

SIX CARDINALS ENTER, ONLY ONE WILL LEAVE



# BLACK SMOKE

BY GARETH HANRAHAN

A setting for the **SKULDUGGERY** roleplaying game

# SKULDUGGERY

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*Skulduggery*, the roleplaying game of verbal fireworks & sudden reversals, brings fast and funny innovation to the exciting world of inter-player conflict.

**Black Smoke** is one of three brand new settings for *Skulduggery*. In this game, six scheming cardinals try to be crowned the next Pope in 15th century Italy, by whatever means necessary.



# BLACK SMOKE

## CREDITS

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## THE SETTING

The year is a conveniently nebulous one, sometime during the 15th century<sup>1</sup>. The characters are all cardinals in the Catholic Church, which is at the height of its power and corruption. The pope is dead, and his successor must be elected by the assembled cardinals. They will be locked *cum clave* in the Sistine Chapel, and there they will stay until a new pope is chosen. Each day, the cardinals vote by secret ballot. If no new pope is elected, the ballots are burned with straw in the chapel's furnace, sending a pall of black smoke over Rome.

The citizens of the eternal city watch in anticipation for the plume of white smoke that proclaims *habemus papam! We have a pope!*

They're not the only ones watching.

**The Last Pope:** The previous pope, Celestine, died under mysterious circumstances. All the characters know that the official cause of death (he choked to death on a herring bone) is untrue, and have heard all sorts of wild rumors about poisonings, assassins, orgies and devilry. The truth is that Celestine was struck by lightning – the curia fear that might be construed as divine judgement upon the venality of the Church.

**The Holy Roman Emperor:** There's an army of several thousand hairy and violent men, mostly Germans, encamped a short distance away from Rome, under the command of the Holy Roman Emperor. He's not especially holy, he's definitely not Roman, and he's only allowed use the title of emperor by permission of the Papacy.

Recently, the emperor felt the chill hand of mortality upon his shoulder, and started giving thought to the

### Murder in the Sistine Chapel

⚔️ None of the cardinals are in any shape to fight anyone, so this scenario does not use the ⚔️ rules. Use Athletics or Mischief for indirect attacks, like pushing rivals down steps, but only NPCs like Flamel or Christos can actually do direct violence.

disposition of his soul. He's decided that he wants a leg up in Heaven, and wants to be declared a saint as soon as possible – preferably pre-humously. Celestine was considering this request when he was hit by lightning. This is, of course, a ridiculous assertion as the criteria for canonisation involve the performance of three miracles after death but the hirsute Emperor will not be bothered by such trivialities.

The emperor's troops are there as a reminder that the cardinals really should elect someone willing to be flexible on the sainthood question. Initially, Nicholas Medivucci is his preferred candidate.

## COLLECTIVE GOAL

All the characters are united by their hatred of Cardinal Medivucci. They also all want to become pope, but the game works best if each player believes that only his or her own character has designs on St. Peter's chair.

### Character Tracker

Player	Character	Nationality	Key Temptation	Personal Goal
	Cardinal Franz	German		Support the Emperor
	Cardinal Oldman	English		Cover up theft of money
	Cardinal Vespucci	Italian		Humiliate Medivucci
	Cardinal O'Malley	Irish		Avert a prophecy
	Cardinal Aubert	French		Sell relics
	Cardinal Bona	Italian		Push back against the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge that this is a somewhat tenuous date but do urge players not to do any historical research on this subject.

## RELATIONSHIPS

### Cardinal Innocent

Italian

*“Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance.”*

**Personality:** Doves flock to Innocent, lambs gambol around his feet, and he holds long conversations with trees. He’s one quick martyrdom short of sainthood. Of course, it’s easy to be holy when you’re that simple-minded. He was made a cardinal to get him away from the common peasants, where he was setting a terrible example for other priests by being poor, humble and charitable.

**Traits:** Stroking and feeding animals. Speaks like a child.

**Goals:** Establish a new order of monks, dedicated to charitable works and poverty.

**Initially Supports:** None

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Intimidating/Glib

**Sample Favors:** 1) Vote for a candidate (other than Sebastien – Innocent can sense there’s something wrong about him) 2) Calm anything violent – a wild beast, an angry mob, a raging thunderstorm

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Craftsmanship (farming) 4, Etiquette 1, Knowledge (theology) 3, Living Rough 6, Moxxy 6, Perception 2, Performance (oratory) 2, Persuade (forthright) 1, Physician 3, Rebuff (pure-hearted) 1, Stealth 4

### Cardinal Alberto

Italian

*“The pope definitely did not die of syphilis, gout, arsenic or six stab wounds to the back. I should know, I’m a doctor.”*

**Personality:** The previous pope’s private physician, and a Vatican insider. Alberto’s medical skills start and end at ‘leeches and lots of them’, but he’s very good at sounding knowledgeable. His real skill is in providing prophylactics, curing poxes, and dealing with related problems. He’s also got an arsenal of poisons.

