7th Sea™



Players' Guide

1668

Discover the New World.



ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT GROUP presents •7th SEA•

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Primer

Once upon a time...

... on a storm-torn sea, two ships are locked in deadly combat. One flies the colors of a Vodacce Merchant Prince, while the other flies a black flag with a grinning crimson skull. The pirates have just flung over grappling hooks and pulled the two ships together. The boarding parties swing across on ropes and rigging while the Vodacce pull their swords from their belts and make ready to repel boarders. Meanwhile, deep in the hull of the Vodacce ship, two men prepare to escape the inevitable...

Part One

Villanova

He fell hard to the wood below, knocking his head against a crate. As he pulled the crimson robes back into shape, he held back a curse. His eyes refocused on the man before him, clad in black leather from head to toe, madly ripping open boxes, mumbling to himself in his native tongue. Bernardo didn't need to speak Vodacce to know he was not so careful with his own curses.

The Vodacce turned for only a moment, spitting in Bernardo's native Castillian this time. "Are you waiting for Theus to pick you up, priest? They will be down here in moments!"

Bernardo pushed himself to his feet, taking only a moment to readjust his robes. "You are a fool, Villanova. We had a chance to escape, but you and your ambition..."

The Vodacce spun on his heel, his sword suddenly in his hand, its point at the priest's neck. "Do not tempt my temper, priest. Your god isn't down here in the hold of this ship."

Bernardo looked at the steel, then looked into the steel of Villanova's eyes. "Threatening me will not help you find your prize."

The Vodacce hesitated, then replaced the sword. "You are right," he snarled. "As usual." Then he turned back to the half-open crate and continued his search.

Bernardo turned away from the Vodacce and looked into one of the boxes Villanova had already plundered. He heard the cries of dying men up top and closed his eyes. He looked over his shoulder at Villanova once more... and took a small, wrapped package from the folds of his robe. He placed it under some of the cotton packing. It was a dangerous game, he knew, but the rules had changed when the pirates had raised their crimson and black flag.

"Villanova!" he cried out. "I have it!"

The Vodacce pushed him aside in a heartbeat. "Where? Here?" He lifted the wrapped package from the cotton and held it high. "How did I miss it? How..." He turned and gazed at the priest, his hand falling to his saber. "I didn't miss it. Did I, Bernardo?"

The priest took a step back. "It was there! I found it! You would still be looking if I hadn't..."

The ship suddenly rocked toward starboard and Villanova fell to his side, the impact knocking the package from his grasp. Bernardo leapt over the Vodacce, grasping at it. But Villanova was quick, and the priest was caught as he leapt and was thrown to the floor, his back cracking from the impact.

Villanova knelt over the wounded priest, his prize in his hands. "I do not have time to kill you, Bernardo," he said. He paused. "But I will make the time." The Vodacce's face blossomed into an evil grin and Bernardo took a deep breath, realizing that it might very well be his last.

O'Connell

He swung across to the Vodacce ship, the battle cry of his forefathers in his throat. His bare feet landed on the deck; the knives he had held between his teeth were in his hands and a wild fire shone in his eyes.

"Come on, you Vodacce dogs!" he shouted. "You all sleep with the Sea Hag tonight!"

Three of them charged him with swords, but he ducked the first one easily, slicing the sailor's heel while spinning beneath the blade. The second one caught his left knife in the gut while O'Connell leapt upon the third and slammed his head against the Vodacce's skull. There was a second of sickness in his head, but then everything was fine again. "Wine drinkin' makes yur head go soft," he said to the reeling Vodacce. "Best stick ta whiskey in the future."

Just then, he felt a body back into him and he spun about, knives at the ready. But it was only the bosun, his face wet with Vodacce blood. "Out of my way, Inish," he shouted over the din.

O'Connell bowed and smiled. "I pray your pardon." The big bosun moved by him and O'Connell jumped back into the fray. A moment or two later, he was on a stairwell that led him away from the blood and toward the hold. At the end of the stairwell was a long corridor, filled up to his ankles with water. His sea legs held his balance and he moved quickly down the corridor.

As he trod through the thick, black water, he heard two voices ahead: one Vodacce and the other Castillian. When he reached the heavy door at the end, he lifted the bar and put his shoulder against the wood. The door opened easily and he fell face-first into the rancid water.

When he lifted his head, he saw two men – one on top of the other – and exposed steel. He recognized one, but not the other.

"Signore Villanova, I presume?" he asked, raising himself from the water. The Vodacce looked at him – then at the priest on the floor – and grabbed a small package and sprang to his feet.

Villanova said something in Vodacce, but O'Connell shook his head. "Sorry," he said. "I tried learnin' the language, but it tasted like noodles every time I said anything. I hate noodles."

O'Connell didn't know if the Vodacce understood; the black-haired man kept walking forward. The Inish stood his ground, knives held tightly in his fists. Vodacce steel flashed in the dim light just before Villanova struck and O'Connell's knives swung in a wild parry...

Helena

She watched the carnage from the *Never Surrender* beside the ship's captain, wrapped up in her heavy coat to keep out the cold wind. The tall man peered through his spyglass at the battle on the opposite ship and chuckled. Helena heard the screams of dying men and shuddered. The pirate noticed. "You don't look the squeamish type," he said.

"I'm not," she replied in the captain's native Avalon, her Vendel accent heavy on the vowels. "But this butchery..."

"Is entirely necessary," the captain interrupted. "The Vodacce do not surrender."

She turned away from the carnage. "As long as I get back what's mine."

"That was our agreement," the captain said, putting his spyglass back in his sash. "My crew gets the gold and you get... whatever it is you want."

She buried herself more deeply in her coat. *That was our agreement, Mordigan,* she thought. *But we still have to see if you'll keep your word.*

Just as she finished the thought, something knocked her forward as an explosion filled her ears and heat burned at her backside. Her face slammed against the deck and she tasted blood. It took her a moment to pick her wits up off the deck, then she pushed herself to her feet and ran her tongue along her teeth just to make sure they were all still there.

She saw the captain, still smoldering in the cold sea air, a raging fire before him from the other ship. He was swinging his cutlass above his head, though she heard no orders. She couldn't hear anything but a loud ringing in her head. While she had managed to pick up her wits, she realized that she'd left her balance on the deck and fell right back

down. She tried twice more, using the rail to pull herself up, and saw the other ship had lost her stern to a raging inferno. Very slowly, the captain's voice found its way past the ringing and she heard his commands.

"Get back, lads! She's going down, and if we don't work them lines fast, we're going right down with her!"

Helena shook her head and pointed at the sinking ship with her right hand while grabbing the captain with her left. "No! We can't leave! Villanova's on that boat with my..."

"We've no choice! We're still grappled with Villanova's ship. If we don't cut free, we're drinking sea water wine for dinner tonight."

She shook the last bit of vertigo from her head and pushec the captain aside. He started to protest, but she pulled a gun from her heavy jacket and he was silent. Blood trickled into her eyes and she turned toward the ship, aiming the gun at the rigging. The captain watched as the gun fired, launching a grapple high into the air to catch on a line. Helena tugged to make certain it was fast, then turned to the captain.

"Wish me luck," she said as she climbed on the rail.

"That ship will be under the water in less time than it takes to say 'Mad Jack', y'know."

She nodded. "Then have a couple of drinks before you say it." She grabbed hold of the grapple line and swung across to the blazing, sinking ship.



What is 7th Sea?

It is a world of swashbuckling and sorcery, piracy and adventure, diplomacy and intrigue, archæology and exploration. It's a world of musketeers, buccaneers and privateers, ancient sorcery and lost civilizations, secrets that hide in the shadows and monsters that hide in plain sight.

That's quite a mouthful, so let's take it one step at a time.

Swashbuckling and Sorcery

It is a world where an order of musketeers guards the lives of the nobility, but also the virtues of honor, integrity, and fraternity. It is a world of sharp blades and sharp wits, where a cutting retort can be just as deadly as a sword's point.

It is also a world where the nobility control the most powerful force of all – sorcery. Dark magic pulses in the hearts of the noble class, power that was given to them long ago. Some control the weather. Others assume the forms of animals. Some rip through the fabric of reality, while others play with the forces of Fate itself.

The hard edge of steel coupled with the shadowy substance of sorcery: that is your first step into the world of *7th Sea.*

Piracy and Adventure

The waters of *7th Sea* are populated with the robbers of the waves. The pirates of *7th Sea* are united by a common cause: freedom. Freedom from the tyranny of sorcerers and kings. Freedom from the shackles of the Church of the Prophets. Freedom from greedy land-owners and money lenders. Pirates sail where they want, take what they please and live a life of freedom unknown by any other man in the world of *7th Sea.*

With the decline of the Church, things have become even better for pirates as kings and queens hire daredevil adventurers to explore the unknown and bring back the booty they discover. Of course, if those adventurers lower their guards for even a moment, they'll find themselves facing the black flag...

Diplomacy and Intrigue

In the world of *7th Sea,* kingdoms are on the verge of becoming countries. A swelling tide of nationalism grows in the hearts of men and women, and a new kind of conflict – covert warfare – is finding its way into the world. But in the courts of kings and queens, diplomats dressed in powdered wigs, lace and silk try to resolve the disputes of nations. Of course, if diplomacy fails, there is the cold steel of the dueling sword waiting under all that finery.

A new kind of espionage is making its way into the world as well. Men and women trained in the arts of deception live perilous lives of illusion and artifice as they pillage enemy secrets with only their beauty, cunning and wits... and a willingness to do *anything* for crown and country.

Archæology and Exploration

Beyond the kingdoms of Théah lie the ruins of an ancient civilization, lost centuries ago. Hidden beneath thousands of years of dust and the waves are vast cities of Lost Syrneth. Who knows what ancient treasures remain, unseen by human eyes, untouched by human hands?

Men and women who call themselves "archæologists" are hired by the kings and queens of Théah to unearth these treasures and bring them back to noble hands. Daring the perilous ancient ruins, these men and women are all the rage in the noble courts and the subjects of romantic novels all across the land. Praised as heroes, they hope to discover the secrets of the Syrneth in hopes that they may uncover the key to man's own origins, and possibly the secrets of the universe itself.

Conclusion

And that, in a nutshell, is the world of *7th Sea.*

It is a great deal like our own, but at the same time, not at all like our own. Théah is a whole new world to explore.

Are you ready?

What is an RPG?

A roleplaying game is a unique kind of game. It's a lot like playing cops and robbers, except with more sophisticated rules. When players get together to play *7th Sea,* they tell tales about the adventures of a group of characters in Théah, using their collective talents to make the stories come alive for everyone involved.

While any number of players can participate, three to six is usually optimal, including one player – called a Game Master – who will take the role of referee and guide the stories along.

The Players

Each player sits down with a copy of this book and creates a Hero to portray. Many people who play roleplaying games like to create a Hero with backgrounds, skills, attitudes, and abilities totally unlike their own. Often, these characters will do things their players would never dream of doing.

The Game Master

The Game Master (or "GM") is a very important part of the game. While each player creates a single Hero to portray, the GM creates all the people, places, and things the characters will meet. He creates plots and situations for the characters to become embroiled in and improvises plot twists when the players prove to be too clever for his initial story ideas.

The GM is, in essence, the players' five senses. He describes everything they experience, from the trembling lip of the spoiled princess complaining about her saddle sores, to the whining laugh of the scheming villain, to the sickening crunch of the hard tack as the characters learn that it's meant to be soaked in liquid before being eaten.

We've written an entire book for the GM, complete with hints, suggestions, and dirty tricks to make his job easier. If you are a player, reading that book is cheating. It reveals a lot of secrets about Théah, and you don't want to spoil the fun of finding all that out on your own, do you?

The Rules

A GM is part author, part improvisational actor, and part referee. Whenever a dispute arises about the rules, the GM must make the final decision.

7th Sea uses 10-sided dice (which you can find in most hobby stores) to help arbitrate the success of most actions the characters take. Whenever there is an uncertain outcome for an action, the GM tells the players to roll a handful of dice, add up the numbers and tell him the result. This total determines the degree of success or failure.

Who Wins?

The best part about roleplaying games is that everyone can win. On the flipside, everyone can also lose. Roleplaying is like storytelling. When all the players work in concert, they can create a beautiful, elaborate story filled with adventure, drama, and excitement. Players have to be patient and work together, allowing each other to share the spotlight.

Likewise, GMs have to be fair to the players and allow everyone a chance to participate in the story. It only takes one selfish player to ruin everyone else's evening.

How to Use This Primer

The first few pages of this book are an overview of the *7th Sea* game and will teach you the basics. In other words, if you read these first few pages, you're ready to play the game. The rest of this book will give you a much more thorough look at the world.

The **Théah** chapter introduces you to the world of *7th Sea* with a little bit more detail. **Hero** teaches you how to make a hero of your own. **Drama** shows you how to use the game system to make your Hero do all those great heroic things you've read about and seen in movies. Finally, **Player** gives you some tips and advice on how to portray your Hero as fully as possible.

Théah

Théah is the continent where all the action of *7th Sea* takes place – a continent with many similarities to 17th century Europe. She's ruled by a series of nation-states, which bear cultural and historical similarities to particular European nations on Earth. While she isn't Europe's twin sister, she is certainly a distant cousin, which should make Théah more familiar and learning about her culture and history easier. There are some important differences, however.

Sorcery

Sorcery is a very real power in Théah. Almost every noble family has the dark gift running in its veins, although two nations – Castille and Eisen – are exceptions to the rule. Their sorcery is powerful and dangerous, each type demanding its own unique cost. It is a discipline that not all can, or should, attempt to master, but when its power is harnessed, it can change the fate of nations.

The Vaticine Church

Théah's principal religion – the Church of the Prophets, or Vaticine Church – has many elements similar to European Catholicism, but also some key philosophical differences. Aside from a slightly different iconography, the Church embraces science as a means of understanding the Creator's world, and encourages the proliferation of knowledge through schools and universities. Because of its efforts, Théans have made several scientific breakthroughs that would not occur on Earth until centuries later.

Unfortunately, the Church has a darker side as well. Théah has only just emerged from the thirty year long "War of the Cross," a struggle between traditional Vaticines and a reform movement known as Objectionism. The war involved every nation on the continent, and left the country of Eisen in shattered pieces. As if this weren't bad enough, a sinister Inquisition has recently seized power within the Church, threatening to transform it into an instrument of terror. Only time will tell if they succeed.

The Seventh Sea

There are six seas surrounding Théah. The mythical "seventh sea" is considered little more than a sailor's story, a tale to frighten cabin boys on their first voyage. It is said that when a ship enters the seventh sea, the stars move backwards, the sun and moon share the same horizon and strange cries can be heard from beneath the waves. While scholars dispute the veracity of the sailors' stories, too many have surfaced to be ignored.

The Syrneth

The ruins of a society far older than man's lie scattered across Théah. Some sit in ruined cities beneath the earth, while others lie on an extensive string of islands in the western seas. The race which built them – known as the Syrne – has remained unknown, but it is clear that they were not human. While their origins remain a mystery, the ruins are a treasure haven for daring men and women. Strange artifacts and wondrous inventions have been pulled from their depths, resulting in a great amount of puzzling... and an even greater amount of wealth.

Nations

The current nations of Théah – seven in all – currently represent the whole of the civilized world. A more detailed description of each can be found in the **Théah** chapter of the two core books.

Avalon: Green and enchanted, this union of three kingdoms has recently risen to the forefront of Théan politics.

Castille: Headquarters of the Vaticine church, this fertile nation has recently fallen under attack from the Montaigne to the north.

Eisen: A once-proud country now struggling to recover from the War of the Cross.

Montaigne: One of Théah's most powerful nations, leading the world in art and culture even as its Emperor crushes the populace beneath his thumb.

Ussura: A vast and wild country, whose people still live as their ancestors did centuries ago.

Vendel/Vestenmannavnjar: This collection of islands is divided between wealthy Guilds seeking to dominate Théah's economy and the fierce raiders who refuse to surrender their heritage.

Vodacce: The former cradle of civilization, now split between seven merchant Princes whose complex schemes reach every corner of the world.

Two other nation-states exist as well – The Empire of the Crescent Moon and the land of Cathay – but they are isolated from the rest of Théah by a combination of cultural differences and physical barriers. Other continents may exist, far beyond the western oceans, but no Théan has yet discovered them.

Secret Societies

The Nations are not the only powers influencing Théah. There are many more clandestine organizations – not beholden to nationality or religion – that move Théan politics, some unnoticed by even the most observant scholars and statesmen. More details on these groups can be found in the **Théah** chapter.

The Explorer's Society: One of the most prominent "gentleman's clubs" in Théah, a multinational organization dedicated to studying the past and discovering her geography.

The Invisible College: A secretive band of academics who work to protect scientific progress from the fires of the Inquisition.

The Knights of the Rose and Cross: An ancient order of adventurers, seeking to bring justice to the unjust and to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Die Kreuzritter: A group of holy Vaticine Knights, wiped out centuries ago by a traitorous political ruler.

Los Vagos: Led by a mysterious masked man, these hidden crusaders protect the people of Castille from enemies both within and without.

The Rilasciare: Best known as the Free Thinkers, the Rilasciare promote free will and self-determination through a range of extremely unorthodox tactics.

Sophia's Daughters: A union of Vodacce women seeking equality and political power by covert means.

Hero

Introduction

There are many different kinds of Heroes in *7th Sea.* The one you choose to play could have any number of skills, abilities, and unique quirks. You can find a list of ready-to-play characters in the back of the **Hero** chapter, but you'll eventually want to create one of your own. The rules below provide a quick overview of the statistics used to define them.

The Hero Sheet

The words and numbers on a Hero sheet are there to remind you of your character's strengths and weaknesses. Just as some heroes are stronger, faster or smarter than others, so will your Hero have a unique list of virtues and flaws. The Hero sheet helps you keep track of all of that.

