adventure is largely completed. All that remains is the wrap up. How things get wrapped up, however, is pretty up in the air depending on how Scenes 13 and 14 played out. There's a good possibility that the characters are all dead, and this Scene is nothing more than an epilogue and an introduction to creating the group's real party of characters.

A good Robots and Rapiers scenario is all about choice and the consequences of those choices. Even with a largely railroaded Tapestry scenario there are opportunities for characters to make choices, and those opportunities will increase as the characters increase in Self Awareness which carries with it not only the ability to make different choices in a scenario, but also the potential for players to create their own scenarios by who and what they choose to do as a Spark.

Auvernais was modeled after the court of Louis the Sun King and so is filled to the brim with plots and subterfuges and schemes built in as part of the Tapestry. All residents in Auvernais, sparked and non sparked alike are fully acquainted with negotiating the twists and turns of factional power struggles. The presence of Sparked robots introduces a whole new layer of plot and subterfuge into this mix. Where the characters wind up in terms of their faction loyalties will have a big impact on the course of a campaign. Its always a good idea to keep options open and curry favor with as many powerful individuals as possible. But sooner or later, the characters (meaning, of course, the players) will have to choose between them. In most cases, choosing between factions is equivalent to choosing the direction of the very fate of Auvernais. Auvernais will be a very different place than what it is today if the Queen, or Rork, or de Grasy, or some combination thereof manages to overthrow the status quo of King and Cardinal. That's not even to mention outside forces of change like La Roche or even the characters themselves.

If the characters completed the task of delivering the parts to the bandits and managed to depart, then they are guilty of treason, regardless that they were dupes and manipulated by their programming. They will gain some favor with Beauchard for keeping his father safe and with Mazzeri for helping him help out a friend, but other than that, they're essentially King's men who just helped provide succor to enemies of the King.

de Grasy knows what was in those crates. He may not have been able to get his hands on them but he's certainly not above using his knowledge to gain leverage over the characters.

The Bandit King is not just a bogey man used to frighten children. He's gained in strength and is now a legitimate power with the capability to actually give battle to the King's men. How much longer before its not just a company of soldiers he can take on. There's even an outside possibility that the characters may have gained favor with Rork. They may even believe his stories about being (and he may actually be) a revolutionary. Will the players move their characters into joining what promises to be a violent and bloody uprising.

Or will they throw in their lot with de Grasy who, as a Spark, surely has a much more accurate grip on reality than the self deluded King. He promises a relatively bloodless coup with the possibility of ending the necessity to play homage to the Tapestry. Auvernais could have a bright strong future under his leadership. At least to hear him tell of it.

Even better, they may have some ideas of their own about how they'd like to see Auvernais turn out. Or they may just wish to pretend it never happened and hope that things can go back to life as usual.

If the GM went with option 8 in Scene 15 and had the character's rescued by de Grasy, then his campaign will take a sharply different direction. Rork will have been dealt a major blow and the campaign will likely focus more on the rising power of de Grasy, than the rising danger from bandits. If they go along with de Grasy's story, however, they get to return as heroes with +2-3 dice of Reputation +2 to Favor with the King and +4 with Trebone (for recovering the Guards Honor), and likely +1-2 with de Grasy himself.

Scenario Creation Example

What better way to end a sample scenario for play than to show off how we used the Robots & Rapiers Scenario Generator to create it.

First we Roll on Table I

4 = Escort the [innocent] without stopped by the [foe]. This involves the tables in Section D.

The instruction in Section D have us roll on Table II, starting with II(a)

3 = Roll on Table II(b), so we proceed to that table and roll again.

2= A mysterious letter is found containing instructions

Then we roll on Table III, starting with III(a)

6 = Bourgeoisie. Following the instructions for Table III we proceed to III(b)

7 = The individual's father. We proceed to Table III(d)

2 = A highly respected professional.

Next we roll on Table IV, starting with IV(a)

2 = Foes of the King. Foes of the King can be found on Table IV(b)

5 = an ambitious noble looking to increase their power.