**Goals:** Ensure he’s in the new pope’s good books.

**Traits:** Rubs hands. Slightly camp.

**Initially Supports:** Medivucci

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Forthright/Obfuscatory

**Sample Favors:** 1) Provide medical services and healing 2) Pronounce a cardinal too infirm to vote 3) Supply poisons or other drugs 4) Carry messages out of the chapel 5) Vote for a candidate

**Abilities:** Appraisal 3, Craftsmanship (apothecary) 4, Eavesdropping 3, Etiquette 3, Gossip 5, Management 4, Mischief 4, Physician 5, Persuade (glib) 3, Rebuff (lawyerly) 4, Stealth 3

### Terminology Changes

The ‘show-off’ temptation is renamed ‘ostentation’; characters who fall prey to this want to be the centre of attention and to show off their robes, jewellery, collections of holy relics and impressive ecclesiastical titles.

The ‘nit-picking’ temptation is renamed ‘contumacy’, and covers the desire to quibble over scripture and defy authority.

The Management skill covers dealing with the Church bureaucracy, especially the financial side.

Mechanic can be used to open the locked doors, or to fortify the chapel against rioters.



## Cardinal Sigismund

German

“Which one are you again?”

**Personality:** Sigismund is the oldest cardinal at the conclave. He’s blind, deaf, incontinent and incoherent at the best of times. In his younger days, he was an inspiring leader of the church and was the mentor of Cardinal Medivucci, but now he spends most of his time drooling. His ambitious aide Giuseppe attends to Sigismund’s every need, and may also speak for his master if the old priest is too weak to raise his voice above a whisper.

**Goals:** 1) Get through the conclave without dying 2) Get transferred to a nicer diocese, preferably somewhere sunny.

**Traits:** Speaks loudly, hand cupping his ear.

**Initially Supports:** Medivucci

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Charming/Eloquent

**Sample Favors:** 1) Vote for a candidate 2) Make a rousing speech in favor of a candidate 3) Die on cue

**Abilities:** Eavesdropping 1, Etiquette 3, Gossip 4, Knowledge (theology) 5, Management 4, Moxy 1, Performance (oratory) 4, Persuade (Intimidating) 2, Physician 1, Rebuff (Contrary) 3

## Cardinal Ashford

English

“Clearly the person who accepts the Church as an infallible guide will believe whatever the Church teaches.”

**Personality:** The great theologian of the age, Cardinal Thomas Ashford is famed across Christendom for his philosophical treatises, *In Vis of Res*, *Vir Quod Deus*, *In Fides quod Fides* and his blockbuster *In Sententia quod Res*. Only a fool would admit that he didn’t understand a word of Ashford’s subtle logic, so everyone agrees that these books are deeply insightful and wise. Ashford’s words carry great weight in the conclave. He does not suffer fools at all; anyone who doesn’t measure up to his intellectual standards gets snubbed.

**Goals:** 1) Ensure the winning candidate shares his philosophical views and thoroughly understands them 2) Obtain papal funding for a new college of philosophy to study heathen theology and philosophy 3) Initially,

vote for Cardinal Sebastien, who has agreed to fund such a college

**Traits:** Steeples fingers. Speaks in long convoluted sentences.

**Initially Supports:** Sebastien

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Obfuscatory/Forthright

**Sample Favors:** 1) Vote for a candidate 2) Make an incomprehensible speech in favor of a candidate 3) Discredit a candidate by engaging them in a theological debate 4) Give signed copies of *In Sententia quod Res*

**Abilities:** Etiquette 3, Gossip 2, Knowledge (theology) 8, Management 5, Moxy 3, Perception 2, Performance (oratory) 3, Persuade (eloquent) 4, Physician 2, Rebuff (Penetrating) 4, Stealth 1

## Porter Flamel

Italian

“You want I should put him down the catacombs, boss?”

**Personality:** If Flamel were around a few hundred years later, then the debate on evolution would never have happened. Just one look at him confirms that man and ape are close cousins indeed. He’s the chapel porter, responsible for bringing in food and other supplies as



needed. He's also a thug and torturer when required; he moonlights for the inquisition. Flamel's not a great intellect, but he has a certain animal cunning.

**Goals:** Find out who the next pope is going to be in advance, so he can get down the bookmakers in time to make a winning bet.