Traits

Every Hero has 5 Traits: *Brawn, Finesse, Resolve, Wits and Panache.* To show your Hero's abilities in these Traits, we'll assign a number, or Rank, to each one. All your Hero's Traits will be Ranked from 1 to 5, although it is possible to have a 0 Rank Trait, or even Rank 6 or higher. The higher the Rank, the more ability your Hero has in that Trait.

Brawn is a measure of your character's strength and endurance.

Finesse measures his coordination and agility.

Resolve is a measure of your Hero's willpower.

Wits measures how quickly your Hero can think on his feet.

Panache is that "something special" that sets your Hero apart from Joe Average.

Skills and Knacks

Skills represent the training your Hero has acquired. If Traits define who your Hero is, then Skills define what he knows. Unlike Traits, not everyone has the same set of Skills. We all learn different lessons, even from similar experiences.

When your Hero purchases a Skill, he picks up a wide range of abilities. After all, when he takes a fencing class, he learns more than just thrusting: he learns to thrust, parry and riposte, and picks up some general knowledge of fencers and the history of the activity.

These "minor Skills" are called Knacks. Unlike Traits, Skills themselves do not have Ranks, but Knacks do. In that sense, characters who have trained under the same teacher can learn different lessons and come away with completely different abilities. For example, two characters apprenticed under the same master could have Skills that look entirely different:

Jason, the Performer
Performer Skill
Acting: 3
Dancing: 2
Oratory: 1
Singing: 3

Richard, the Performer
Performer Skill
Acting: 1
Dancing: 3
Oratory: 2
Singing: 3

Wounds

A very important part of the swashbuckling genre is action, and whenever swords get drawn, somebody is going to get hurt. Your Hero can take only so many Wounds before he gets Knocked Out (that's a game term, by the way) and is vulnerable to attack from Villains and other riff-raff. We'll talk more about Wounds in the **Drama** section.

Drama

The purpose of this section is to show you how to use the *7th Sea* game system. While a more detail discussion of all of the rules appears later in the book, we are giving you an overview of the important ones here.

Dice

7th Sea uses ten-sided dice (dice that generate numbers from one to ten) exclusively. You can find them anywhere roleplaying games are sold. Dice help the Game Master and players resolve conflicts, adding a degree of luck and chance to the game.

Whenever the GM tells a player to make a check, the player picks up a number of dice, throws them and counts up the total. Because you almost always want to roll high in *7th Sea,* rolling more dice is better than rolling only a few.

For example, if you roll three dice and they read 3, 8 and 8, the total of your roll is 19 (3+8+8=19).

In the following text, you'll see two words that are very important: Roll and Keep. When we tell you to *Roll* five dice, you roll five dice. However, when we tell you to *Keep* only three of them, you choose any three and keep those totals. For example, if we say "Roll five, Keep three," we mean roll a total of five dice, but only count three of them toward your total.

Finally, whenever a die rolls a 10 ("0" on many ten-sided dice), that die *explodes.* An exploding die is rerolled and the next result is added to the first one. For example, a die rolls

a 10, and you roll it again. The next result is a 5. Add the two results together and that single die rolled a 15. If you roll consecutive 10s, continue rolling until you roll a number other than 10. Then add *all* the results together for the total roll. No matter how many times a single die explodes, it only counts as one die towards the number of dice kept.

Actions

If your Hero wants to do something, he performs an *Action*. A Hero can make only one Action at a time. Because some Actions are harder than others, the GM will assign a *Target Number* (TN) to each Action to represent its difficulty. Actions that are easy or simple will have low Target Numbers (5 or 10) while more difficult actions will have higher Target Numbers (25 or 30). The average TN is 15.

The Two Rolls

There are two kinds of rolls used in *7th Sea: Simple* and *Contested.*

A Simple Roll is used when a Hero is acting on his own, when only his own abilities are being tested.

A Contested Roll is used when a Hero is actively opposing (or being opposed by) another character.

The Simple Roll

• Step One: The player declares an action and the GM determines which Trait is appropriate for that action. Then he assigns a *Target Number* (TN) for that action.

• Step Two: The player rolls a number of dice equal to the character's appropriate Trait and adds them together.

• Step Three: Compare the total generated by the dice with the TN. If the character's roll is equal to or greater than the TN, then the action is successful. If the roll is less than the TN, the action fails.

A *Simple Roll* is an Action whose outcome is based solely on the ability of the Hero. Does that Hero have the strength to lift and throw that table? Does he possess the deftness to pick that lock? Both are good examples of Simple Rolls. The GM decides the character's appropriate Trait and a difficulty for the roll (Brawn would be appropriate for lifting and throwing a table, while Finesse would be appropriate for picking a lock). The player rolls a number of dice equal to his Trait. He then compares the total on the dice with the assigned Target Number. If his roll is equal to or higher than the TN, his Action is successful. If it is lower, then he fails.

The GM has a list that shows the relative difficulties for actions and their appropriate Target Numbers. The chart gives you a good estimate as to what those Target Numbers may be.

The Contested Roll

Contested Rolls are a little different from Simple Rolls. A Hero makes a Contested Roll when he's trying to use his Action against another character. The GM tells him to roll a number of dice equal to the appropriate Trait, just like a Simple Roll, but:

• The TN for a Contested Roll is equal to the opposed Trait times 5.

• Both the Acting and Opposing characters make rolls, and the success of the action is determined by their rolls.

In a Contested Roll, one of three results can occur:

1) If only one contestant rolls successfully (Opposing Trait x 5), then he succeeds, and his opponent fails.

2) If both contestants roll successfully, the one who rolled higher wins.

Target Number Chart

5	Mundane
10	Easy
15	Average (This is the default Target Number)
20	Hard
25	Very Hard
30	Heroic
35	Never Done Before
40	Never To Be Done Again

3) If neither contestant rolls successfully, the Action continues until one or both of them can make a successful roll.

Example: Don and Jeff make a Contested Brawn Roll. Don's Brawn is 3 and Jeff's Brawn is 4. Don's TN is 20 (Jeff's Brawn of 4 x 5) and Jeff's is 15 (Don's Brawn of 3 x 5). If only one of them rolls equal to or higher than his TN, he succeeds. If both of them roll equal to or higher than their TNs, the one who rolled higher succeeds. If neither of them roll equal to or higher than their TNs, they both fail and the test continues to the next Action.

Trait + Knack

Generally, when you roll to see if an Action is successful, we'll list the number of dice you'll be rolling as "A+B." For instance, if you're trying to hit a flying bird with a shot from your flintlock, your GM will tell you to roll Finesse + Attack (Firearms) to gain a total. Whenever you roll Trait + Knack, you *always* keep a number of dice equal to the Trait.

Raises

When the GM assigns a player a TN, the player may find that TN a little too easy to hit. A player may voluntarily *Raise* any TN he is assigned in increments of 5. Raising the TN will increase just how impressive the success will be. Raising allows a Hero to complete tasks more quickly, more effectively, or with more style. A "called shot" (striking an opponent in the hand, firing a bullet into an opponent's leg, etc.) is an example of what a player can do with Raises. The GM will notify you how many Raises are necessary for a called shot.

As you go further into this book, you'll see more references to Raises. Just remember that a Raise is always a 5 point increase to any given Target Number, which also increases the success of your roll.

Occasionally, a Hero will receive a *Free Raise.* A Free Raise increases your roll by 5.

What Has Changed From *Legend of the Five Rings*

If you're familiar with AEG's other roleplaying game – *Legend of the Five Rings* – then you're already familiar with the *7th Sea* game system. However, we've made a couple of modifications to it, so here's a "heads up" on the changes.

- **Raises:** The number of Raises you can make is not limited by any Trait.
- **Free Raises:** Free Raises now add 5 to your roll instead of making a successful roll more successful.
- **Drama Dice:** Although Drama Dice may look like Void Points, there's no limit to the number of Drama Dice you can spend on a roll, and you can spend them after the roll. Also, leftover Drama Dice turn into Experience Points at the end of every Story.
- *7th Sea* has no Disadvantages.
- **Traits and Knacks:** Instead of having Rings with two Traits each, there are now five indivisible Traits. Skills, however, have "sub-skills" known as Knacks. Instead of rolling Ring + Skill, you're usually rolling Trait + Knack.
- **Wounds:** Getting hurt in *7th Sea* is very different from getting hurt in *L5R*. Indeed, the one-on-one combat system has changed quite a bit: it's much more detailed, to encourage a more chandelier-swinging style of combat. See the "Combat" section of the Drama chapter for more details.
- **Battles:** The Mass Battle System has changed a little. It now focuses more on the Hero's abilities and how Heroes can influence a battle. Ask your GM for details.

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Rounds and Phases

Whenever the Heroes engage in combat, time slows down so everyone can get a chance to perform an Action. A *Round* is the basic unit of time in *7th Sea,* which is further broken down into ten *Phases.* Remember, Phases are 1/10 as long as Rounds.

A Round begins with Phase 1 and counts up to Phase 2, Phase 3 and so on until the Round reaches Phase 10. At the end of Phase 10, the Round ends and a new Round begins.

Action Dice and Initiative

At the start of a Combat Round, you will get a number of *Action Dice* to roll equal to your Hero's Panache. Action Dice *do not* explode like regular dice. Action Dice have two purposes: 1) The numbers shown on the dice tell you in which Phases your Hero will have an Action this Round, and 2) when added together give your Hero his *Initiative Total* for this Round.

For example, let's say your Hero has a 4 Panache, so he rolls 4 Action Dice at the beginning of a Combat Round. The dice he rolls come up 1, 3, 4 and 10, indicating that he will act in Phase 1, Phase 3, Phase 4 and Phase 10. Notice that he did not reroll the 10 and add the result.

When you add a Hero's Action Dice together, you get his Initiative Total for the Round. Within individual Phases, the Hero with the highest Initiative Total goes first, followed by the Hero with the second highest Initiative Total and so on down the line. Using the example above, your Hero's Initiative total at the beginning of this Round is 1+3+4+10=18.

Whenever you take an Action in a Phase, you must "spend" your Action Die. Spending your Action Die reduces your Initiative Total, so be sure to double-check it at the beginning of each Phase.

Attack and Defense Knacks

Any character (Hero or Villain) who attacks another character is called "the Attacker." Any character who is being attacked is called "the Defender."

In order for an Attacker to hit a Defender, he must roll against the Defender's Target Number to Be Hit. The Defender's TN to Be Hit is 5 + (Defense Knack x5). Defense Knacks are listed in the boxed text below.

Your Hero cannot use Leaping while swinging or Swinging while Parrying. When leaping, he *must* use the Leaping Knack.

Damage Values

All weapons have a *Damage Value* that tells you how many Wounds you will inflict with a successful hit.

Each weapon is listed in the same way. A weapon gives you the number of dice you roll (adding your Brawn dice to the roll) and the number of dice you Keep from the roll. Therefore, if a fencing sword inflicts *"2, keep 2"* (or *2k2*) Wounds, you roll two dice (plus your Brawn dice) and Keep two dice from the roll.

If the weapon is a hand-to-hand weapon (such as a sword or knife), you add your Hero's Brawn to the DV when you roll

Defense Knack	*When Used*
Footwork	At any time, unless overruled by another Knack
Parry (Weapon)	**May** be used only when holding the appropriate weapon
Balance	**Must** be used when fighting on an unstable surface such as gravel, a ship, or a moving carriage.
Swinging	**Must** be used when swinging; overrides Footwork
Leaping	**Must** be used when leaping; overrides Footwork

it. If the weapon is a firearm, a bow or a crossbow, you do not.

For ranged weapons (such as firearms and bows), you will see a bonus or penalty to hit your target. For example, a pistol has a –10 to hit at Short Range. This means that you subtract 10 from your roll when you are rolling against an opponent's TN to Be Hit.

Wounds

When your Hero gets hit by a sword or a bullet from a musket, he gets wounded. Once you've been wounded, you have to determine if you've taken a serious hit (a *Dramatic Wound*) or a superficial one (a *Flesh Wound*). This is referred to as a *Wound Check*. Roll your Brawn with a TN equal to the Wounds you've taken so far in the combat. If you fail the roll, you suffer a *Dramatic Wound*. Otherwise, nothing happens, but the damage stays with you. Flesh Wounds are cumulative, which means if you get 10 Flesh Wounds at the beginning of a Round and then get 15 more at the end, you have a total of 25 Flesh Wounds. For every 20 points you miss your Wound Check by, you take an additional Dramatic Wound. Firearms, on the other hand are much more deadly. When making a Wound Check against a Firearm, for every *10 points* you miss it by, you take an additional Dramatic Wound.

At the end of each battle, erase all your Flesh Wounds, but not Dramatic Wounds. You get to keep them for a while.

For example, a Hero gets hit twice in one Round. The first hit causes 10 Flesh Wounds. He has a Brawn of 3, so he rolls and Keeps 3 dice on his Wound Check. He rolls a 15, making the roll. He marks down the Wounds on his Hero sheet, so he'll remember how many Flesh Wounds he's taken so far this combat. At the end of the Round he gets hit again, taking another 10 Flesh Wounds, for a total of 20 Flesh Wounds (10 from the first hit and 10 from this one). He makes another Wound Check and rolls another 15, missing his TN of 20. Now, he erases all the Flesh Wounds he has taken so far and writes a Dramatic Wound on his Hero sheet.

Dramatic Wounds

When you suffer a Dramatic Wound, the first thing to do is erase all the Flesh Wounds you've suffered so far. Don't get too excited; you still have to deal with the effects.

First, if this Dramatic Wound brings your total number of Dramatic Wounds equal to your Resolve (e.g. you have 3 Dramatic Wounds and a Resolve of 3), none of your dice (except Drama dice) explode. If you accumulate a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to your Resolve x 2, you get Knocked Out, and you're out of the combat. You'll

Weapons Table

Weapon	Damage	Range	Short Range	Long Range	Reload
Bow	2k2	150 yards	–5 to hit	–10 to hit	1 Action
Crossbow	2k3	100 yards	–5 to hit	–10 to hit	6 Actions
Fencing Sword*	2k2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heavy Weapon†	3k2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Knife	1k2	5+2*Brawn	–0 to hit	–5 to hit	N/A
Musket	5k3	80 yards	–10 to hit	–15 to hit	30 Actions
Panzerhand	0k2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pistol	4k3	30 yards	–10 to hit	–15 to hit	20 Actions

* Fencing Swords are rapiers, epées, cutlasses, scimitars and any other similar weapon.
† Heavy Weapons are polearms, two-handed swords, axes and any other similar weapon.

probably wake up in a dungeon or tied to a chair, assuming no one kills you.

NPC Wounds

Player Characters are a little different from NPCs (Non-Player Characters, those controlled by the Game Master). Players are Heroes, after all. While there are NPC Heroes, there are only a few (so they don't crowd the player characters!). The player characters are so distinguished, they even deal with Wounds in a different manner than the rest of the world.

In *7th Sea,* there are 3 kinds of NPCs: Villains, Henchmen and Brutes. Each of them is wounded differently.

Villains

Villains are the counterparts of Heroes. They have the same abilities as Heroes, and the same potential to do evil as a Hero has to do good.

Villains are Wounded in exactly the same manner as Heroes. Whenever they receive Wounds, they make a Wound Check using their Brawn. If they succeed, there's no effect. If they fail, they take a Dramatic Wound. If a Villain ever takes a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to twice his Resolve, he gets Knocked Out.

Henchmen

Henchmen are the lieutenants and hangers-on of Villains and Heroes. They're tougher than Brutes, but only a little bit. Henchmen are actually just on the verge of becoming Heroes and Villains themselves; all they need is a little push and they're on their way.

Henchmen receive Wounds as Heroes do, but if they suffer a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to their Resolve, they are Knocked Out. It's up to the GM whether or not the Henchman is unconscious or killed, but if he takes a Wound while he's Knocked Out, he dies.

Brutes

Brutes are riff-raff. They are nameless thugs that villains employ by the dozens, and who get Knocked Out by the dozens when Heroes show up. A group of Brutes (usually six) is called a "Brute Squad."

Generally, the normal TN to hit a Brute is 10. When a Hero gets a successful strike against a Brute, the Brute gets Knocked Out. That's it. There's no roll for Wounds, no Wound Check, just the Brute getting Knocked Out. The GM determines if the Brute has been killed or just knocked unconscious, but if a Brute ever takes a single Wound after he's been Knocked Out, he dies.

Oftentimes, a Hero can dispatch a menacing Brute Squad with little effort. If a Hero is facing a Brute Squad directly, he may attack one additional Brute per Raise. In other words, if you were facing four Brutes, you would need three Raises (one for each additional Brute beyond the first) to attack them all.

Example: Rodriguez is facing four Brutes. He only wants to spend one Action on dispatching them, so when he attacks, he tells the GM he wants to attack all the Brutes. There are four of them, so the GM tells Rodriguez he needs three Raises to attack them all. The TN to attack these Brutes is 10, so with three Raises, the TN becomes 25. Rodriguez makes his roll and all the Brutes are Knocked Out in a flurry of swordplay.

Drama Dice

Every Hero begins the game with a pool of *Drama Dice* equal to his lowest Trait. These represent a character's innate ability to second-guess his surroundings and the intentions of his opponents, and to perform actions beyond the capacity of the common man (i.e. "heroic actions").

When a Hero spends one of his Drama Dice, one of two effects can be invoked.

The first is to add a kept die to *any one Action*. This can be called *after* the roll is made, but *must* be called before the GM describes the result of the Skill check in question. Drama Dice cannot be used after the Action has been successful. In other words, you can't add Drama Dice to the *effect roll*. You can only use them to increase the likelihood of your success.