Then we roll on the table specific to Section D, D(1)

4 = The innocent is a traveling merchant delivering supplies and parts

The Table D entry contained additional instructions. Instead of rolling twice on Table U as normally directed, we are to roll once on Table U for the Origin and then 1d10/2 more times for several possible destinations.

7 = 3 destinations (7/2 rounded down)

Rolling on Table U for the origin, starting with Table U(1)

3 = Common City locations, proceed to Table U(3)

1 = Somewhere in the Warrens

Rolling on Table U for the 3 destinations

8 = Common Countryside Locations, proceed to Table U(5)

8 = Somewhere in the Broken Hills

9 = Common Countryside Locations, we'll be rolling again on Table U(5)

1 = A Cave in the Broken Hills

2 = Common City Locations, back to Table U(3)

8 = Church of the Holy Rest

So, very interesting. Lets see what we have.

We know that the player's characters will receive a letter from a well respected professional in Auvernaise asking their help in escorting his father. We know that the father is a traveling merchant dealing in parts and supplies. What makes things very interesting is the combination of locations that were rolled.

We're to meet this merchant in the Warrens. The Warrens is the name given to that area of Auvernaise that was pretty badly damaged in the attack and which was very low priority to be repaired. Without guests and with a lower population than was once present, the area wasn't really needed and so the Warrens remained largely abandoned. They are the Auvernaise equivalent of a slum, full of abandoned and half ruined buildings where a number of Auvernaise' destitute have congregated. A large number of Sparks desiring to flee from society have wound up here and the Shadow Guild and other unsavory organizations are active here.

The Church of the Holy Rest is the second major church in Auvernaise (after the Cathedral). The priest of the church is actually Father Donovan one of the named robots found on Table III(f). He's known to be a good man and a straight arrow. The most interesting feature of the church, however, is the little known fact that it doubled as the morgue for human guests who passed away while on Athalon. The deaths as a result of the attack overwhelmed the small facility, of course, but some of the guests were placed in cryostorage for an eventual shipment back to Earth which never happened.

The Broken Hills came up twice. The Broken Hills are a series of rugged foothills well to the north of Auvernaise that jut like a sideways "Y" from the north eastern boarder well into heart of the region. The King's Highway runs from Auvernaise to Montrebec and then on to the ruins of Dupre with one branch of the "Y" on the right. It then turns north with the other branch of the "Y" and ends in the enemy city of La Roche.

These hills pretty much mark the north eastern border of the region of Auvernaise and were essentially the area where most of the major Bandit Gang's operated out of, raiding and plundering down onto the King's Highway.

What then could this merchant be doing starting in the Warrens and winding up out in bandit country? Well, no where did it say he had to be an honest merchant...parts & supplies, the Warrens, bandits...

Bingo. This merchant deals in black market parts and power sources. The Shadow Guild under Hamlet, its cruel new leader, is not above muggings, murder, and theft; with spare parts (often from dismantled victims) being the prime loot. This merchant then, we decide, periodically takes the ill gotten gains out to the gangs in the Broken Hills who have a tough time surviving away from Auvernaise' power generators and machine shops. Now if Auvernaise was still a functioning resort, this scenario would involve some harmless smuggling and fencing of "stolen" property and the like. But the Sparks in the Shadow Guild have twisted it to their own nefarious purposes.

So where does the church come in? Many possibilities. Could be something as innocuous as the merchant being a religious man simply seeking a priest's blessing before heading out into the wild country side. But instead...we know the church houses some cryogenic facilities that are still operational. These would require a significant amount of power to keep running. Power is a valuable commodity, especially to the bandits who often have to resort to recharging from the ammo packs for their guns. Perhaps there's a Sparked Deacon at the church making a little money on the side by drawing power from the cryo facilities to charge batteries for the merchant to take to the bandits. Even better, the Deacon isn't doing this to make money, he's being blackmailed by the Shadow Guild to cooperate. That's good, we'll work on those details in a bit.

So after all of this, why would the characters agree to escort this guy. Presumably the characters are heroic good types; and since this scenario is designed for use with 4 pre generated characters who are all swashbuckling heroes in the King's Guard we know they are. One obvious answer is they don't know what the merchant is doing and assume he's an honest businessman. Imagine, loyal guardsmen unwittingly delivering contraband to the bandits; this random scenario is starting to sound pretty good.