**Traits:** Speaks like a cockney or mafia lackey.

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Obfuscatory/Forthright

**Sample Favors:** 1) Carry a message out of the chapel 2) Smuggle an item or person into the chapel 3) Injure or restrain a cardinal

**Abilities:** Athletics 5, Eavesdropping 4, Etiquette 1, Gambling 3, Gossip 3, Management 2, Mechanic 3, Moxy 1, Perception 3, Persuade (Intimidating) 3, Rebuff (Obtuse) 3, Stealth 4

## Captain Christos

Greek

*"Rest assured, cardinal, that you are perfectly safe within these walls. It's the roof I'm worried about."*

**Personality:** As captain of the Swiss Guard – in this era, a mercenary army – Christos is sworn to defend the Vatican and the pope against enemies. He has a small number of crack troops under his command, whose silly hats belie the warriors' fierceness. Christos is loyal, but pragmatic. His soldiers can temporarily stem a riot, or even hold off the army of the Holy Roman Emperor, but only by heroic self-sacrifice. He doesn't want to be a martyr...

Christos isn't allowed inside the Sistine Chapel during the conclave unless events there demand his presence. The characters can send messages to him via Flamel, or whisper to him through the door.

**Goals:** 1) Avoid getting killed by rioters or enemy soldiers 2) Protect the conclave and the newly-elected pope 3) Get paid

**Traits:** Straight-backed, military pose. Hesitant voice.

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Eloquent/Charming

**Sample Favors:** 1) Carry a message out of the chapel 2) Arrest a cardinal 3) Defend the Vatican against attack for a short period

**Abilities:** Appraisal 2, Athletics 4, Etiquette 2, Gambling 1, Gossip 2, Living Rough 3, Management 3, Moxy 4, Perception 4, Persuade (forthright) 3, Physician 2, Rebuff (wary) 3, Riding 3, Weaponmaster 5

## OTHER SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

### Cardinal Nicholas Medivucci

Italian

*"Arranging for your martyrdom by savage goats is my way of helping you progress to Heaven."*

**Personality:** Manipulative, cynical, ambitious and murderous – obviously, he's the leading candidate for the papacy. Medivucci is part of a rich and infamous family who own half of northern Italy and terrorize the other half. Those who cross him end up dying of mysterious accidents, like throwing themselves onto a knife six times, or unaccountably mistaking a lion for a prostitute and inviting the beast to bed.

Medivucci's family are rivals of the Holy Roman Emperor, and the cardinal wants to ensure the primacy of the church in any struggles with the secular governments.

**Goals:** 1) Become pope 2) Maintain his reputation as a holy terror 3) Crush anyone who dares cross him 4) If possible, rally the church against

**Traits:** Uses open handed gestures. Speaks huskily

**Initially Supports:** Self

**Downfall:** Arrogance

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Intimidating/Glib

**Abilities:** Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Eavesdropping 4, Etiquette 4, Gossip 3, Knowledge (theology) 4, Management 6, Mischief 4, Moxy 5, Perception 4, Performance (oratory) 4, Persuade (eloquent) 5, Physician 2, Rebuff (pure-hearted) 4, Stealth 2

### Cardinal Sebastien

German

*"I prefer to think of myself as theologically flexible."*

**Personality:** Easily the youngest cardinal present, dark-eyed Sebastien cuts a dashing figure compared to the



ranks of withered, phthisic grave-dodgers in red hats who make up the rest of the conclave. Rumors that he possesses occult powers or sold his soul to the devil are rife in the church. He has no desire to become pope, but will spout all sorts of ambiguously dire prophecies about the candidates. One of them is sure to turn out correct.

The GM should build up Sebastien's reputation as a sorcerer in the eyes of the players, by casting everything he does in a supernatural light.

**Goals:** 1) Protect his reputation as a powerful sorcerer 2) Get access to the Vatican archives 3) Don't get burned at the stake 4) Being pope would be nice, but having the pope in his debt would be even better

**Traits:** Sleazy mannerisms. Occasional 'magical' gestures.

**Initially Supports:** Self

**Downfall:** Ostentation

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Glib/Intimidating

**Abilities:** Eavesdropping 4, Etiquette 5, Gossip 3, Mischief 6, Moxy 4, Perception 3, Persuade (Forthright) 4, Rebuff (Obtuse) 4

## Cardinal Umberto

Italian

*"Our accounting practices are, like the Almighty, ineffable."*

**Personality:** Umberto's been the right-hand man to the last few popes. He's in charge of the papal finances. He's notoriously venal and corrupt, and until recently flaunted the wealth he liberated from the church coffers. His profligate ways and ostentation were legendary. All that changed when the pope was hit by lightning – Umberto shows up to the conclave dressed in sackcloth and determined to save his soul through a vow of poverty and charitable works. He's desperately trying to keep his greedy nature at bay.