The second is to get up immediately from being Knocked Out (*see Combat, above*). However, regardless of the current Phase, the Hero must then spend the remainder of that Round recovering, unable to perform any Actions. Your TN to be hit during this Round is 5. And don't think that just because you're up and walking doesn't mean that one more hit won't kill you.

There are more uses for Drama Dice, but they can wait until you learn more about the rules.

Getting More Drama Dice

You earn Drama Dice through roleplaying. If your Hero snaps off some witty banter at a Villain while engaged in deadly swordplay, you'll earn a Drama Die. If he pauses for a moment before leaping out the window to give the beautiful princess a good-bye kiss, you'll get a Drama Die. In short, whenever you pull off an Action with unusual flair, you'll earn yourself a Drama Die.

The End?

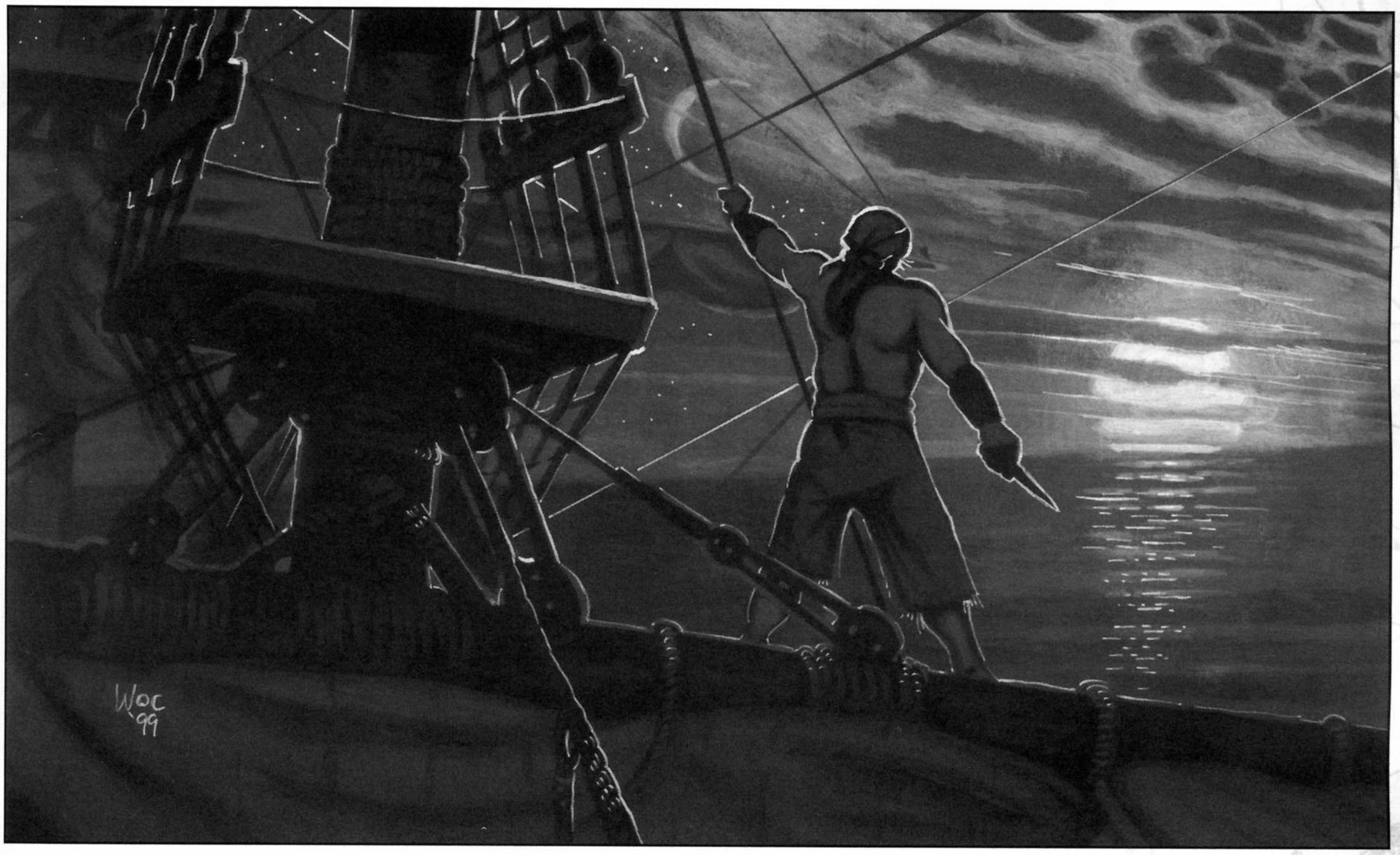
Oh no. This is just the beginning.

This is only a taste of what's waiting for you inside the *Players' Guide.* Within these pages is even more information on the nations, Secret Societies and that shape modern Théah, as well as a look at Théah's past glories and tragedies. Additional rules expand the game system further, including Advanced Knacks, Sorcerous Heritages, Swordsman Schools and combat mechanics that really let your Hero fly off the wall.

The *7th Sea Roleplaying Game* is just your first step into Théah. AEG will release a variety of *7th Sea* material, including novels, miniatures games and card games.

7th Sea is not just a game, it is the New World.

Come explore it with us!





Theah

Part Two

Archibald

The letter in his belt was written with an exquisite, delicate hand and perfumed just enough to catch his attention. So many women didn't know how to perfume a letter, but this lady did – and yes, he chose those two words very carefully.

The house was in the richest district in the city, and he had to show the guard the pass she had written for him. The tall, burly fellow with shoulders like mountains snarled at him as he passed. Archibald shifted his shoulder just enough to let the sword on his hip and the pin on his lapel shine in the morning light. After that the guard didn't grumble.

It was a long walk – uphill – to her home, and he stopped on the way to catch his breath. It wouldn't do at all to let the client see him winded. After his rest, he resumed his walk and found the address.

Wide walls and green grasses greeted him, all in circles. *Castillians and their circles,* he thought to himself. *I just hope she speaks Avalon.* He walked through the garden, remembering how amazed he had been at the Castillian homes when he first arrived. After three years even Paradise would start to look commonplace.

He didn't expect to have to look up at whomever answered the door, but he did. All the way up. The black-haired monster looked down at him. All the way down. Archibald removed his hat and gathered his composure. "Is the lady of the house home?" he said in his best Castillian. The giant nodded somberly and let him inside. He smelled the same perfume as he stepped through the door. "I should have listened to my instincts," he muttered.

As soon as the door latched, something screamed in the back of his head. His sword was in his hand immediately and deflected a blow to his left with a half-circle parry he had picked up from a Montaigne musketeer. Then, as fast as the parry, he sidestepped another blade and leapt forward, tumbling and spinning to his feet to face the two behind him. The one on the left had the softer sword, while the one on the right with the scar over his eye knew exactly what he was doing. Softsword attacked again while Scar stayed back and watched. Archibald would have to dispatch Softsword quickly; he couldn't let Scar see too much. He parried Softsword and gave a quick riposte just above the eyes. Softsword flinched – even the most experienced fencers flinch when you cut at their eyes – and in two fluid movements, Archibald had two swords in his hands and Softsword was unconscious on the floor.

"No mal," Scar smiled. *"No mal para un pero de Avalon."*

Archibald felt his jaw clench. "I am a Swordsman, Castille."

Scar grinned, revealing a gold tooth. "We will see," he said.

Archibald threw Softsword's weapon down and put himself in position.

"It'll be the last thing you see."

Clarisse

She watched him knock Arturo senseless and steal his sword as he fell. Rodrigo was obviously outmatched. She reached to her left, lifted the bell from the glass table and shook it. The small sound was like thunder in the silent room. Both fencers stopped and turned to face her. She watched the Swordsman's face closely. She loved watching their eyes when they saw her for the first time. Clarisse wasn't disappointed.

"That will be enough of *that,* I think," she said. When she used the Swordsman's native Avalon, the tension in his shoulders eased and his stance shifted. *Always watch the details,* her father told her. *Men reveal more with their bodies than with their tongues.* After ten years as Montaigne's ambassador to Castille, she was fairly certain that a woman's body could make a man's tongue reveal what she wanted.

"Put those things away," she said, gesturing at their weapons. "I won't have bloodshed in my house." She shifted in her plush seat. "The stains never come out."

The Swordsman looked at Rodrigo, then looked back at her, his eyes shadowed confusion. "Yes," she said. "I am Montaigne, not Castillian. But don't let that ruin your first impression. Come and sit with me. We'll drink tea and talk about how you're going to spend all of those Guilders I'm going to put in your pouch."

He watched Rodrigo and didn't sheathe his sword until the Castillian sheathed his. Rodrigo walked forward, bowed before her and left the room, closing the door behind him. She poured Archibald a cup and hid her concern when he sat his dirty, unwashed body in her satin chair. Clarisse had heard that Avalons abhorred bathing, but *really*...

After a moment of silence, she settled back into her chair and began talking.

"My friend, the matter is simple, really. You are a Swordsman and I am a client. Your guild is built upon the tradition of anonymity. I am in need of that anonymity in this concern. There is a man – you shall learn who he is very soon – who has betrayed my heart and I wish for him to feel the pain that he has brought me. I see in your eyes that you understand such matters, so there is no need for explanation. Suffice to say that I wish him to feel that pain, not only the moment the sword pierces his skin, but every moment of his life from that moment on. I want his life to be one long, lasting parade of misery. Do you understand? I am certain you do. And so, it is with that small purse – yes, the one sitting next to you – that I am employing you, my Swordsman, to execute this little matter of retribution with the complete confidence that I shall remain completely anonymous. Even though letting him know who made him suffer so would be a delicious delight, it shall be even more satisfying to have him go through the rest of his days wondering who caused him such agony."

She paused. "Are we in agreement, then?"

The Swordsman nodded.

"Good."

Lucia

"You can show yourself out," Clarisse said. The Swordsman rose from his chair, took the envelope from the desk and tipped his hat. He said nothing, only turned toward the door and exited the room.

The moment he was gone, Clarisse turned her head and whispered to the wall, "Well, what did you think?"

A concealed door in the wall opened and a young girl stepped from the shadows. "He's strong. A very skilled killer."

"That's *not* what I was talking about, my dear." Clarisse sighed. "Don't they teach you Vodacce girls *anything* about men? He was absolutely beautiful! A rugged beauty... those eyes... those hands!"

Lucia stepped toward the window, watching him walk down to the street. "If my lady says so."

"In fact, I do say so." She rose from the chair, her dress swishing about her slender form. "I want you to follow him. Find out where he goes." She put a small purse in Lucia's hand. "I want to know who he meets, what he eats and where he spends his money." Clarisse's gaze fell down on her. "Do not fail me, Lucia."

"I never do, Madame." She knelt quickly, then hurried from the room, leaving the Montaigne diplomat to swoon alone.

She rushed out after the Swordsman. She did not need to keep her distance; the man had never seen her before. Besides, a Swordsman would never notice a black-clad serving girl out on a shopping trip for her mistress.

Lucia followed him into the town and kept pace with him through the bustling streets for nearly an hour. He wandered through the market, buying an apple at a street booth, a pastry at the baker's, then a steaming corn cob from a farmer's cart. He waved at friends, pinched a few ladies... then slipped into a part of the city that no distinguished woman would ever enter: the red lantern district.

Lucia never missed a step.

She walked by the jennys in their scandalously sleeveless dresses and side-stepped the dark alleys that smelled of murder. She walked briskly past the tavern houses and kept her gaze low when the men with dark eyes and moist hands watched her pass.

When she passed one particularly nasty corner, a man stepped out before her. "Hey, Señorita," he said in an accent so thick she could barely make out the words. "What are you doing in such a place?"

"If you would, sir, please stand aside."

He shrugged and Lucia heard another man step behind her.

She gestured forward. "I have business with that man over there."

The brute grinned, and she noticed he was missing more than a few teeth. "I think you have business with me."

Lucia's gaze fixed on his eyes and when she spoke again her voice was different. "I am going to say something to you, and I want you to listen very carefully."

The brute, now having a little fun, leaned in to listen. She spoke the word once and his eyes flashed. His head popped up and he looked behind her. Before anything else could happen, a knife was in his hand and he called the man behind her something that no woman of proper breeding should ever hear.

Lucia stepped aside and the two men plunged into the dark corridor without another word. She didn't pause to consider the stinging pain that she knew would eventually leave a long, thin dark welt on her side. Twisting a man's fate did have a price, after all, but the pain was better than what those two had in mind.

She left them behind, still following the Swordsman, still wondering why her lady considered him so fascinating. She found him frightfully commonplace.



This small treatise is by no means complete, but it does give you a brief look at Théah's history, from the founding of its first great Empire to the current year. "AUC" and "AV" are abbreviations for Théan phrases meaning "The Year of the Founding of the First City" and "The Year of Truth", respectively. AUC dates are before the appearance of the First Prophet (the founder of the Vaticine Church) and AV dates are those after.

Rise of the Old Republic (AUC 1 – AUC 340)

Théan recorded history originally dated from the founding of the First City, called Numa, in the lands now known as Vodacce. In the Early Age, a republic rose from Numa which grew to encompass most of Théah. For centuries, the republic thrived, creating a golden age of heroes, philosophy and science that would inspire Théan scholars for the rest of time. Ruled by a Senate elected from noble families, the Old Republic also gave Théah its first formal religion, a pantheistic faith inspired by the visible planets.

Republic's Fall, Empire's Rise (700 AUC – 724 AUC)

But the Republic grew old and corrupt and eventually it was reborn as an Empire. Imperator Gaius Philippus Macer, nephew of a popular Senator, took control through a military coup. In an attempt to wrest power back from him, the Senators used knowledge gained from Syrneth artifacts to become the world's first sorcerers. The power base shifted once again and the Imperator became nothing more than a

puppet ruler. The Empire expanded its influence and the Senators claimed the fertile border lands.

The First Prophet (1 AV – 200 AV)

The beginning of the "modern age" (*Anno Veritas*) began with the appearance of the First Prophet. Fifty years after the Senators took control of the Empire, a stranger appeared in the Senate. He claimed to be the prophet of a god called "Theus" and spoke against those who had taken up sorcery, claiming it was an abomination in the eyes of the Creator. He asserted that mankind's highest virtues were his intelligence and his free will, two gifts that no other creature in Creation had. It was humanity's *duty* to use these tools and to encourage and educate others in their use.

The Prophet had gained a cult following in the Empire before his appearance on the Senate floor and the Senators recognized him as a threat to their authority. Almost as soon as he had left the chambers, they declared him a criminal and a traitor. As the Book of the Prophets records, the night before his arrest warrant was signed, the Prophet turned himself in to the authorities for punishment. Before he was put to death, however, he predicted that three Prophets would follow him, each with his own message and duty.

Unfortunately for the Senators, the cult did not die with the Prophet, but rather grew in strength and numbers as the years went by. Two centuries later, in a political maneuver that would change the world forever, the Imperator declared the faith the Prophet taught to be the only true faith, making his teachings the official Church of the Empire. He declared that anyone who joined the Church would be a full citizen of the Empire. The Imperator's action stole power from the Senators and they fled from the Empire's core to border states, far from the Church of the Prophet.



East and West Empires (100 AV – 300 AV)

Over the next two hundred years, the Empire grew too large to manage and split into two distinct political entities: the Eastern Empire and the Western Empire. The two Empires suffered from barbarian attacks, political infighting and border skirmishes. Soon enough, the whole structure fell, throwing Théah into its "dark age." The descendants of the exiled Senators had become local rulers in the outlying territories, and they fought against each other in an effort to gain more power. Political boundaries blurred and petty conflict spread to every corner of the continent.

The Second Prophet (305 AV – 306 AV)

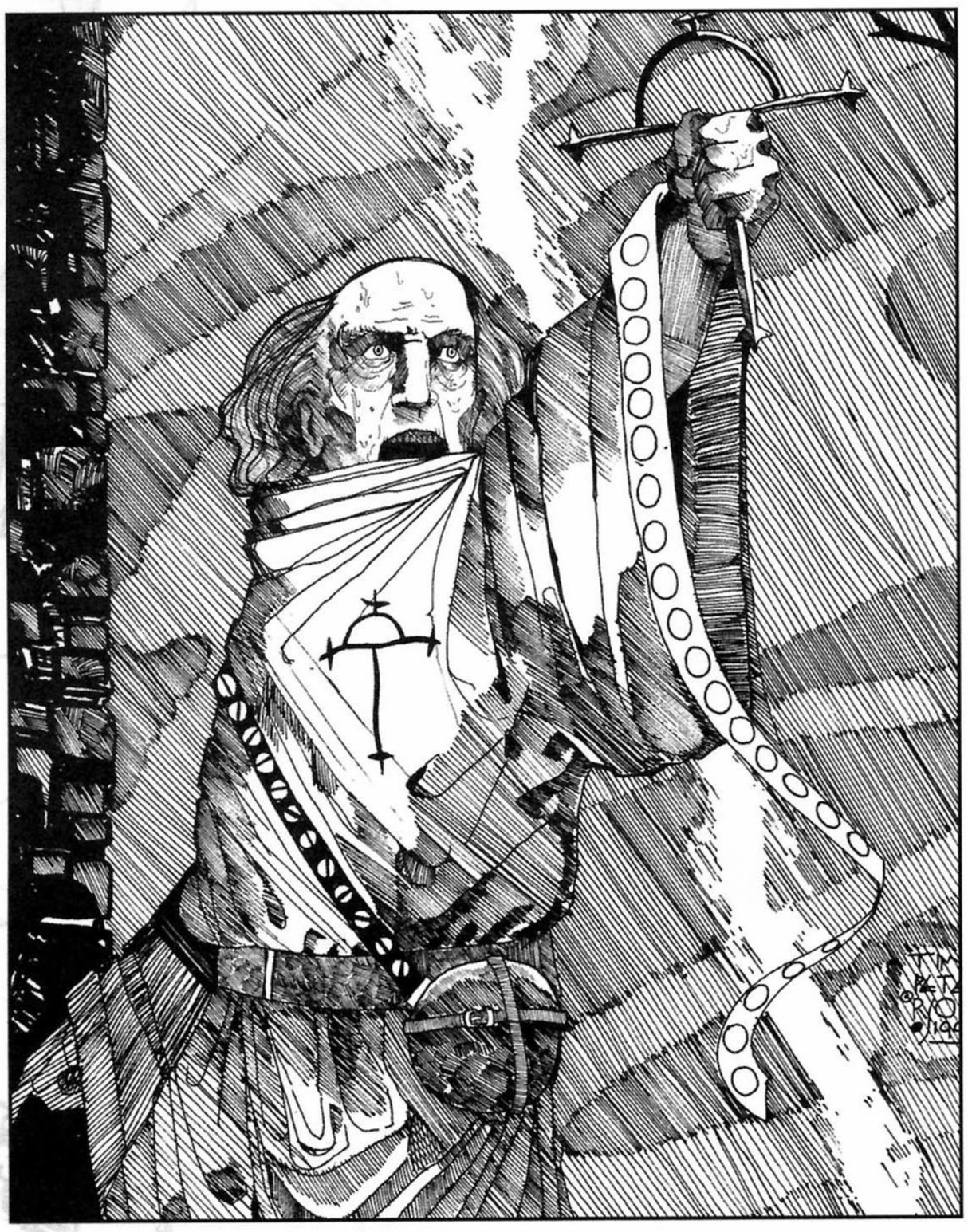
The Second Prophet, foretold by the First, arrived from the East, which was now called the Empire of the Crescent Moon. Like his predecessor, he spoke against sorcery, but instead of using words of peace, he used words of

departure. He said that society had become too corrupt and the faithful needed to leave it behind them. He gathered a massive flock and moved them into the Eastern Empire on a great pilgrimage, leaving a small band of followers behind to spread his message.