Since these are beginning characters with low Self Awareness Scores, the GM can plan on using Role Saves where necessary to keep the characters suitably gullible until they're embroiled to an interesting depth. But they aren't fools, we need a better hook than just being hired for a job.

That brings us back to the highly respected professional who wrote the letter to the character's to begin with. We can assume that he's in on his father's scheme and his "highly respected-ness" is just a front. But how much more interesting is it if he's not? If he's an innocent dupe himself. He, an honest, upstanding, highly regarded member of the community comes asking the characters for their help in serving as escort to his dear old dad who's still making rounds to villages and manors of the northern countryside. It seems he's been having some trouble with bandits and his regular guards have up and quit on him (at least that's the story he told his son). But why would this professional come to the characters rather than someone else...hmmm.

Got it. He's a physician, a highly respected physician (i.e. robot repairman) who is close both personally and professionally with the character's fencing master. After all, every fencing master running a *salle d' armes* needs to know a good doctor to patch up his students every now and then. This doctor was relating his father's plight to his good friend the fencing master who gladly volunteered four of his students to help out. Perfect. Not only would the characters be unlikely to turn down a request from their fencing master, but a skilled doctor is always a valuable contact to begin to build favor with. The bait is set.

That leaves only the foe. There's already a couple of potential foes built into the scenario. Those being: One, if the players figure out what's going on and decide to confront the bandits they're delivering to; and two, if the guards were somehow to become aware of the delivery and seek to stop it. But for this example we want to hew completely to the random results for

illustration purposes and that means there also needs to be the “ambitious noble looking to increase their power” we rolled earlier. Not a problem. There’s always factions and powerful aristocrats engaging in their own private plots and schemes in Auvergnais. Here we have an ambitious noble who wants to increase his power. What better way than to grab a wagon load of valuable spare parts and power sources. Sold for wealth and favors or for his own private use one can easily imagine a greedy noble who somehow became informed of the delivery trying to grab it for himself, and any such noble is going to have his own guards and footman at his disposal to do it with. Stealing stolen property, who’d ever know. Its not like the bandits would press charges. And so the stage is set, we just need to fill in the details.

That brings us to Table S.

We’ll first roll on Table S(1) to determine how long the scenario will be. We remember that the instructions from Table D are to add 1 scene for every destination rolled. In our case 3. $10 = 12+$ scenes, GM determines how many, +3 to the roll on Table S(2)

Proceeding to Table S(2) we roll to decide how complex the scenario will be remembering to add +3 to the roll.

$4+3 = 7 = 4$ branches, 2 denouements, the branches may branch.

From here we begin to structure our scenes. We can roll on Table T for each of the scenes we use to determine the nature of the challenge present in the scene. It is important to keep in mind that inside an individual scene even non-sparked robots are programmed to decide for themselves how to address the challenge presented. This means that even scenes designated as Social Scenes could well turn into fights if the players choose to approach the problem that way. Similarly even Fight Scenes can become social if the players successfully talk their way through. The type of scene simply indicates the “standard” approach that generated scenario assumes.

We’ll start by giving some thought to our branches. What sort of choices or “either / or” events can we populate this scenario with that would cause it to branch and lead to 1 of 2 possible endings (denouements).

Well, we’ll have some choice related to the ambitious noble foe, and there should probably be some choice related to the final delivery in the cave at which point the players will probably have become aware of what it is they’re delivering and who it is they’re helping. There should probably also be some possibility of having the wagon of supplies taken from them with one branch being continuing with the deliveries, with the other being trying to get the wagons back. We’ll keep those ideas in mind when setting the scenes.

Also, since this is meant to be an introductory scenario for new players, we’ll make the very first scene something relatively harmless that the GM can use to teach the game mechanics a bit before continuing. We won’t bore you with the entirety of the rest of the creative process. Having already read the finished scenario you probably already can see how we chose to tie all of these randomized elements together.