**Goals:** 1) Cling to his new-found vow of poverty 2) If that fails (and it will), then make sure he and the new pope have an understanding 3) If that fails, burn the Vatican financial records. He and Celestine spent most of the money 4) Keep the church coffers by rejecting frivolous or self-serving requests for cash

**Traits:** Constantly admiring jewellery and robes. Keeps

eyes on them, not on who he's talking to.

**Initially Supports:** Jean de Mises

**Downfall:** Avarice

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Forthright/Obfuscatory

**Abilities:** Appraisal 5, Eavesdropping 2, Etiquette 3, Gambling 3, Gossip 4, Knowledge (theology) 3, Management 7, Mischief 3, Moxy 2, Perception 2, Persuade (obfuscatory) 4, Rebuff (lawyerly) 3, Wealth 6

## Cardinal Jean de Mises

French

*"Voting for you would be throwing a diamond into a dungheap."*

**Personality:** A fiery reformist, Jean de Mises has rallied many to his side by calling on the church to eschew greed and corruption. He stands on a platform of poverty, asceticism and the persecution of the wicked. His ideas are popular among the masses, but have obviously little support among the rich, corrupt clergy.

**Goals:** 1) Become pope 2) Clean up the church finances 3) Scourge the sinful

**Traits:** Chest puffed out. Serious expression. Speaks quickly.

**Initially Supports:** Self

**Downfall:** Spite

**Rebuff Trumps/Trumped By:** Charming/Eloquent

**Abilities:** Appraisal 2, Athletics 3, Eavesdropping 1, Etiquette 2, Gossip 2, Knowledge (theology) 4, Living Rough 3, Management 3, Mischief 1, Moxy 3, Perception 4, Persuade (intimidating) 4, Physician 3, Rebuff (contrary), Stealth 2.



## Names

### Male

- Grosso
- Santori
- d'Amboise
- Argentino
- von Wellenburg
- Pucci
- Cesarini
- Cornaro
- Caetani
- Gambara

### Female

The Church may be the Bride of Christ, but there are no female priests or cardinals; the only women in the Vatican are nuns, servants, pilgrims and prostitutes. Unlike other *Skulduggery* settings, the genders of the player characters are fixed.

- Maria
- Lucretia
- Anna
- Dina
- Fotina
- Milena

## OPENER: THE CONCLAVE

The game begins with the characters arriving in the Vatican and taking their places in the Sistine Chapel. The streets around the chapel are crowded with Roman ruffians and citizens, all eager to find out who the next pope will be. Bookmakers shout the odds, with Medivucci being the clear favorite. Outside the walls of the city, the characters can see the banners of the emperor's army.

If anyone wants to check, tradition dictates that they are allowed confirm that the pope is dead by thwacking him on the forehead with a silver hammer<sup>2</sup>. The lightning-fried corpse is kept covered by a sheet, so that no-one can contradict the official account of his death.

Explain the voting rules at this stage, and let the characters know who the other strong contenders are. Also mention the emperor's demand for sainthood.

## Extra Omnes

All the cardinals gather in the Sistine Chapel. At the cry of 'extra omnes', everyone who isn't a cardinal (or one of the few attendants permitted to remain, like Portal Flame!) leaves the chapel, and the doors are sealed. None of the cardinals are allowed out until they agree on a pope.

The first order of business is to randomly choose three scrutineers. These officials will cross-check the ballots, ensure that there are no extra votes, and perform the count. Drawing lots puts Cardinal Umberto and two randomly-chosen player characters in as scrutineers.

In addition to the PCs and named NPCs, there are a dozen other cardinals who have no hope of being pope, but who can still be lobbied for support or won over by arguments.



<sup>2</sup> Historical Footnote: This may or may not be true in real life, but it's macabre and perfect for *Skulduggery*.



## Conniving & Skulduggery

Before each vote, there's an opportunity to lobby for support, discredit rivals, and spread wild rumors. Characters can make sure of getting votes by making promises to NPCs or by spending favors. Limit the number of actions that the players can take between rounds of voting to two or three each.

The cardinals can be divided into two groups – sure voters, and floating voters. Sure voters are either voting for themselves or have a firm candidate in mind, and won't be swayed by sermon or debate. They can, of course, be individually persuaded/blackmailed/tricked. A sure voter who is persuaded to support a different candidate switches to being a sure voter for that candidate; a sure voter whose candidate is discredited or withdrawn becomes a floating voter. All the named NPCs start out as sure voters.