Unfortunately, he and many of his followers were killed within the borders of the Crescent Empire, causing a series of crusades against the murderers of Theus' Prophet. The crusades lasted for years and continued across the Crescent borders. For a while, Théans held a large portion of Crescent territory, but were eventually thrown out by the combined might of the Empire's armies.

Imperator Corantine (312 AV – 376 AV)

After the Crusades, many kings sought to reunite Théah under a new Empire. The greatest of these men, Corantine, conquered most of western Théah, uniting hundreds of tiny kingdoms under his crown. Corantine's realm was the largest since the fall of the Old Empire. In 312 AV, he declared that the faith of the Prophets would be his Empire's official church, but there were so many Prophet cults that one faith could not be declared. Corantine ordered a single Credo be determined, thus creating the Vaticine Church. The home of the Church was to be the site where the First Prophet spoke – Numa – and a Hierophant was chosen to serve at its head. A council of Cardinals, representing every part of Corantine's kingdom, would elect the Hierophant who would then serve for life. The unprecedented move gave the Church great power, for even the Emperor could not dictate spiritual matters without their permission.



Corantine's empire was great, but it did not last long after his death. The Emperor divided the land among his three sons, none of whom possessed the political acumen of their father. Once more, everything fell apart, the world was thrown into chaos, and the only voice of authority for nearly three centuries was the Vaticine Church.

Imperator Carleman (600 AV)

In the seventh century, another conqueror arose and united almost all of Théah under a single crown. His name was Carleman, and his kingdom grew to stretch across the lands that would later become Montaigne, Eisen and Vodacce. He was declared the High Imperator of Théah by the Vaticine Church, which had gained incredible political power by that time. It had also become the stronghold of science and learning; almost all progress was due to the research and experimentation of Church scholars.

Again, Carleman's kingdom did not long outlast his death. However, the rough political boundaries he set within his realm grew in importance, planting the seeds of Théah's nations. For the first time, Montaigne, Eisen, and Vodacce thought of themselves as single states, not just a collection of tiny baronies bound by a common language.

For the next three hundred years, the Dark Ages continued. Bands of fierce raiders from the Vesten Isles preyed upon coastal communities, sending fear up and

down the continent. A terrible disease called the "White Plague" arose in the tenth century, spread by rats and ultimately destroying nearly a third of its population. But through these nightmares, Théans persevered, looking to the Church for guidance and living their lives as best they could.

The Third Prophet (1000 AV)

The Third Prophet's arrival in Castille may be the most violent moment in the history of the Vaticine Church. He changed the tone and voice of the Church: he did not speak of peace or separation, but of fire and blood. He arranged a political coup that removed the sorcerous nobility from power, replacing them with families whose blood was pure and uncorrupted. For centuries, Castille and the Crescent Empire had shared amicable trade relations, greatly influencing Castille's culture. The Castillians and Crescents had traded and mingled blood and culture, but the Third Prophet called the Crescents infidels and declared another crusade against the murderers of the Second Prophet.

At first, the crusades went well. The Crescents retreated from their borders into the desert and the Crusaders claimed great swaths of borderland for the Church. But as before, the Crescents counterattacked, driving the crusaders back. A long and bloody struggle ensued, ebbing and flowing for over three hundred years.

Following his declaration of the crusade, the Prophet announced that Castille was the new center of the faith, an assertion that spilled more blood over the Church's altars. A bloody war broke out between the Prophet in Castille and the Hierophant in Vodacce. "The Hierophant War" ended with Castille victorious and the Church's capital city moving west. However, almost all real Vaticine political power remained in Vodacce hands; Vodacce controlled the majority of Cardinals and could still elect the Hierophant.

With his power now based in Castille, the Third Prophet restructured the Church, emphasizing research above all else. "Our need to understand the Enemy," he once said, "is second only to our need to understand Creation." He also created an order of the Church called the Inquisition, answerable only to the Hierophant. The Inquisition's duty was to seek and destroy all those who practiced the dark art of sorcery. The creation of such an order was a direct challenge to the nobility of Théah, putting the Church at odds with almost every nation. Consequently, sorcery was not openly practiced for over five hundred years.

The Invasion of Avalon (1028 AV)

The tiny island of Avalon had long remained out of Théan politics, living under the influence of a strange race called Sidhe. In 1028, however, the King of Montaigne sent an invasion fleet to conquer the island, along with its neighbors Inismore and the Highland Marches. The Sidhe fled Avalon, taking their peculiar form of magic with them and leaving the Montaigne as rulers. Eventually, the invaders assimilated with the local culture, allowing Avalon a quasi-independent status, but fierce enmity remained between the two countries. The occupation stoked the fires of nationalism among both peoples, catalyzing their sense of identity and slowly pushing Théah away from feudalism.

The Rise and Fall of the Crusaders (fl. 1100 AV – 1312 AV)

For centuries, the Church promoted a holy war against the Crescent Empire, pushing its influence further into the East. That came to an end when an order of knights – the Poor Knights of the Prophet – who had participated in the crusade were condemned as heretics. Their trial revealed evidence of unspeakable crimes, crimes blamed on their proximity to the Crescent infidels. The Poor Knights were executed, and the Church declared the Crescent borders closed to all faithful. A single Vodacce prince was permitted to maintain trade with them, but the Crusades themselves died with the Poor Knights. Three hundred years of conflict was finally at an end.

Renaissance (ca. 1300 AV – present)

From the fall of the Old Empire, the land of Vodacce had gradually developed into a consortium of merchant princes. Their proximity to the Crescent Empire, coupled with their devotion to the Vaticine (and its scientific development), allowed art and culture to slowly flourish there. Painters and other artists discovered new forms of expression, while wondrous scientific inventions came from the Vaticine

Universities. Through the Princes' fleets, the renaissance spread across Théah, prompting a revitalization of knowledge and a gradual emergence from the long years of darkness. It also gave the Vodacce unquestioned economic power, which the princes used mainly to compete against each other. Vodacce also become known not only as a beacon of culture, but also as a treacherous land of subtle and deadly political games.

The Objectionist Movement (1517 AV – present)
For centuries, the Church held steady control of Théah's destiny. Like its secular counterparts, it began to decay from within. Church officials took advantage of the power they held, condemning those who objected to their credo. That continued until 1517 when the actions of Mattias Lieber, an Eisen monk, created what has become known as "the Objectionist Movement." He denounced Church authority and declared that only Theus Himself could intercede on behalf of a human soul. Those who had grown disenchanted with the Church's excesses were quick to join the movement, and within the span of a decade the Vaticine Church lost almost a third of its flock. It responded with fire. For decades, Objectionists were burned all across Théah until the early 1600s, when Eisen declared that its borders were safe for "Liebers." Tolerance grew, but tensions between Vaticines and Objectionists remain high to this day.

The War of the Cross (1636 AV – 1666 AV)
Eisen's acceptance of Objectionism would ultimately cost it dearly. Eisen's Imperator was an open-minded and tolerant man, but when he died in 1636, he was replaced by Reifenstahl, a fanatical Vaticine. Tension between the two faiths would soon explode into war.

The new Imperator demanded all Objectionists renounce their faith and affirm their belief in the Credo of the Vaticine Church. It didn't happen. Soon, Eisen Vaticines were fighting Eisen Objectionists in the street, priests called for a holy war against the "infidels," and devout believers on both sides were forming military units to destroy their enemies. Civil war ensued. Nearly every nation in Théah contributed forces to one side or the other, but Eisen bore the brunt of the fighting. The surrounding nations grew rich selling arms and supplies, while suffering none of the devastating damage the battles inflicted. The War of the Cross lasted thirty years and ended more through sheer exhaustion than anything else. Eisen was left bloody and broken, with nearly a third of its population dead and nothing to show for it. The surrounding nations swooped in to divide the spoils.

The war also stole power away from the Vaticine Church, severely damaging its influence. Thirty years of bloodshed was enough to turn the Théans away from proselytizing. More nations declared independence from the Church of the Prophets, and even faithful Vaticines took a tolerant view of Objectionism. For all the damage it caused, the War's lessons were not lost on Théah – cold comfort to the surviving Eisen, however.

Current Events

While the events above form the background of modern Théah, the last century has had a profound effect on current affairs. Listed below is a brief description of Théah's most recent – and sometimes tragic – events.

The Rise of Avalon and the Castillian Armada
The three Kingdoms of Avalon – including Inismore and the Highland Marches – have recently united under the crown of Queen Elaine in 1658. Throwing off all traces of the Montaigne occupation, the High Queen of Avalon has done much to gain power for her tiny kingdom. She declared religious independence from the Vaticine Church and created a new rung in the Avalon social structure: the sailor. All who sail in Avalon's navy are considered the same social rank as gentleman knights. These "gentleman sailors" have plundered from Castillian galleons, Vodacce merchantmen and Montaigne vessels. Elaine publicly condemns their actions, but it is no secret that Avalon's coffers bulge with loot from their actions.

In 1659, the King of Castille decided to make the upstart island nation pay for its insolence. He ordered the construction of a great fleet to sail against Avalon. It would prove to be an exercise in errors. Avalon spies discovered the construction and pirates sabotaged production from the

beginning. The man placed in charge of the armada was completely unfit to command a navy. When the Armada finally set sail, it ran into a storm that sank a third of the ships. Off the coast of Avalon, the Castillians discovered their ships were too big to sail in such shallow waters. The smaller Avalon ships were not. After another third of her number were sunk by Avalon fire, the fleet turned back from Avalon's shores and Queen Elaine claimed a naval victory over the largest and most powerful fleet in Théah, an act that would propel her tiny union onto the world stage.

The Return of the White Plague (1665 AV – 1666 AV)

A few years ago, the White Plague – unseen since the Middle Ages – reared its ugly head once more in Avalon, Castille and parts of Montaigne. Richard Kailean (the scholar most responsible for what little knowledge the Church does have) meticulously observed and cataloged its symptoms and speculated on possible causes. As he was beginning to formulate a plan for fighting the disease, however, it disappeared as quickly as it began. There has been little chance for observation since, but scholars are now waiting with a mixture of anticipation and dread for another opportunity.

The Vendel-Vodacce Merchant War (ca. 1620 AV – present)

The Vestenmannavnjar had long been thought of as bloodthirsty barbarians, but as Théah emerged from the Dark Ages, a new trend developed among its people. The farming caste grew into a merchant caste, developing political skills and displacing the warriors who were away from home for so long. They began using Vesten ships, which could move cargo quickly, to trade with other nations, which increased both their wealth and prestige. Within a few decades they had seized political control of their country, leaving the warriors in disenfranchised bands on the fringes of their country. Now calling themselves "Vendel," they began building a powerful economic empire. By 1600, they had established a league of Guilds to control their assets, which stretched across northern Théah; the league served as the *de facto* rulers of the nation. The War of the Cross only increased their influence, and when Eisen splintered, the Vendel quickly stepped in to fill the vacuum. In the space of a few decades, they had become one of the most powerful nations in the world.

The Vodacce, of course, did not take the threat lying down. As Vendel money – the Guilder – became a common currency and Vendel merchants began appearing in every port, the Vodacce began a quiet trading war against their rivals. They raised prices, closed ports, and used their trade monopoly with the Crescent Empire to drive the Vendel back. The outcome of this conflict is still unclear: as things currently stand, Vendel controls the north and Vodacce controls the south. Very soon, something is going to break.

Montegue's Stand and the Montaigne-Castille War (1666 AV – present)

In 1664, the King of Montaigne broke five hundred years of silence by openly admitting his practice of sorcery. Other Montaigne nobles soon followed his example, sending the Church into an ecclesiastic rage. In 1666, High Inquisitor Verdugo raised an army composed mainly of Castillians to attack the kingdom's capital. The Inquisition demanded the King surrender himself to be tried for heresy. The King refused. Most of his army was diverted in the Montaigne countryside, but he threw what meager forces he had against the Church. They were no match for the Castillians; the Montaignes were decimated and only a handful of soldiers and the King's personal guard were left to face the Vaticines' might.

As the army advanced on the capital, the Montaigne command crumbled, leaving a young corporal named Montegue in charge. He moved the soldiers and musketeers to the palace walls and ordered them to line up before the gate. Then he ordered his two best sharpshooters to take flanking positions and shoot down any enemy officers they could see. As the army approached, the first row of Montaigne started firing, then fell back and reloaded as the second line stepped forward to fire. Meanwhile, the sharpshooters shot at any officer they saw. The Castillian advance broke down with alarming rapidity and Montegue's relentless musket line caught the Church army completely off guard. They retreated; Montegue followed and let no man escape alive.

Since that day, Montegue has been made High General of the Montaigne army and the King has declared himself Emperor. In retaliation for the attack, *l'Empereur* ordered his new General to invade Castille. Currently, the High General's armies are in the western half of that devout nation, increasing the Emperor's holdings and freeing the people from the tyranny of the Vaticine Church.

The Death of the Hierophant

Soon after Montegue's Stand, the Vaticine Hierophant went to Montaigne in an effort to repair relations with *l'Empereur.* During his stay, he suddenly grew ill and died in the space of a few days. The Montaigne claimed he died of the Plague and burned his body to keep the disease from spreading. While suspicious in the extreme, the Church has been unable to act – his death has thrown the Vaticine into chaos.

According to Church tradition, another Hierophant must be unanimously chosen by the high council of cardinals. For two years the council has been unable to come to a unanimous decision, and so for two years there has been no Hierophant at the head of the Church.

The lack of leadership has caused great distress to the flock; more importantly, it has freed the hands of the Inquisition. The organization was answerable only to the Hierophant, and now there is nothing to hold it back. The most important change has been the swift reversal in the Church's attitude towards its scholars.

It began when an Avalon scholar named Jeremy Cook published a paper denouncing alchemy, the backbone of Church metaphysical theory since the time of the Third Prophet. Instead, he proposed a method of observation he called "Empiricism." Cook's paper caused so much controversy among his contemporaries that it attracted the attention of the Inquisition. In a clerical court, he was found guilty of heresy and put to death. Since that day, scholarly research in the Church has come to a near standstill. Secular scholars continue to work, but for the first time in its history the Vaticine Church is no longer the spearhead of science in Théah.



A description of each of Théah's eight known nations follows. More details can be found in the *Game Masters' Guide* and in the forthcoming Nation sourcebooks. Players with Heroes from a particular nation can ask their GM to photocopy the appropriate material from the *GM's Guide.* (The GM has the final say as to how much material the players can see.)

Avalon

Far north and west of mainland Théah lie the Glamour Isles, the United Kingdoms of Avalon. Three crowns linked by a single destiny and duty, Avalon is a place of mystery and fantastic reality. Visitors to the isles always remember how the dew makes the grass shine like emeralds, how the cotton-white clouds stretch across the cobalt-blue sky and how the forests are tall, dark and menacing.

As its visitors suggest, Avalon could very well be a living færie tale. If you ask the Avalons themselves, they smile, wink and remind you not to walk alone at night – not without an iron cross around your neck or a four-leaf clover in your pocket.

Lay of the Land

"If it isn't raining in Avalon, wait a spell. It'll start."

What Théans colloquially refer to as "Avalon" is actually three island kingdoms: Avalon, Inismore and the Highland Marches. Each island has its own peculiarities, but in general, they are nearly identical. Avalon itself is not

particularly mountainous, but has its share of rolling hills, glens, moors and marshes. The islands have more than their share of rainfall and the intense rain and warm weather make for good crops. Morning and evening in Avalon are always covered with a thick fog that seems to linger all through the night, a fog that even the chilly ocean winds never blow away.

Politics

To speak of Avalon is to speak of her Queen; the two are synonymous. When Elaine took the throne, an offer of marriage came from Castille, but she declined. "I cannot marry Castille," she said. "I am already married to Avalon."