Floating voters haven't made up their minds yet. If a character persuades an individual floating voter, then he becomes a sure vote. Otherwise, all the characters can try to win the support of the floating voters for a single ballot by sermonising and debating.

Sermonising & debate works as a multiple participant persuade contest (Skulduggery, p. 21) with the floating cardinals acting as granter. The first cardinal to speak (chosen at random) makes a short sermon on a particular problem facing the church, or a moral question. Likely topics for debate:

- So, what *did* happen to the last pope?
- Why all the other candidates are corrupt.
- The trade in indulgences
- Those damn Heathens
- The penurious state of the church coffers

The other candidates can then make their own sermons in support, or debate the theological points raised, with each reroll representing a new interjection or counterpoint. Optionally, call for Perform (oratory) or Knowledge (theology) rolls to back up a particularly fiery sermon or abstruse debating point.

The conclave's collective Rebuff style depends on circumstances when the vote occurs. Announce to the players the sort of circumstances needed for each Rebuff style. Information in *italics* is for the GM only. By default, they're Wary.

The conclave is **Pure-Hearted** (trumps Intimidating, trumped by Glib) if the sermons support a more independent church, one that stands up to the emperor's demands for sainthood. At least three cardinals must come out strongly in favor of rebuffing the emperor. *If word that the church is organizing against him reaches the ear of the Emperor, then he starts marching on Rome, and will punish any rebellious cardinals if they don't have papal protection.*

They're **Contrary** (trumps Charming, trumped by Eloquent) if at least three cardinals takes a strong moral stand on an issue and inspires the cardinals to follow their better angels. *Anyone who claims to be a moral paragon and is then discredited suffers a Levy of 1.*

If the theological works of Cardinal Ashford are brought up by the author, and at least two other cardinals help raise the intellectual tone, then the mood is **Lawyerly** (trumps Forthright, trumped by Obfuscatory). *Any character who campaigns on this topic will be questioned, and suffers a Levy if he fails a Knowledge (theology) roll.*

The conclave turns **Penetrating** (trumps Obfuscatory, trumped by Forthright) if anyone suggests the last pope was murdered or that the conclave's procedures are being tampered with, and provides proof of such allegations.

They're **Wary** if the mob is hammering at the doors. *The Romans want an Italian as pope.*

**Obtuse** conditions (trumps Glib, trumped by Intimidating) prevail if they believe the imperial troops are marching on Rome. *The emperor would prefer a German pope.*

The characters can also offer promises to floating cardinals in exchange for Boons. Sample favors include:

- Funding for a new cathedral
- Overlooking an unfortunate incident
- A cushy job in the curia
- Money to pay off gambling debts
- Promotion for a favored nephew
- Permission to sell indulgences for a new sin, like murder or fornicating with shellfish
- Setting a thorny theological dispute
- Papal endorsement of their new book

## Voting

The cardinals vote anonymously in writing. The ballots are collected and counted by the scrutineers. The scrutineers may, of course, use Mischief to tamper with the ballots.

Calculate each candidates' votes as follows:

- Firstly, count their sure votes.
- Next, divide the floating votes up amongst the characters who got the best result during the sermonising and debating portion. If two or more characters tied, divide the floating voters amongst them, with the character with the best Persuade pool getting any remainder.
- If a character has a two-thirds majority, he's elected pope.
- The NPC with the lowest vote total withdraws from the contest and becomes a floating voter. PCs can also withdraw if they wish.
- Finally, the ballots are burned. If the election was inconclusive, then straw is added in with the ballots to make black smoke.

## Conclave Events

Throw in any of these events as needed:

- A blind cardinal is miraculously cured... or he was faking it.
- The Roman mob hears that the conclave is about to elect a non-Italian pope. In response, they surround the chapel and threaten the cardinals.
- Cardinal Sigismund dies of natural causes.
- A clerk reports that the church coffers are nearly empty.
- Rumor reaches Rome that the emperor will attack if the conclave does not elect a German pope.
- The emperor's army marches on Rome.
- Flamel offers to poison the food of a powerful cardinal.
- Cardinal Ashford declares himself a schismatic and leaves the conclave.
- A fierce storm hits the city; could it be the end of the world?