Because of an agreement made four hundred years ago, a Parliament of Lords "assists" the Queen in matters of policy making. The Queen may make no new law without their consent, and they must gain her acquiescence if they wish to do the same. It is a tricky balance, but so far, Avalon's young Queen has proven quite skilled at making deals with Parliament.

Inismore is also a monarchy, but their King is very different. Hundreds of songs have chronicled the adventures and misadventures of "Mad Jack O'Bannon", the Inish king. O'Bannon is reputed to be over a thousand years old, and anyone who looks into his ancient eyes will not dispute that claim. A "Mad King O'Bannon" has appeared numerous times in Inismore's history, always appearing exactly as he did before and always disappearing as he did before. But the O'Bannon always makes one promise before he leaves: "I'll be right back." Then, he walks away with his traveling sack and his twenty-league striders strapped to his feet.

While the Highland Marches may be the least organized of the Avalon Kingdoms, no one can dispute its unity. The Highland Clans have elected one of their own – James MacDuff – to represent them as their High King. MacDuff has brought much to the Marches, despite his opponents' claims he has become Elaine's court fool. James' support of the young Queen gave her the legitimacy she needed to hold the throne, and because of that confirmation, Avalon has given much back to the Marches.

The People

While separated by seashores and prejudice, Avalon's people are much closer than they would like to admit. Their trappings are different, but the deep truths that run through Avalon blood cannot be denied.

Avalon's people are a hearty lot, made so by the rough life they have chosen. While her countryside is dotted with farms, her main occupation is fishing. So many fishing villages populate her shores that it is no wonder



her people call the waters "Mother Ocean." Water plays an important role in Avalon's culture and spirituality, a role that was subdued by the Vaticine Church for nearly five hundred years. Long before the coming of the Church, the Avalons' native faith taught a deep reverence for her waters. According to legend, the country's streams, swamps and rivers are all guarded by a figure known as the Lady of the Lake. It was taught that the Avalons and the Lady made a sacred vow long ago, a vow that was symbolized by a cup called "the graal." The graal represented this promise the Avalons made to the Lady, and it was the duty of Avalon's true king to keep its water pure. A kind of spell fell over Avalon's shores. It was called "the Great Enchantment", and as long as the promise was maintained, Avalon would be a land of magic and wonder.

Unfortunately (the folk tales say), that promise was broken, and soon after Montaigne invaded and seized Avalon. When Elaine came forth from the mists and claimed to be the descendant of the king who first held the graal, bearing the graal in her hands as proof of her legitimacy, Avalon's Enchantment returned.

Elaine has done much to return Avalon to its previous glory. She reinstated the ancient order of knights that once protected the High King. As she sits in council, surrounded by her knights, she hears the pleas of the people and distributes justice. Because of the empty coffers left to her by her decadent Montaigne predecessors, she has had to rely on mercenary fleets and militias to protect her shores. But the privateers have proven to be a great asset, filling those empty coffers with Castillian and Montaigne riches.

Inismore and the Marches have fared equally well from their alliance with Avalon. Both have reclaimed their lands and no longer live in fear of occupation. However, there are nationalistic voices in both Kings' councils calling for independence, even if it means spilling blood. MacDuff usually dismisses such cries, reminding them how easy it would be for Montaigne to return

and crush them. The O'Bannon just cuts off their heads or beats them until they apologize, depending on the weather. However, rumors persist that the mad Inish king is preparing for some kind of rebellion against Elaine, while rumors of an entirely different sort rumble about MacDuff's relationship with the young and beautiful Queen.

Common Male Names: Aidan, Alan, Bran, Dwyer, Edward, Finn, Harold, Jerome, Keith, Liam, Luke, Malcolm, Michael, Morgan, Ossian, Quinn, Richard, Shawn, Thomas, Walter

Common Female Names: Aileen, Alison, Bridgit, Caroline, Denise, Elaine, Grace, Helen, Jane, Karen, Leila, Maeve, Mary, Pamela, Sabbina, Sybil, Teresa, Veronica

The Sidhe ("shee")

"As terrible and blameless as a thunderstorm."
– Lady Katerine, describing the Queen of the Sidhe

The Lady of the Lake is only one of "the Sidhe", an ancient and powerful race that has only recently returned to Avalon's shores. The Sidhe seem unique to Avalon (although one Vendel archæologist has suggested a connection between them and the otherworldly Ussuran matriarch "Matushka"), and the Avalons themselves claim that they are the oldest creatures in the world. While Montaigne "færie tales" have painted them as naughty sprites dancing around toadstool circles, Avalons know better.

There are two distinct types of sidhe (defined by Lady Katerine's famous *Book of the Goodly Folke*): the seelie and unseelie. While the seelie are generally regarded as the less malevolent of the two, it is only because the unseelie are so wicked. All Avalons know the sidhe – seelie and unseelie – are not to be trifled with. When speaking of them, they call the sidhe "the goodly folke" for fear of calling them anything else. Almost all of Avalon's etiquette and culture come from their superstitions of the sidhe. Avalons never steal horses (fearing that it may be a shape-shifted pooka), never walk off the path that leads through the woods (which are always dark and haunted) and always keep a penny in their left shoe (to protect themselves from seelie mischief or unseelie cruelty).

Castille

Of all of Théah's nations, Castille is the most eclectic. Founded by one of the oldest of the Old Empire's families, it has also shared an alliance with the Crescent Empire, is one of only two nations not ruled by sorcerous blood, and is the current home of the Vaticine Church. However, despite hundreds of years of invasions – military and otherwise – the heart of Castille has never changed. It was, is and always will be a nation devoted to its people.

Lay of the Land

Castille is located on the southwest tip of Théah, just south of Montaigne. Geographically, the nation is situated on prime real estate. It has rich mines, fertile soil and well-stocked oceans; Castille's people have never wanted for food or supplies. Its winters are short and tepid and its summers are long and temperate. Castille's previous agricultural efforts hampered the productivity of its farmlands, but the Church's knowledge has changed all of that. In fact, the Church's organizational efforts have turned Castille into an economic powerhouse.

Politics

The Sandoval family sits on the throne of Castille, while its countrysides are divided into counties called *rancheros*. A family *don* governs the rancheros for the King, collecting taxes and administering justice. Due to Church sanctioning, the rancheros are distributed equally, and the dons are each responsible for housing and maintaining an equal portion of the King's army. The King of Castille recently passed away, leaving his fourteen-year-old son on the throne. Dubbed "Good King Sandoval" by one of the more famous court poets, the boy has held the country together for two years – far longer than his detractors predicted.

While the King of Castille is nominally the supreme ruler of his Kingdom, it is no secret that his council of Church



advisors powerfully influences his decisions. Others have plotted treason against the Good King, but three assassination attempts have failed, due largely in part to the efforts of the mysterious figure known only as *El Vago*. The masked Vagabond has proven to be more than a match for those who plot against the crown of Castille, although his efforts may yet be in vain.

Castille's biggest problem these days comes from its northern neighbor. After having forced the Church from Montaigne's borders, General Montegue continued on into Castille itself. Nearly a quarter of the country has been claimed as spoils of war by the invading Montaigne army. Montegue's forces ripped through Castille's defenses, capturing important strategic and trade positions. However, since he split his army to assault Ussura (a tactical move the Castillians have still not been able to decipher), Montaigne has lost its momentum and the two forces are locked in a stand-off.

The People

While it is easy to describe Castillians as "cold" or "distant", it is easy to see why they distrust foreigners of any sort. Castille has been invaded many times in her history and her occupations have always been long and bloody. Consolidating Castillian power with the Vaticine Church ensured that foreigners would never again hold her, which has made it easier for Castillians to accept the teachings of the Prophet. Unfortunately, the recent Montaigne invasion has caused the people to begin to doubt the Church's veracity and power.

Castillians are practical. They have seen the benefits of accepting the Church into their nation's culture. Castille is the only nation to have aqueducts in every major city. They have free public education. Their water is clean and their crops are more productive than ever. Even the simplest village in

Castille has a church stocked with medical supplies and a small library along with a scholar trained in science and medicine. Generally speaking, Castillians are the best educated people in Théah.

But they are also a passionate people. They love music and dancing and have a profound devotion to *la familia*: the family. *La familia* is centered around the mother who brought the children into the world; the Castillian veneration for the maternal figure is great. Traditional Castillian dances are passionate — some say lascivious — and their music is quick and heartfelt. The Church's influence on Castillian music has produced what some call "a passion for precision", a sound that the Castillian guitar encapsulates perfectly.

The recent Montaigne invasion is tearing Castille apart. Her economy is crumbling, her nobility is dispossessed and other nations begin to hover like vultures at her borders. Good King Sandoval is trying to hold his kingdom together, but it's only a matter of time before the front lines waver and the rest of Théah rushes in to share the kill.

Common Male Names: Alonso, Andrés, Baltasar, Benito, Carlos, Diego, Domingo, Esteban, Felipe, Gaspar, Hector, Jaime, Juan, Lucas, Miguel, Rodrigo, Sancho, Sebastian, Tomás

Common Female Names: Andrea, Angela, Beatriz, Catalina, Clara, Constanza, Cristina, Floriana, Francisca, Inés, Isabel, Juliana, Lucia, Luisa, María, Quiteria, Sancha, Susanna, Ursula, Violante



Eisen

The people of Eisen have always been proud. They are proud of the fact that they have no magic except that which they make with their own sweat and blood. They are proud that their ancestors carved the Vaticine Church's empire for the Hierophant, and that their Empire lasted for hundreds of years. They are proud that their past is a series of one valorous deed after another. With the state their country is in today, they might be forgiven for trying to live in the past.

Lay of the Land

Located in central Théah, Eisen has long been of critical importance in Théan wars and politics. Troops often needed permission to move through her borders, and trade agreements often hinged on allowing ships to pass along the river to their south. After the War of the Cross, however, Eisen was devastated. Fields were reduced to mud, garrisons could no longer be paid, and merchant ships could thumb their noses at any Eisen attempt to collect tolls.

Eisen's sun has risen and set once more. Now Eisen is a lonely land of mud and snow, and travelers are well advised to hire an armed guard.

Politics

Eisen has collapsed into seven *königreiches*, or "kingdoms." Each is ruled by an *Eisenfürst*, or "Iron Prince." They each control a supply of *dracheneisen*, a metal that is stronger than steel and twice as light. This metal is traditionally used to create superior armor and weaponry for the Eisen nobility; because of this edge in a fight, they maintain their hold on Eisen.

Each Iron Prince rules his kingdom differently. Some, like Fauner Pösen, maintain strict control of all trade and troops. Others, like Reinhard von Wische, allow their subordinates to run the kingdom. The most extreme example of this hands-off attitude is Nicklaus Trägue, who collects no taxes or tariffs, and only occasionally becomes involved in politics.

The People

Although Eisen lies in ruin, her people are far from beaten. While some have succumbed to the horrors of war, those that remain are stronger for the cruelties they have endured. The Eisen have more collective combat experience than any other nation. The armies of most of Théah's nations rely on an Eisen advisor for tactics and strategy.

Since they have nothing else left to sell, the Eisen have begun to sell war. Their military academies are the best in Théah, and simply being born an Eisen is often a good enough reason to lead an army. Eisen mercenaries often find work as soldiers, bodyguards, or marines defending ships against pirates. Many loyal sons have left their homeland to fight abroad, sending their wages home to their families.

One thing that echoes throughout the national character of Eisen is stubbornness. The Eisen never give up. They may lie low for a while while they lick their wounds, but they always return in the end, ready to fight once again.

Common Male Names: Adrian, Bernhard, Dirk, Erich, Gustav, Hans, Josef, Kurt, Lorenz, Max, Oliver, Philip, Reinhard, Rolf, Stefan, Volker, Wenzel, Willi, Xavier

Common Female Names: Barbara, Connie, Cornelia, Diana, Dora, Elsa, Eva, Gabrielle, Ingrid, Jessica, Kirstin, Lena, Mona, Nina, Ruth, Sigrid, Sylvia, Tina

Montaigne

One man's decadence is another's routine. Montaigne shines like a brilliant sapphire from her perch on the western coast of Théah. She is the center of culture and fashion and home to the most renowned artists and fantastic architecture known to mankind.

Lay of the Land

Upper Montaigne rests above The River while Lower Montaigne, territory recently captured from Castille, lies to the south. The land itself is rich, flat farmland, acres of green as far as the eye can see. Small farms are common; no land in Montaigne goes to waste. If it isn't a pleasure garden or a building site, it's being used for agriculture. The River running past her borders provides natural irrigation.

Montaigne consists of vast cities, large towns, and small farms. A man could walk for days and see nothing besides farmers' hovels. But when he does come upon a city, he finds a sprawling affair full of grand manors and dizzying wealth. These cities are metropolitan oases, almost entirely separate from the lands surrounding them.

Where the peasantry of Montaigne struggle daily to please their landlords and feed themselves, the upper classes in the cities have no word for "moderation."

Politics

All government and social politics revolve around Léon Alexandre, *l'Empereur* of Montaigne. The Sun King, as some Montaigne poets have called him, is the center of activity. Ranks of nobles orbit around him, most notably the dukes who control the various provinces of Montaigne. He parcels the country into smaller sections of land, each maintained by a single duke; this duke may have any number of marquis who attend to the actual day-to-day affairs of the lands. Each duke makes regular reports to Léon on the state of his lands. Invariably, these reports assure him that everything is perfectly fine. Should any wrinkles in the great plan occur, they are expected to be worked out long before they ever reach *l'Empereur.*

The People

The peasants of Montaigne are simple people. They have a minimal education, produce large families and live quietly respectable lives. Young men of at least 15 years are conscripted into the Montaigne military and sent to lower Montaigne to fight on the border in the present war with Castille. Many come back broken or not at all. This leaves men who are too old to fight (40 and above), and their wives and daughters, to tend to the farmlands.

It used to be the custom of Montaigne to hold all weddings in the springtime, but more recently the war with Castille has given rise to a new tradition. In the winter, when the fighting is at its slowest, many young men are granted leave, married quickly to their old sweethearts, and encouraged to procreate as rapidly as possible. After all, Montaigne always needs more soldiers and farmers.

By contrast, the practice among most nobles is to have no more than two or three children. Their reasons are as practical as those of their lower-born neighbors. In Montaigne, the eldest offspring inherits the land, property and wealth. Younger siblings are tolerated at the elder's discretion. Although the heir may choose to employ a brother or sister as marquis, in most cases they are



sent out to fend for themselves. This unleashes a herd of hangers-on onto the various Montaigne courts, all looking for a place to stay and some means of support.

Although it is prudent to have more than one heir (it is, after all, impossible to predict the turns of fate), to have more than three is simply bad manners. This does not apply to the Empereur and his nine daughters, of course.

Where Montaigne peasantry is hospitable and direct, her nobles have made an art out of inference. In the courts of Montaigne, no one ever says exactly what he means. Instead they fall back on a wealth of metaphors and precedents, often using clever quotes rather than their own words. This kind of conversation can be dizzying to an outsider, and many diplomats from other nations serve their posts under protest, despite the fine food and accommodations of the Montaigne court. The pressure to be circuitously inoffensive is overwhelming.

The Montaigne prefer to make a verbal game out of the uncomfortable. The height of rudeness is to force someone into a direct response, especially when dealing with controversial subjects. Their banter frequently becomes playfully painful as they make light of a serious subject so that no one need address it directly. Individuals witty enough to excel at these delicate games are held in high esteem.

Another favorite game among the Montaigne is intrigue, along with its close cousin scandal. If nothing interesting has happened all season, someone will surely invent it. Guests from other nations have observed a playful viciousness in the mannerisms of the Montaigne.

Their quick conversation and practiced indirectness make them ideal spies. Even if someone suspects them of double talk, it's written off as Montaigne custom. What's more, since the Sun King's country sets the standard for clothing, custom and art, Montaigne courtiers are welcomed almost anywhere, allowing them easy access to other courts and sensitive information.

Since the Montaigne army pushed the Vaticine church out of their country the Montaigne nobility has reveled in its newfound freedom. By contrast, the peasants live in apprehension regarding their new status living in a godless country.

Common Male Names: Ambrose, Blaise, Cédric, Daniel, Denis, Eugene, Félix, Gerárd, Guy, Henri, Jacques, Jules, Luc, Marc, Martin, Pierre, Rémy, Sébastien, Victor, Zacherie

Common Female Names: Allette, Andrée, Arielle, Blanche, Camille, Cosette, Dominique, Estelle, Francine, Georgette, Henriette, Irene, Julie, Lydia, Nicole, Phebe, Roseline, Sylvia, Vivienne

Ussura

"In Ussura you share the warmth or die from the cold."

Late at night when the wind wails down from the mountains and rushes through the thick trees, families gather around the fireplace and tell stories of "Matushka" (Grandmother Winter). She stalks the forest with a broom in her hand, and if she finds young children wandering out of their homes, she sweeps them back with a quick "Tisk, tisk." If they don't treat her with the proper respect, she pops them in her black pot and turns them into stew.

Ussura is not a kind land. It is not a gentle land. But its people have kind, gentle and humble hearts, made so by the harsh lessons they've learned from Matushka.

Lay of the Land

Ussura is cold. It is covered in snow and ice nearly year round. When it isn't covered in snow, it's covered in mud. One visiting scholar wrote, "The Ussurans do not live in the present, but five hundred years in the past." There are no working roads, dams, or any other structure resembling modern architecture – or even antiquated architecture for that matter. Even their huts and hovels are primitive compared to the shacks of Théah's more fortunate peasantry.

But if you talk to the Ussurans, they don't feel like they're living in a wasteland. In fact, they look well fed. If you look closely enough, Ussura isn't the wasteland it first appears to be. The people produce crops in land that should not support them, have surprising luck with their traps and haul

up catches big enough to make any Avalon fisherman turn green with envy. It is as if Ussura looks after her own, as if she really is the Grandmother they speak of.

Politics

Ussura's Gaius is technically the ruler of Ussura, but since he comes from the peasant class (the *muzhiks*), he is guided by his council, the *Knias Douma.* The council is made up of Ussura's merchant class, the *boyars.* Traditionally, the boyars control Ussura's political efforts while the Gaius remained a figurehead.

We said "traditionally." That isn't the case in modern Ussura. The current Gaius, Ilya Sladivgorod Nikolovich, is not a pleasant man. In fact, the boyars have come to call him "Ilya Grozny", or "Ilya the Terrible." Despite their dislike, Ilya is beloved by the people. He is not, like his predecessors, a Gaius on strings. The last boyar who crossed him was fed to his own dogs while his family watched. Ilya is his own man, forging his own destiny and making decisions based on the welfare of the people, not the boyars' pouches.

The People

Ussurans are a short, broad people, and the commoners typically possess dark hair and eyes. Only the nobility – specifically those chosen by Grandmother Winter – bear the emerald green eyes of the Gift. The men usually grow long beards and wear their hair long. The women pull their hair back, with the married women covering their hair with a cloth wrap known as a *babushka.*

How do the Ussurans survive so well in a snow-covered land? "The question is a good one, but the answer is better," said a famous Ussuran traveler. "The land cares for us, and we care for the land."

The statement is more true than the rest of Théah may imagine. In Ussura, the land itself is alive, rippling through the seasons with joy and fertility and fighting alongside its people in time of war. The ancient spirit which resides in Ussura's high mountains and snow-covered lakes is a beneficial one, and it respects honesty and integrity as much





as hard work. No man who pulls his weight is allowed to starve. For as long as the Knias Council stands, the land will stand with it.

This is not to imply that trees bring fruit on command or that an Ussuran farmer's life is less difficult than farmers in any land. Rather, it shows that the land listens to her people – and rewards them for good deeds, as well as punishing them for bad. If an Ussuran farmer works hard throughout the year, and strives to place his duties before his own selfish desires, he will be rewarded. No matter how harsh the year, his crops will grow and his family will be fed.

The Ussuran people (even the boyars) live in close connection with nature, often choose spending winters in the high mountains surrounded by wilderness. Their love of the land is shown in their powerful magic: Grandmother Winter chooses to enfold them in the shapes of animals, allowing them to know the world through the eyes of a beast.

No invasion of Ussura has ever made it farther than the first river. Barbarian hordes from Cathay died of plague and starvation. Enterprising warriors of Eisen often speak harshly of General Johann von der Velde, who led them in an attack on Ussura's southernmost province in the year 523. The army was found after the snows melted – buried by an ice storm that began in the middle of summer.

The Ussurans address the mighty soul that inhabits the land around them as "Matushka." She is said to appear as an ancient, matronly woman with iron teeth and nails. She brooks no impertinence, but generously rewards those who treat her with respect. Children are warned to be polite if they encounter her, for she devours rude little boys and girls. The Ussurans feel very strongly that Matushka serves as a guide to proper behavior, and visitors who don't understand this aspect of

their religion often find themselves utterly confused by some of the Ussuran customs.

Standing beside Matushka in Ussuran faith is the First Prophet. The Ussuran Orthodox Church teaches the lessons the First Prophet taught, but ignores the second and third Prophet. "If the First one got it right," an Ussuran might say, "why do you need another one?"

Practical, honest and forthright statements such as this are the bread and butter of Ussuran philosophy. "If it works, why meddle with it?" could be their national slogan.

Common Male Names: Aleksei, Alexandr, Boris, Busla, Dmitri, Erema, Fyodor, Georgi, Ignati, Ilya, Kirbetei, Mikhail, Nikita, Pyotyr, Sergei, Staver, Timofey, Vasily, Vladimir, Vyslav

Common Female Names: Afaila, Anna, Bogna, Chenka, Coika, Darya, Elina, Era, Galina, Godava, Irina, Katerina, Marusia, Marya, Nana, Natalya, Natasha, Sofia, Tamara, Zabana

Vendel/Vestenmannavnjar

"Selling your soul used to be a metaphor. The Vendel made it a lifestyle."

Once upon a time, the nation of Vendel was called Vestenmannavnjar *(VES-ten-mahn-NAH-ven-yar)*, its chief island, Oddis, was called "Oddiswulf" and its capital city of Kirk was called "Kirkjubæjarklauster." But times change. Some say the Vendel have thrown away their heritage, but what they have gained may be equally powerful. The power of the Vodacce merchant princes is beginning to fade, and that just might be due to the Vendel League.

Lay of the Land

The nation of Vendel is a chain of nine islands. Its capital, Kirk, is located on the island of Oddis. Flat and arable near the coast, the interior of the land quickly becomes rocky and unscalable. The large, obtrusive central mountain range on Oddis is known as the Hjalmarr Mountains, and it takes up more than half of the land's area. It is impassable, so a single road has been built to connect the cities that circumscribe its girth. The great Hjalmarr Mountains once produced metal for the greatest weapons in Northern Théah – second only to the dragon-steel of Eisen. These days, instead of being hammered into swords, axes and polearms, it is shaped into coins.

The weather is almost always cold in Vendel, although it is tempered by many natural hot springs. Cities have popped up near such springs, and many Vendels claim that their springs hold mystical qualities. Some are said to heal, others to prolong youth and still others to prolong other less mentionable activities.

Politics

While still technically a monarchy, Vendel has not had a King for many years; he vanished after an argument with the League on military matters over a hundred years ago. Since his disappearance, the political structure has all but disintegrated, leaving the League in complete control of matters military and otherwise. It makes, interprets, and enforces all the laws and serves as ambassador to Vendel's foreign neighbors.

The League's structure is divided into nine "Chairs" and 91 "seats." The Chairs are reserved for the Guilds who created the League, save for one held by an Eisen who inherited it from the old Eisen Imperator when he died. The seats are put up for auction every year – for sale to the highest bidder.

Vendel's political stance has been vague at best. It has declared neutrality in nearly every political and military issue in the last century. One issue the Vendel have not remained neutral on, however, has been the Guilder.

Initially, the guilds created a system of paper credit vouchers to be used in lieu of currency. However, the "Guilder", as the vouchers were called, became more useful to merchants than local coined money, and the League saw an opportunity. They issued paper money, based on the funds of the League, and set a standard value guaranteed never to change. It was a risky maneuver, but one that put Théah's economy into Vendel hands.

Now the Guilder is the most popular form of currency in Théah. The only countries that do not recognize it are

Ussura, Castille and Vodacce. In fact, creation of the Guilder has brought the Vendel/Vodacce trade war to a new extreme. If the Castillians or Ussurans officially accept the Guilder's worth within their borders, it could mean the end of the war.

The People

It could be said that Vendel and Vestenmannavnjar are two separate nations. In the lands of the Vendel, the greatest craftsmen and tradesmen in the world have built buildings to house the richest merchants in the world. While Vodacce has always held the best courtesans in all of Théah, Vendel certainly holds the best courtesy. Visitors to the country receive the best food, the best drink, and delicacies of all kinds, imported without regard to expense. "When you are in Vendel," one merchant once said, "you are covered in comfort and excess." Of course the Vestenmannavnjar would correct that sentence, replacing the word "covered" with "smothered."

The people who now call themselves "Vendel" have done everything in their power to make their nation more accessible to foreigners. They have adopted a new culture that does its best to seem as familiar and friendly as a next-door neighbor. They've changed the names of their islands, cities, streets, even their own personal names, to make certain visitors are comfortable. Names such as Eskjö, Örnslköldsvik, Sorøya and Thórshöfn were transformed into less "colorful" titles, a philosophy that has not gone over well with Vestenmannavnjar traditionalists.

The traditionalists have fled the Vendel cities for the mountains and cold wastes. They cling to their old ways, huddling together around bonfires, telling tales of ancient heroes and wars, branding their bodies with runes said to hold the power of creation itself. They look to the glowing lights of the Vendel cities and know that their brethren have not forgotten their heritage, but sold it.

A significant element of Vestenmannavnjar religion involves the importance of names. The Vestenmannavnjar believe that when the body dies, the soul lingers, but only as long as his name is remembered. For that reason, the Vestenmannavnjar have named places after heroes of the past, so they may be remembered and remain. When the Vendel changed the names of the cities and islands, they endangered the memory of those heroes, risking Vestenmannavnjar's relationship with its ancestors in the name of the all-holy Guilder.

It's no wonder that many Vendel cities have recently come under the cloud of Vestenmannavnjar nationalism. Piracy has plagued the Vendel waters for many years now and word has begun to spread. It's rumored that Vodacce gold funds many Vestenmannavnjar pirates, but none can say for sure. Before Elaine took the throne, many Inish could be found on Vestenmannavnjar ships. The Queen of Avalon has made the O'Bannon swear his people will not participate in such violent and antipolitical activity. Of course, O'Bannon's promise and Vodacce assurances have not stopped the Vestenmannavnjar raids. In fact, in recent years, they have increased dramatically, driving away Vendel's visiting merchants and causing the League to consider more violent solutions to their problems.

Common Male Names: Alfgeir, Bragi, Brøn, Eldgrim, Gellir, Hägin, Hallbjørn, Hrafn, Jön, Ketil, Magnus, Olväld, Reinn, Serk, Sigurd, Solmünd, Thørfinn, Thrand, Ulf, Velëif

Common Female Names: Asgerd, Asny, Bera, Dalla, Grøa, Gudrid, Hrafnhild, Ingibjørg, Jofrid, Kadlin, Ljüfa, Osk, Rannvëig, Sæun, Sigrid, Thørhild, Ulfeid, Vigdis, Yngvild, Yr

Vodacce

"If asked to describe Vodacce with a single word, I would respond: 'Treacherous.'"
– Admiral Enrique Orduño

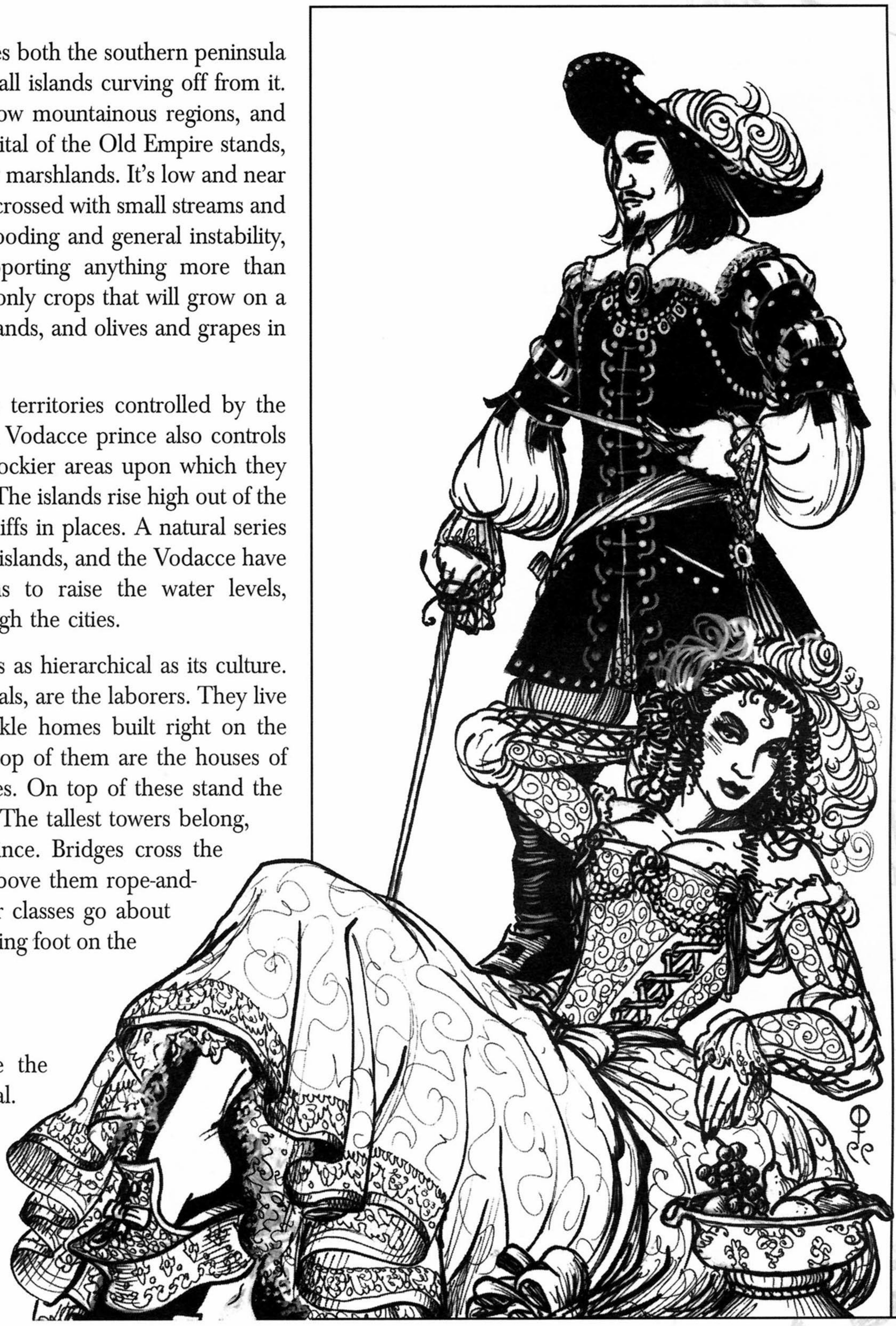
Always look over both shoulders. Never meet a woman's eyes unless you know your blade is better than her husband's. And never, *ever* turn your back on a challenge. You won't get an opportunity to turn around again. Vodacce is a place where every careless word, every second glance, every misstep could be fatal. It is not a safe place for the reckless.

Lay of the Land

The nation of Vodacce includes both the southern peninsula of Théah and the chain of small islands curving off from it. With the exception of some low mountainous regions, and the central area where the capital of the Old Empire stands, mainland Vodacce is primarily marshlands. It's low and near the water, and the land is crisscrossed with small streams and rivers. This means frequent flooding and general instability, making it unsuitable for supporting anything more than small wooden buildings. The only crops that will grow on a large scale are rice in the lowlands, and olives and grapes in the hillier areas.

The mainland is divided into territories controlled by the seven merchant princes. Each Vodacce prince also controls one of the southern islands, rockier areas upon which they have built great stone houses. The islands rise high out of the water, dropping off in steep cliffs in places. A natural series of canal ways run through the islands, and the Vodacce have strategically constructed dams to raise the water levels, allowing for canal travel through the cities.

The architecture of Vodacce is as hierarchical as its culture. At the bottom, next to the canals, are the laborers. They live in crowded, littered, ramshackle homes built right on the canal ways. Built literally on top of them are the houses of the merchant and crafts classes. On top of these stand the grand manors of the nobility. The tallest towers belong, of course, to that island's prince. Bridges cross the canal ways, and in the tiers above them rope-and-wood causeways let the upper classes go about their business without ever setting foot on the ground.



Politics

Mainland Vodacce was once the seat of the Old Empire's capital. Its streets bustled with senators, merchants and soldiers all going about their business. Its buildings echoed with their debates,

and its libraries overflowed with the collected knowledge of a thriving republic.

Now, several hundred years after the fall of that empire, the capital city stands empty and silent. The land on which it stands belongs to the princes who have turned their backs on debate in favor of subterfuge, and left the great city in favor of their own miniature kingdoms scattered along the peninsula's southern islands. Better in Vodacce to be king of your own hill than to share the rule of a mountain with other men. But better still to be king of that mountain.

Each of the seven princes controls a different aspect of the country's economy and a different export. One makes the finest wine in Théah, another boasts the best craftsmen. Vincenzo Caligari holds the greatest collection of Syrneth artifacts on the continent, and Gespucci Bernoulli controls the only open trade route to the Crescent Empire.

The Vodacce princes are all cousins. Traced far enough back, they're descended from brothers, and they fight as viciously as only family can. They don't visit one another's islands except under special sanction. If there is business great enough to require a gathering, they do so on the mainland, in the senate building of the Old Republic.