### Contacts Summary

Cardinal Innocent		None	Holy, simple-minded, loves animals
Cardinal Alberto	Italian	Medivucci	Pope's personal physician. Rumoured to know cures for embarrassing ailments.
Cardinal Sigismund	German	Medivucci	Very old, blind, deaf, incontinent. His aide is Giuseppe
Cardinal Ashford	English	Sebastien	Pedantic theologian.
Porter Flamel	Italian		Ape-like servitor with low cunning
Captain Christos	Swiss		Captain of the Swiss Guard. Cannot enter chapel unless summoned.
Cardinal Medivucci	Italian	Self	Leading candidate for Pope, rival to Holy Roman Emperor
Cardinal Sebastian	German	Self	Young, dashing with a gift for prophecy.
Cardinal Umberto	Italian	Jean de Mises	In charge of papal finances, formerly flaunted wealth now poor.
Cardinal Jean de Mises	French	Self	Eschews greed and corruption. Popular amongst the masses.

One dozen other cardinals – floating voters.



## CLOSER: WHITE SMOKE

We have a pope!

The newly elected vicar of Christ is crowned with unseemly haste, as the Holy Roman Emperor is on his way to the Vatican. The Roman mob, if they're not already at the doors of the chapel, gather as soon as white smoke is seen over the city.

After a short time (during which the new pope can hand out favors and punishments to the other cardinals), the Emperors' troops arrive and surround Rome.

The new pope must immediately decide whether or not the notoriously violent, brutal, rapacious and blaspheming emperor is worthy of sainthood. On the one hand is the question of the spiritual pre-eminence of the church; on the other, the pressure of the large number of angry hairy Germans.

If he beatifies the emperor without justifying it to the faithful, he'll be torn apart by the crowds. The new pope needs to come up with a few miracles and saintly deeds that can be attributed to the vicious brute, and sell the assembled mob on the spiritual purity of the new saint.

If he doesn't beatify the emperor, then... well, all the cardinals are already here, they can hold another election...

### Taglines

- As spiritual crosses go, yours is not the most burdensome I have encountered.
- I think an exorcism would be a welcome distraction from the matter at hand.
- That would be an ecumenical matter.
- Remember, our Lord forgave the two thieves at Golgotha.
- Never, in all my years, have I encountered such cruel and foul-minded perversity! I see why you pursued a career in the church!
- I'm not anti an anti-pope.
- I refer you to the writings of St. Augustine on this topic.
- Try speaking in tongues, you might make more sense.
- I shall engineer a prodigious miracle of some sort.
- Blasphemy is such a harsh yet entirely apt description.
- I've always thought this chapel could use redecorating.
- God works in mysteriously violent ways.
- If the pope does it, it's not heretical.
- Now that we have the papacy, let us enjoy it.

- I've always wondered how I'd like to be martyred.
- Let us call the New Testament a rough draft, and not be bound by it.
- What Our Lord actually meant when he said that was...
- Which commandment is that, again?
- Loving thy neighbor sounds good in theory, but really only works for hermits.
- I don't think that's manna from Heaven, but why don't you try some and find out?
- There's a monastery in Iceland with your name on it. I hope you like fish.
- Well, I'm excommunicating you first!
- Wait, you actually believe all that nonsense? Even the bits about forgiveness and camels?
- I'm certain that the bigger the hat, the better the man.
- The Emperor has all the grace, humility and gentleness of a rabid, lustful Barbary Ape.
- Before the cock crows this morning, you will have denied me three times.
- He appears to have suffered an unfortunate transubstantiation-related accident!
- It's not a riot. The peasants are simply revolting.
- Now would be a good time for you to unburden your immortal soul through the sacrament of confession. I have some suggestions.
- Don't bring religion into this! We're cardinals!
- The red robes do help with hiding the bloodstains.
- And then. a miracle occurs!





## Cardinal Franz

German

Ach, this is not good. You are the confessor to the Holy Roman Emperor – possibly the most sinful man in Christendom. The things that man has done, the terrible, lusty, murderous things... they haunt your dreams. Now, he has sent you to Rome to make sure they make him a saint. If you fail, he'll have you killed!

**Collective Goal:** Thwart the ambitions of the hated Florentine, Cardinal Nicholas Medivucci

**Personal Goal:** 1) Become pope. 2) Ensure that the Holy Roman Emperor is declared a saint.

**General Abilities:** Appraisal 2, Athletics 4, Eavesdropping 2, Etiquette 3, Gambling 2, Gossip 3, Knowledge (theology) 5, Management 4, Mischief 4, Moxy 3, Perception 4, Performance (oratory) 5, Physician 3, Stealth 4, Wealth 5



## Cardinal Oldman

English

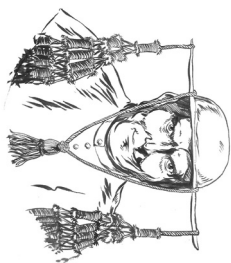
The building of Halford Cathedral is now seventy years behind schedule, mainly because you and your predecessors kept borrowing money out of the building fund. Questions are being asked in Rome about the matter. It could scupper your plans to become pope unless you can put the money back or get your debts forgiven.