The People

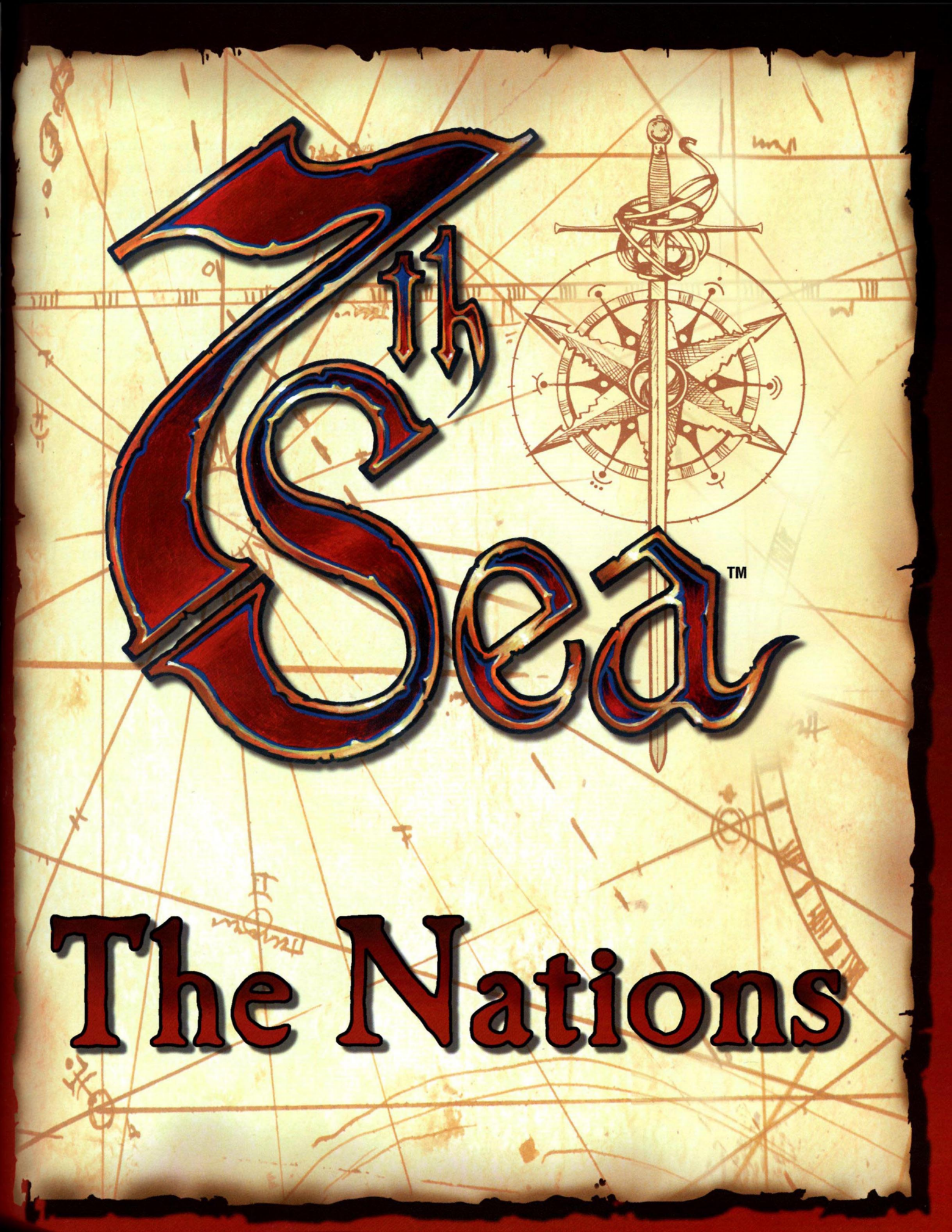
The people of Vodacce are an emotional lot, from the lowest peasant to the highest Prince. Fights are common among the lower classes, and duels among the upper. Still, there is a profound sense of respect for strength, and while a fisherman may brawl the day through with other fishermen, he knows better than to insult his Prince's son. This isn't simply because the nobleman could cut him down in a heartbeat (which he could), but because the fisherman respects his lord and his lord's family, and takes great pride in their strength. Should anyone disagree with his assessment, the fisherman will happily explain why he's wrong... with his fists.

Fighting, like much else in Vodacce, is a man's sport. Although Vodacce men are known for their hot tempers and fast blades, their women are renowned for their cool calculations. In Vodacce, alone among Théan nobility, sorcery is possessed only by the noblewomen. Called Fate Witches in other parts of Théah, the *Sorte Strega* play a dangerous game of cat and mouse with destiny itself. They see and tug the strands of fate, aiding their husbands in their business. Vodacce ships are seldom caught in bad storms, and pirates usually stay clear of them out of fear of running headlong into misfortune.

Romance is one of a Vodacce man's greatest pastimes, although his wife maintains a respectable distance from such things. Marriage among nobles is entirely a matter of politics and economics. Couples seldom meet before the wedding day, although once the engagement has been decided, husbands are still required to woo, from a distance, with poetry and fine gifts. Most of a man's romantic endeavors are directed at professional courtesans. These women exist as a separate society from Vodacce's other women. Where respectable ladies do not read (the Vodacce fear that education would tip the tenuous balance of power between men and witches), courtesans are extremely well-educated both in arts and the sciences. Their dress is as elaborate as the noblewomen's is simple, as bright as theirs is black. Entire quarters of the city are set aside for fetes and revelry, and the noble wives of Vodacce do not tread in these quarters. It is entirely acceptable for men, married and otherwise, to attend these gatherings, however. Still, the courtesans are wary of the potential anger of the *strega*, and wear elaborate decorative masks to hide them from the witches' gaze.

Common Male Names: Alberto, Antonio, Carlo, Ernesto, Felice, Fortunato, Gianni, Giuseppe, Leon, Marco, Modesto, Pietro, Rinaldo, Rolando, Savino, Siro, Timeo, Toni, Umberto, Vito

Common Female Names: Alesio, Angelina, Clarissa, Crescenza, Elena, Fiora, Iolanda, Lea, Luisa, Miranda, Natalia, Paolao, Penelope, Rachele, Rebecca, Regina, Sandra, Valeria, Veronica, Viola


7th Sea™
The Nations



Avalon

Three crowns united under one throne, the united kingdoms of Avalon are also known as the Glamour Isles. Queen Elaine rules over Avalon, James MacDuff II rules the clans of the Highland Marches and John O'Bannon rules Inismore, the emerald isle. Only in the last decade have the Glamour Isles made an impact in world politics. A decade ago, their tiny navy defeated the Castillian armada, the largest naval force in Théah. They have broken away from the Vaticine Church and united their warring island kingdoms for the first time in history. It is an uncertain alliance, however, one that could fall into open warfare at any moment.

The Avalons are a proud people, known best for their relationship to the Sidhe (pronounced *shee*), an ancient race who practice the magic called "Glamour." The Sidhe have given this magic to the Avalons who use it against their enemies. Always off the coast of Avalon is the homeland of the Sidhe, Bryn Bresail, a phantom island whose location shifts as often as the tides.

Avalon has no standing army, but it does have one of the most cunning fleets on the seas. Commanded by Captain Jeremiah Berek, the Sea Dogs have proven to be the terror of the Castillian and Montaigne navies. While Elaine officially denies sanctioning their actions, there is no doubt that Avalon's wealth has grown since they began their forays into piracy. Whenever the beautiful Queen of Avalon is asked about Berek's actions, she only smiles and shakes her head. "If he is ever brought before me," she once said, "I will make certain he gets exactly what he deserves."



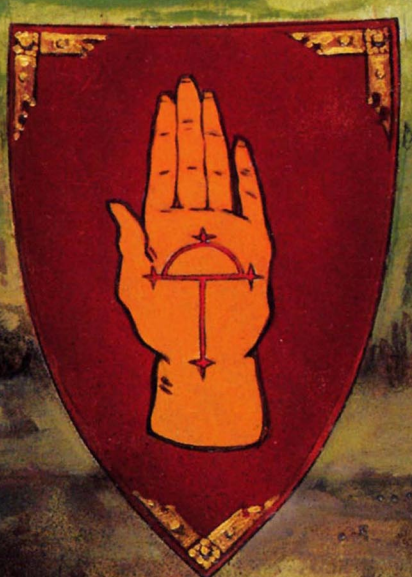
Castille

The Castillians are a passionate people, and their passion can be seen in their music, their food, even their language. Of all the nations of Théah, their culture is the most diverse, having influences from all across the continent, even from the Empire of the Crescent Moon. However, the most important and potent influence in recent years has been the Vaticine Church.

Over four hundred years ago, in a bloody war, the capital of the Church moved from Vodacce to Castille, shifting the balance of power in Théah forever. Because of the Church, Castille has a university in every city, making them the most educated nation in Théah. It also sponsors public health programs, aqueducts and medical centers, providing health and medicine to anyone who is in need. Castille boasts that its nobility are not "tainted" by the dark art of sorcery, an unusual claim in Théah.

However, trouble has befallen Castille. Just before his death, Castille's aging king exiled his eldest son in a fit of rage, leaving a beardless boy to inherit the throne. Needless to say, Good King Sandoval is no match for the cunning and wiles of Théah's more mature and experienced nobility, but he does have one ally: the man known only as "El Vago." This masked figure and his league of confederates have protected the king from treachery on too many occasions to enumerate. However, there are those in Castille who would like to see The Vagabond on the end of a rope, thus putting Good King Sandoval in their ambitious hands.






T. NIELSEN

Eisen

The *drachen*, the most sacred creature of folklore and mythology, best represents the character of the Eisen soul. They are a people of indomitable will and incredible courage. Like the Castillians, they possess no sorcerous heritage, but their *dracheneisen* ("dragon iron") armor is all the magic they need; not even gunfire can penetrate a breastplate made from Eisen steel. This, coupled with the best military schools in Théah, made the Eisen the greatest military force in the world. However, the Iron Princes have seen better times.

They are at present little more than a living testament to the cost of Théah's longest and bloodiest war. The nation of Eisen has fallen into bickering baronies, all squabbling for the most precious piece of war-ravaged mud. Any other nation would surrender to the despair that surrounds them.

But there is no word in the Eisen language for "surrender."

Much of the nobility has left behind their blasted lands in search of foreign fortune, making Eisen's once great military into a mighty mercenary force. The richest of Eisen's river cities — Freiburg — has also turned mercenary, declaring to one and all that "No Questions" shall be asked of any who enter. However, some of Eisen's nobility have not given up the dream of war, and deep within her borders, the *Eisenfürsten* ("Iron Princes") are slowly rebuilding their strength. One day, when Eisen does look for a single leader, one of them will be there to take the mantle.





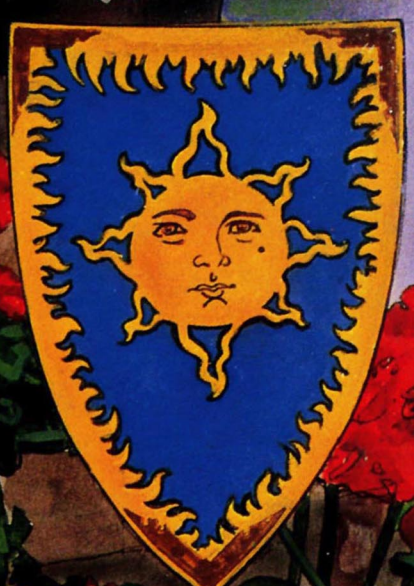

J.NIELSEN

Montaigne

Just south of Avalon, just north of Castille, just west of Eisen — at the center of the world — is Montaigne, ruled by the *Empereur* of the West, Léon Alexandre du Montaigne, the most powerful monarch in Théah. Tall, beautiful and elegant, he is the heart of high culture — just ask him.

For every other civilized nation that cares, Montaigne defines fashion, civilization, music, art and enlightenment. The greatest courts are in Montaigne. The best food is in Montaigne. All of Théah's nobility wear clothing inspired by Montaigne patterns. They build palaces that mimic Montaigne architecture. Montaigne is a country where the question "Why?" went out of style long ago, to be replaced with the answer "Because I want it."

The Empereur's personal escort, *le Garde de Solei*, are among the finest fencers in Théah. Their reputation is legendary throughout the known world, and every swordsman dreams of one day being able to count himself among their number. They are hand-selected to serve the Empereur and their duty is to protect him from all dangers, no matter the cost. With a man like *l'Empereur,* that duty has a high price.







Ussura

In the frozen northwest is a land strange and foreign to the rest of Théah. Those who visit Ussura return to tell tales of a land five hundred years behind the times. Their soldiers still use axes and wooden shields, wear furs and skins, grow their beards to their knees and barter rather than use currency.



While Ussura may still be living in the twelfth century, she is a land that looks out for her own. Invading armies have discovered that to be a literal truth. "Grandmother Winter" seems very alive in Ussura, throwing snow and ice on those who have violated her borders, while her grandchildren remain safe from her cold clutches. It is almost as if the land itself were alive and aware, blessing her own and obliterating those who are not. It is also rumored that some among the Ussurans are able to communicate with beasts such as wolves and bears, but that is no doubt peasant superstition.

The ruler of Ussura, Gaius Ilya, is a beautiful young man with a brutal and deadly temper. While the advice of the Knias Council of Boyars is supposed to guide the Gaius' decisions, Ilya has shown on many occasions his devout hatred of their kind. One boyar who defied his wishes was thrown to his own dogs while the Gaius watched, sipping vodka and making conversation with the doomed man's fellow council members.

Ussura is a land of brutal winters, savage justice and black humor.

And the Ussurans wouldn't want it any other way.





Vendel

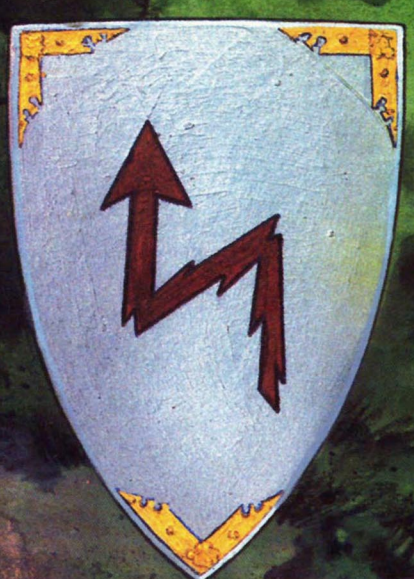


A little over a 150 years ago, the island nation north of Eisen was still known as *Vestenmannavnjar* (ves-ten-mahn-nah-ven-yar). With the rise to power of the trade guilds, the name of the nation changed. Vendel is the name now used by the portion of Vestenmannavnjar society who have chosen to turn their back on what they see as an outdated and superstitious heritage in favor of a more pragmatic, financially based society.

The Vendel, as they are now known throughout Théah, are the most successful and ruthless tradesmen in the known world. They control all economics in the northern half of Théah, sharing the southern portion with the Vodacce merchant princes. The advent of their coinage, the Guilder, has revolutionized Théan commerce by creating a currency recognized all across the world (except, of course, in rival Vodacce).

Fringe communities of Vestenmannavnjar still exist. Living in comparatively primitive circumstances, they continue to follow their traditions and practice the runic magic of their fathers and grandfathers. They tell the same stories they've told for hundreds of years about gods and heroes, a mythology that is a living force and stands beside them every day. And they wait for the day when their myths will walk again and cast down those who doubted.






T.NIELSE

Vodacce

Vodacce is a family at war. What began centuries ago as a quarrel between noble brothers has ended in a nation divided. The seven main isles of Vodacce are each controlled by a branch of that family. Each one competes fiercely with its siblings for trade, wealth, and reputation, and in Vodacce the end always justifies the means.

Built along a network of canalways, the houses of Vodacce rise to the sky by standing one on top of the other. Beneath the city runs the most extensive labyrinth of catacombs known anywhere in Théah. The complexity of its architecture is mirrored by the hearts and minds of its citizens. If the eyes are the windows to the soul, the eyes of the Vodacce are hooded and hidden behind elaborate lattices.

The men of Vodacce are its public face, full of cunning and bravado. Behind that facade stand the Fate Witches. Somber-clad and silent, they see and manipulate the threads of chance. Rumors of Vodacce witchery are varied and terrible. Fierce Eisen warriors have been known to cut down a dozen Vodacce men on a field of battle, only to flee from the countenance of one of the witches for fear her gaze might steal their very souls.

Vodacce is like a land filled with black cats, an unlucky place to be unless all of the cats belong to you.







Théan Culture

Calendar

The Théan calendar is similar to Europe's: twelve months, seven days in a week, twenty-four hour days and sixty-second hours. That's where the similarities end.

The days of the week are Soldi, Veldi, Amordi, Terdi, Guerdi, Redi, and Voltadi.

A Théan month is exactly thirty days. The fifteenth and thirtieth day are feasting days, celebrating the Creator's work, wisdom and mercy.

The original Théan calendar included ten months of 36 days apiece, but this was shortened to 30 days when two more months were added. These two new months were named after important figures in the history of the Old Republic, Imperator Corantine and Julius Caius, and inserted before the seventh month.

The twelve months are Primus, Secundus, Tertius, Quartus, Quintus, Sextus, Julius, Corantine, Septimus, Octavus, Nonus, and Decimus.

The Théan Year

The Théan year is broken down into four seasons (Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter), each three months long. At the end of the year, the Prophets' Mass – a five- to six-day long celebration – fills out the remaining days.

The Seven Seas

There are seven seas that surround Théah. The first, the Trade Sea, is found around Vendel. It is known for its shallow waters and the unnerving tendency of the tides to make reefs appear to move. Experienced captains in these waters have run aground on reefs that they swear were not there the day before. Aside from this phenomenon, the Trade Sea is relatively safe.

The second sea is found near Avalon and Montaigne, and is called the Frothing Sea. A healthy population of sharks and sirens make the Frothing Sea more treacherous than the Trade Sea, not to mention the sudden fog banks and inexplicable appearances of a phenomenon known as 'sea mirages'. Often, ships are sighted, only to disappear as the viewer draws nearer, like a mirage in a desert.

The third sea is just off the coast of Castille, and is often referred to as La Boca de Cielo, or "the Mouth of God." Its deep, cold waters make an ideal breeding ground for the whales that swim there, protected by the fearsome subspecies known as leviathans. These beasts are up to three times as large as a normal whale, and possess a much more aggressive disposition. This sea is also thick with pirates, notably the Brotherhood of the Coast. Sailors who frequent La Boca de Cielo circulate rumors of Estallio, an enormous serpent that feeds on the leviathans. For a creature of such reputed size, it seems odd that no confirmed sightings exist.

The fourth sea is called the Forbidden Sea. It lies to the southeast of Vodacce, near the Empire of the Crescent Moon. Church-maintained garrisons on the Vodacce keys prevent access to this sea, since the Hierophant declared the Empire off limits. Old stories survive, however, of a pillar of water several miles in diameter roaring up into the sky. None of these stories have ever been confirmed.