**Collective Goal:** Thwart the ambitions of the hated Florentine, Cardinal Nicholas Medivucci

**Personal Goal:** 1) Become pope. 2) Deal with the debt

**General Abilities:** Appraisal 3, Athletics 4, Eavesdropping 2, Etiquette 3, Gambling 2, Gossip 5, Knowledge (theology) 4, Management 6, Mischief 6, Moxy 3, Perception 4, Performance (oratory) 5, Physician 3, Stealth 2, Wealth 2

Black Smoke



## Cardinal Vespucci

Italian

Everyone hates Cardinal Medivucci, but you've got a special vendetta against him. Your family and his have been rivals for generations, fighting for control of the church. Now, that bastard has half his arse on the throne of St Peter. There's no way you're going to kiss his ring – bring him down before he becomes pope.

**Collective Goal:** Thwart the ambitions of the hated Florentine, Cardinal Nicholas Medivucci

**Personal Goal:** 1) Become pope. 2) Make sure that Medivucci is not only thwarted, but humiliated.

**General Abilities:** Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Eavesdropping 4, Etiquette 3, Gambling 2, Gossip 5, Knowledge (theology) 5, Management 6, Mischief 6, Moxy 3, Perception 2, Performance (oratory) 3, Physician 1, Stealth 4, Wealth 5

Black Smoke

Black Smoke



## Cardinal O'Malley

Irish

According to the secret prophecies of Saint Malachy, the next pope is probably going to be the Anti-Christ who brings about the end of the world. This troubles you – you like the world, it's a grand laugh being a priest. If you became pope instead, you could throw the prophecy off track... assuming Malachy was right, of course. He was a nice old chap, but a bit too fond of his drink.

**Collective Goal:** Thwart the ambitions of the hated Florentine, Cardinal Nicholas Medivucci

**Personal Goal:** 1) Become pope. 2) Ensure the elected pope isn't the Anti-Christ

**General Abilities:** Appraisal 1, Athletics 5, Eavesdropping 4, Etiquette 1, Gambling 4, Gossip 2, Knowledge (theology) 3, Management 2, Mischief 5, Moxy 5, Perception 5, Performance (oratory) 8, Physician 3, Stealth 4, Wealth 2

Black Smoke



## Cardinal Aubert

French

This conclave came at just the right time – you needed to get out of France for a bit. You've been selling faked relics to other bishops – enough bits of the True Cross to build a bridge, a dozen Saints' skulls, the foreskin of Jesus (twice) – and they've started to compare notes. A few months in Italy will take the heat off.

**Collective Goal:** Thwart the ambitions of the hated Florentine, Cardinal Nicholas Medivucci

**Personal Goal:** 1) Become pope. 2) Sell the relics you brought with you to other cardinals.

**General Abilities:** Appraisal 4, Athletics 1, Craftsmanship (faked relics) 5, Eavesdropping 2, Etiquette 3, Gambling 2, Gossip 2, Knowledge (theology) 4, Management 2, Mischief 6, Moxy 2, Perception 3, Performance (oratory) 4, Physician 1, Stealth 4, Wealth 3



## Cardinal Bona

Italian

You're sick of the Holy Roman Emperor trampling all over Mother Church. It's time to put him in his place! The pope is the supreme power in Christendom, not some militaristic German with delusions of grandeur. For the greater glory of God!

**Collective Goal:** Thwart the ambitions of the hated Florentine, Cardinal Nicholas Medivucci

**Personal Goal:** 1) Become pope. 2) Break the influence of the Holy Roman Emperor over the Church

**General Abilities:** Appraisal 1, Athletics 6, Eavesdropping 3, Etiquette 2, Gambling 1, Gossip 4, Knowledge (theology) 5, Management 3, Mischief 5, Moxy 5, Perception 2, Performance (oratory) 7, Physician 3, Stealth 2, Wealth 6

Black Smoke



**Rebuff** (Lawyerly) 6

**Trumps:** Forthright

**Is Trumped By:** Obfuscatory

“Your contemptacious attitude will not prevail!”

Black Smoke



**Rebuff** (Obtuse) 6

**Trumps:** Glib

**Is Trumped By:** Intimidating

“My faith compels me to ignore you.”

Black Smoke



**Rebuff** (Contrary) 6

**Trumps:** Charming

**Is Trumped By:** Eloquent

“In this I follow the teachings of St. Bartholomew, who lived in a cave and ate nothing but lichen, save for a boiled haddock once a year at Christmas.”

Black Smoke



**Rebuff** (Wary) 6

**Trumps:** Eloquent

**Is Trumped By:** Charming

“I fear your honeyed words are an invitation to eternal damnation or, at the very least, a significant decline in my social standing.”

Black Smoke



**Rebuff** (Pure-Hearted) 6

**Trumps:** Intimidating

**Is Trumped By:** Glib

“I pray that God will forgive you for bearing false witness against me.”

Black Smoke



**Rebuff** (Penetrating) 6

**Trumps:** Obfuscatory

**Is Trumped By:** Forthright

“That is a misquote of that scripture, a common mistake made by those who read only the flawed translation and not the original Greek text.”



**Persuade (Glib)** 8

**Trumps:** Pure-Hearted

**Is Trumped By:** Obtuse

“As it says in the unsent letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, consider the virtue of unquestioning compliance.”

“I cannot help but notice that you possess a fine cheek that has gone unturned throughout this entire interaction.”



**Persuade (Eloquent)** 8

**Trumps:** Contrary

**Is Trumped By:** Wary

“Your devotion to the example of St. Recidivus the Moderately Eccentric is palpable.”

“Offer your sufferings up to the Lord, and your burdens shall be relieved through a stratagem which He shall doubtless reveal to me in a dream.”

Black Smoke

Black Smoke



**Persuade (Forthright)** 7

**Trumps:** Penetrating

**Is Trumped By:** Lawyerly

“We can both quote scripture to our purpose.”

“We know not the hour nor the day, but I suspect it is sometime in the immediate future.”



**Persuade (Charming)** 8

**Trumps:** Wary

**Is Trumped By:** Contrary

“I saw you flanked by Moses and Elijah, and lo, they were cheering your name and waving small flags in your honor.”

“Our Lord built his church on the rock of St. Peter, but had he looked upon you, I suspect he would have had second thoughts about his choice of building material.”

Black Smoke

Black Smoke



**Persuade (Obfuscatory)** 8

**Trumps:** Lawyerly

**Is Trumped By:** Penetrating

“This is not in keeping with church doctrine, or civil law. Or basic morality. Or sanity.”

“I am having a divine revelation, the nature of which is necessarily secret, but which clearly points to the rightness of my position.”



**Persuade (Intimidating)** 7

**Trumps:** Obtuse

**Is Trumped By:** Pure-Hearted

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels!”

“The Inquisition will have heated, pointed, penetrating... questions for you!”

Black Smoke

Black Smoke

Black Smoke



**Relationships:**

- Cardinal Innocent 2
- Cardinal Ashford 2
- Porter Flamel 4



Black Smoke



**Relationships:**

- Cardinal Sigismund 3
- Captain Christos 2
- Cardinal Ashford 3



Black Smoke



**Relationships:**

- Cardinal Alberto 3
- Porter Flamel 3
- Captain Christos 4



Black Smoke



**Relationships:**

- Porter Flamel 4
- Cardinal Sigismund 3
- Captain Christos 3



Black Smoke



**Relationships:**

- Cardinal Innocent 2
- Cardinal Sigismund 4
- Cardinal Alberto 3



Black Smoke



**Relationships:**

- Cardinal Innocent 2
- Cardinal Alberto 4
- Cardinal Ashford 3







**Key Trait:** Proud

**Resistances:** Arrogance 1, Avarice 4, Indolence  $\Omega$ , Nitpicking 4, Spite 2, Ostentation 4

Black Smoke



**Key Trait:** Lazy

**Resistances:** Arrogance  $\Omega$ , Avarice 4, Indolence 1, Nitpicking 2, Spite 4, Ostentation 4

Black Smoke



**Key Trait:** Contumacious

**Resistances:** Arrogance 4, Avarice  $\Omega$ , Indolence 4, Nitpicking 1, Spite 2, Ostentation 6

Black Smoke



**Key Trait:** Greedy

**Resistances:** Arrogance 4, Avarice 1, Indolence 6, Nitpicking  $\Omega$ , Ostentation 2, Spite 4

Black Smoke



**Key Trait:** Spiteful

**Resistances:** Arrogance 2, Avarice 4, Indolence 6, Nitpicking 4, Spite 1, Ostentation  $\Omega$

Black Smoke



**Key Trait:** Ostentatious

**Resistances:** Arrogance 4, Avarice 2, Indolence 4, Nitpicking 6, Spite  $\Omega$ , Ostentation 1

Black Smoke