The fifth sea is a large gulf to the south of Ussura. Its calm, clear waters have earned it the name "The Mirror." The Ussurans believe that an entity called Vodanken lives in the center of the gulf. Another oddity of the Mirror are reports of islands that appear mysteriously, and only hours later, sink

Calendar

All Théan months use the following calendar:

Soldi	Veldi	Amordi	Terdi	Guerdi	Redi	Voltadi
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

The feasting days of the 15th and 30th are not "real" days and not considered part of the week.

back below the water. Some ship's crews have almost been drowned by these sudden submergences.

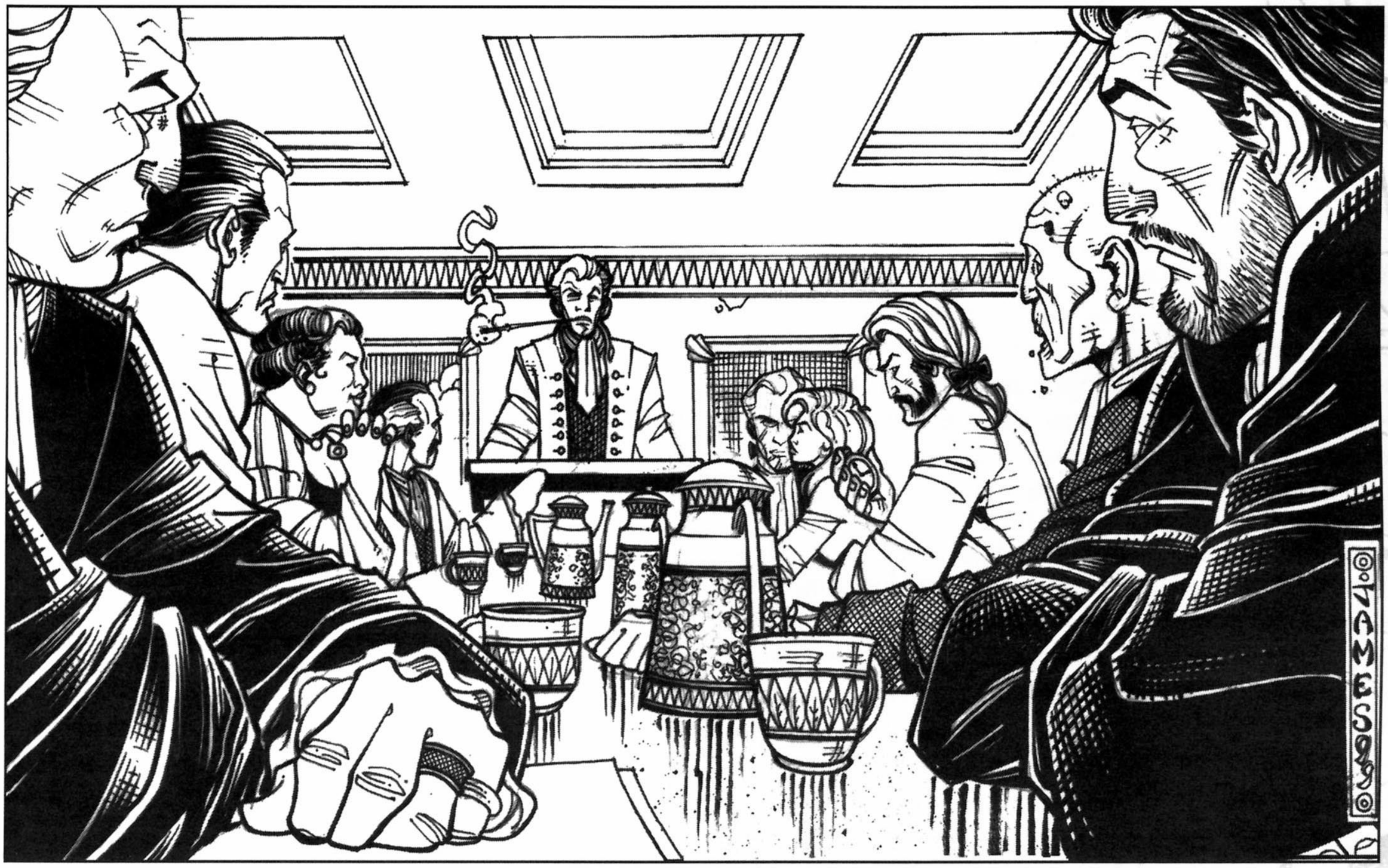
The sixth sea is known as the Corridor of Flame, and for good reason. As ships grow near Cathay, they encounter an enormous labyrinth of fiery walls nearly twenty feet high. These walls do not radiate heat, but instantly consume anything that comes into contact with them. As there is only enough space to sail down these corridors, turning back once inside the labyrinth is a fearsome prospect. From the stories of a lookout who survived the experience, there is also an enormous whirlpool that many of the corridors empty into. A vast column of flame roars up out of its center.

Lastly, many sailors speak of a place where the sun and moon shine in the same sky, where the stars go backward and the waters turn to silver. This "seventh sea" is the source of much discussion within Théah's scholarly community. Sailors tell stories of sailing the silvery waters for days with no sign of land in sight until finally, the sky and waters suddenly snap back and the ship is thousands of miles off course.

A recent archæological discovery may hold the key to the Seventh Sea. The Explorer's Guild is calling it an "alchemical compass", and they believe that the Syrneth used it to sail the mysterious sea. If their claims are true, it could open the door to a new world.

Théah's Courts

Across Théah, while the peasants toil in the fields and the merchants trade at the stands, as duelists assume their stances and soldiers advance at one another, a different kind of war rages within the resplendent forums of Théah's nobles. It is a ceaseless game of polite intrigue, where a slip



of the tongue can forfeit a province and the wrong gesture can end a career. It is the world of Théan politics, and it is not a pretty place.

Stature within the courts of Théah is judged largely by scope. Montaigne, Vendel, and Avalon presently have the most trafficked courts. Their tremendous ballrooms and meeting halls, designed and built to impress, allow the nobles and their guests just enough privacy to feel comfortable, but never enough to be safe. The courts of the Castillians are much smaller, open-air events, which focus more on community than conspiracy. The courts of the Eisen and Ussurans, who are not as interested in international affairs, tend to be small.

Court can be a draining experience. It takes the average noble courtier four to five hours to get dressed; they are literally sewn into their clothes. Every courtier employs five to six handservants who follow them about, tending to their every whim.

Fashion and dialogue govern the daily ebb and flow of courtly life. Everyone knows who the best-dressed or most eloquent people at court each week are, sometimes before they arrive. Trends come and go with the seasons, and those who have not managed to arrive with the right clothing can be shunned, or even ridiculed, for their inattention.

An example of a trend that has remained fashionable for some time are small reading books carried by many nobles, even those who cannot read (illiterate nobles have their books read to them, employing servants for that purpose). Some are bound like normal volumes, while others are sheaves of folded paper, called "quartos." They contain picture stories, hymns, excerpts of other texts, and fairy tales.

Nations employ courtiers and ambassadors for many reasons, primarily to prevent wars. With all the constant (and often unintentional) slights committed between nations at this point, it becomes almost essential for courtiers to actively pursue peace at court to prevent the outbreak of open hostilities. Of course, as can be seen by the recent Montaigne invasion of Castille, this practice is not always successful, but continues regardless. The other primary reasons for courts in Théah are power brokering, arranging marriages, and gaining favor with other nobles. After all, a good party always leaves visitors in happy spirits (and less likely to cause turmoil).

The Swordsman's Guild

Over the last twenty years, dueling became a source of great controversy. Some nations were beginning to take steps toward outlawing it altogether. But in the winter of 1644, three men, each the owner of a fencing academy, met in a dark room and signed a pact in their own blood. They approached the kings of their respective countries and shared their vision. The monarchs approved the agreement, and the Swordsman's Guild was born.

A Swordsman Guildhouse doubles as a fencing academy. Creation of the Guild has changed formal dueling in Théah: only a Swordsman may initiate a duel. Most countries haven't bothered to make dueling laws, but leave such matters to the Guild. One last important note: It is forbidden for a Swordsman to take a contract on another Swordsman.

Honor

Modern Théan concepts of honor descend from the classical ideals of chivalry immortalized in the old Avalon romances of knights and kings. These notions are dying; the sun is setting on chivalry for the last time. Those who still cling to these ideals are known as "gentlemen", or more cynically, "romantics."

The fall of chivalry began with a Montaigne knight named Bastion. During the 1460s, he was considered the pinnacle of chivalry. He was honorable and noble, and the ladies swooned when he spoke to them. Then one day in battle, a peasant armed with an arquebus shot him in the back and he died, drowned in the blood that seeped into his punctured lung. The thought that spread, unspoken, across

Théah was, "Bastion was a man of honor, and all it earned him was a painful death."

The average Théan looks out for himself first, his friends and family second, and everyone else not at all. This doesn't mean that Théah is constantly immersed in schemes and plots, only that most people have better things to worry about, such as getting enough food to eat and making sure their roof will keep out the rain. Chivalry is a pastime for those rich enough to afford it. It is sneered at by many, and romantics are often branded as old-fashioned dreamers who cannot look reality in the eye.

But all hope is not yet lost. Romantics are the last men on Théah to conduct business with a handshake and a spoken promise before a contract – that alone should win them the admiration of even the strongest cynics. There are those who still see them as shining knights on white steeds, and prefer to take all their business to the few who remain.

A Gentleman's Word

A gentleman does not break his word. Ever. The first time he breaks a promise, it brings into question any promise he makes in the future. On the other hand, a man "as good as his word" is reliable, trustworthy and admired. By the same token, he is very particular about when and to whom he gives his word. Only a low-born dog would hold a gentleman to any pledge made while he was in his cups, though a gentleman would probably honor it regardless. A true gentleman will die before breaking his word, for it is his bond and his soul; some, caught in pledges that would destroy their family, have committed suicide rather than dishonor themselves, but this is rare.

If a gentleman breaks his word, the repercussions upon his business and lifestyle would be disastrous. His friends would cease to associate with him, his business associates would abandon him or start demanding written contracts for everything (an intolerable insult to any gentleman), and his income would dwindle to nothing as his reputation was dragged through the mud.

Often, a gentleman swears promises on an item of particular personal importance, such as his grandfather's sword or his mother's pendant; the implication is that if the promise is broken, the ancestor associated with the item will know.

The Duel

There are two types of duels in Théah: those to first blood, and those to the death. A duel to the first blood continues only until one of the duelists has been hit and has suffered a wound (mechanically, just a Flesh Wound, not a Dramatic Wound – for more, please see page 189). Most duels are to first blood. Only a very serious offense justifies a duel to the death.

Curiously, only members of the Swordsman's Guild are legally entitled to challenge others to a duel. Everyone else does so in violation of the law, and can expect a visit from a representative of the Guild if word of the challenge gets out. However, most swordsmen are more than happy to issue a challenge on behalf of a noble and then let the noble fight the duel personally if so desired. They collect the same fee with no personal risk, and the noble may fight his own duel.

The Jenny's Guild

In 1598, a young woman named Jenny Malone was arrested for the murder of an abusive man. She pleaded self-defense, and was found not guilty. Her defense made Avalon the first of Théah's nations to legally recognize self-defense as a right, provided by the Creator. But what made Jenny Malone's acquittal even more remarkable was the fact that she was a prostitute and the dead man a customer.

After her victory in court, Malone began meeting with madams all across Avalon. She saw the power the guilds held in Avalon and suggested that courtesans could be protected by the same laws as well. The women pooled their resources, bribed a few judges and made it official: Avalon's prostitutes were officially a guild. Soon enough, the term "one of Jenny's girls" was the polite way of referring to the profession. The name stuck, and before long, Jenny's girls were simply called "Jennys."

When a challenge is issued, it must be accepted or declined on the spot, either by the person challenged, or by someone else present. For this reason, nobles often hire a Swordsman if they expect to receive a challenge. That way, the Swordsman can accept for the noble, who keeps himself out of harm's way for a small fee. Anyone is entitled to accept a challenge, even if they are not a Swordsman.

Reputation

A gentleman's reputation is one of his most prized possessions. He will go to extreme lengths to prevent it from being sullied. Anyone who besmirches his good name can expect a challenge to the blood; anyone who publically disgraces him, a duel to the death. His word is tied in to his reputation, and if one is harmed, the other suffers as well. Thus, accusing a gentleman of lying is a slur upon his good name, while accusing him of lying in public is tantamount to publically disgracing him.

A Woman's Honor

In recent years, some women have started to follow the rules of chivalry, upholding their own good name, and accepting challenges on their own behalf. There is a mixed response to this; some believe these "gentlewomen" are merely attempting to be men. Others believe that it is the attempt to be noble that makes one noble, however, and that gentlewomen are only bettering themselves as men do.

Knowledge

With the help of the Vaticine Church, Théans are a little ahead of where our own technological progress was in the mid-17th century. The last ten years of Théan history have produced an impressive array of scientific advancements: the microscope, the reflecting telescope, knowledge of human anatomy, and astounding discoveries in astronomy, physics and chemistry.

Unfortunately, with the Inquisition's rise to power, these advancements are in danger of being destroyed. The Inquisition claims that the time of knowledge is past, and that Théans should prepare for the end of the world rather than dabble in scientific heresy. The secret society known as the Invisible College has managed to thwart their efforts, but without a Hierophant in place, no one can truly keep them in check. Countless advancement may be lost to the flames if the Inquisitors are not stopped.

Here is a short summation of Théah's current technological development and knowledge:

Archæology

Currently, archæological technology is restricted to shovels, brushes, historical investigations and notepads. The Théans are perfectly capable of sketching the things they discover in the archaeological digs across Théah, but they often don't understand the purpose of these objects. Worse, important artifacts often get destroyed accidentally, or stolen to hang on some private collector's wall.

Architecture and Construction

The Théans are capable of some very impressive architectural feats. While they couldn't construct a highway, a suspension bridge, or a skyscraper, they've built beautiful cities and enormous cathedrals that stretch up to 400 feet in the air. They possess the secret of making concrete, but they lack the mass production facilities necessary to use it on a large scale. Their roads are cobbled, their roofs are often covered with sheets of tin, and their windows, at least in the bigger cities, are usually made of glass.

Astronomy

The Théans understand that their world, Terra, is a sphere that orbits their sun (which is called Solas), and their moon orbits their world. In addition, they've discovered five other planets that orbit their sun in the same way. There may be more, but their telescopes are too primitive to see them. The names of the six known planets, starting with the closest to the sun, are: Velme, Amora, Terra (the Théan homeworld),

Guer, Re, and Volta. The planets were all named after the gods of the Old Republic.

Théans know how big Terra is within a 1% degree of error, and they can predict eclipses of both the sun and the moon. Telescopes have been around in Théah for a century, but a few months ago (1668), a Castillian astronomer named Alvara Arciniega constructed the first reflecting telescope. It has allowed Théans to see further into the skies than ever before. With the help of the Invisible College, he has revealed his invention to the scientific community and hopes to further refine it in the future.

Chemistry

Chemistry has recently emerged from its mystical roots in alchemy (although in Théah there could be some truth to alchemy). An Avalon named Jeremy Cook wrote *The Rational Chemist* in 1661, which established a more rigorous discipline based on the scientific method. Now only a few practicing alchemists are left, most having turned to the new science of chemistry. In 1662 Cook created the first air pump, an act which should have proven the existence of air. Unfortunately, by that time, the Inquisition was coming to power, and Cook was shot for his heretical research. His work survived only because of the efforts of the Invisible College.

Mathematics

Théan mathematicians have worked out the mysteries of algebra, trigonometry, geometry, and the zero. They do not yet possess calculus, but it won't be long in coming. Probability is not yet a rigorous discipline, and, as Verdugo himself said, "Only gamblers would be interested in its results."

Medicine

Théan doctors are significantly more advanced than our own doctors were in the 17th century. The humor theory, which states that the body is governed by four humors (blood, phlegm, bile, and black bile) was denounced by Vendel physician Franz Deleboe in 1661. The Inquisition carried him off in the night, but word of his revelation leaked, and other physicians have been able to capitalize on his work, although with less success than they might like.

The Théans understand that careful hygiene during operations leads to a higher survival rate, but they aren't sure why. To treat a gunshot wound, they know to remove the bullet and stitch the wound closed afterwards. They also know to change the bandages on a wound every so often and to boil the bandages to make sure they're clean. They believe that it's very bad to mix the blood of two people together, but they don't yet know why. They are aware that diseases are spread by sick people, so they keep them quarantined. Unfortunately, they don't know about bacteria and viruses yet, so the causes of disease are still a mystery. In 1610, scholars completed a map of the interior of the human body, which has greatly aided future medical studies.

On a more tangential note, Avalon scholars have recently begun to study air pollution at the urging of Lord Ryefellow, a noble with a lung condition aggravated by the Avalon practice of burning peat and coal for heat. The study, while medical, is one of the first instances of environmentalism in Théah.

It should also be mentioned that the microscope has been around in Théah since 1608. Its inventor, a Vendel whose name is not recorded, used it to view blood corpuscles, as well as insects and small plants. In addition to its aid in medicine, it has greatly enhanced the fields of biology, botany and entomology.

Natural Philosophy (Physics)

The field of physics has witnessed some startling breakthroughs in the past few years, despite the efforts of the Inquisition. Static electricity was harnessed in 1662 with a small device using a rotating globe of sulphur. Maria Alverado, a Castillian scholar, invented the device as part of her university studies; it was the first practical demonstration of static electricity on a large scale.

The Inquisition was not powerful enough at the time to stop Alverado's experiment (she was prominent and well-respected), but they came close to wiping out another physics breakthrough just four years later. The Castillian

Alvara Arciniega discovered the light spectrum with a series of homemade prisms. The Inquisition, upon learning of this theory, attempted to hang him, but Arciniega was a skilled swordsman and killed three Inquisitors before escaping to the country. (It was there that he first perfected the reflecting telescope, detailed in the Astronomy section.)

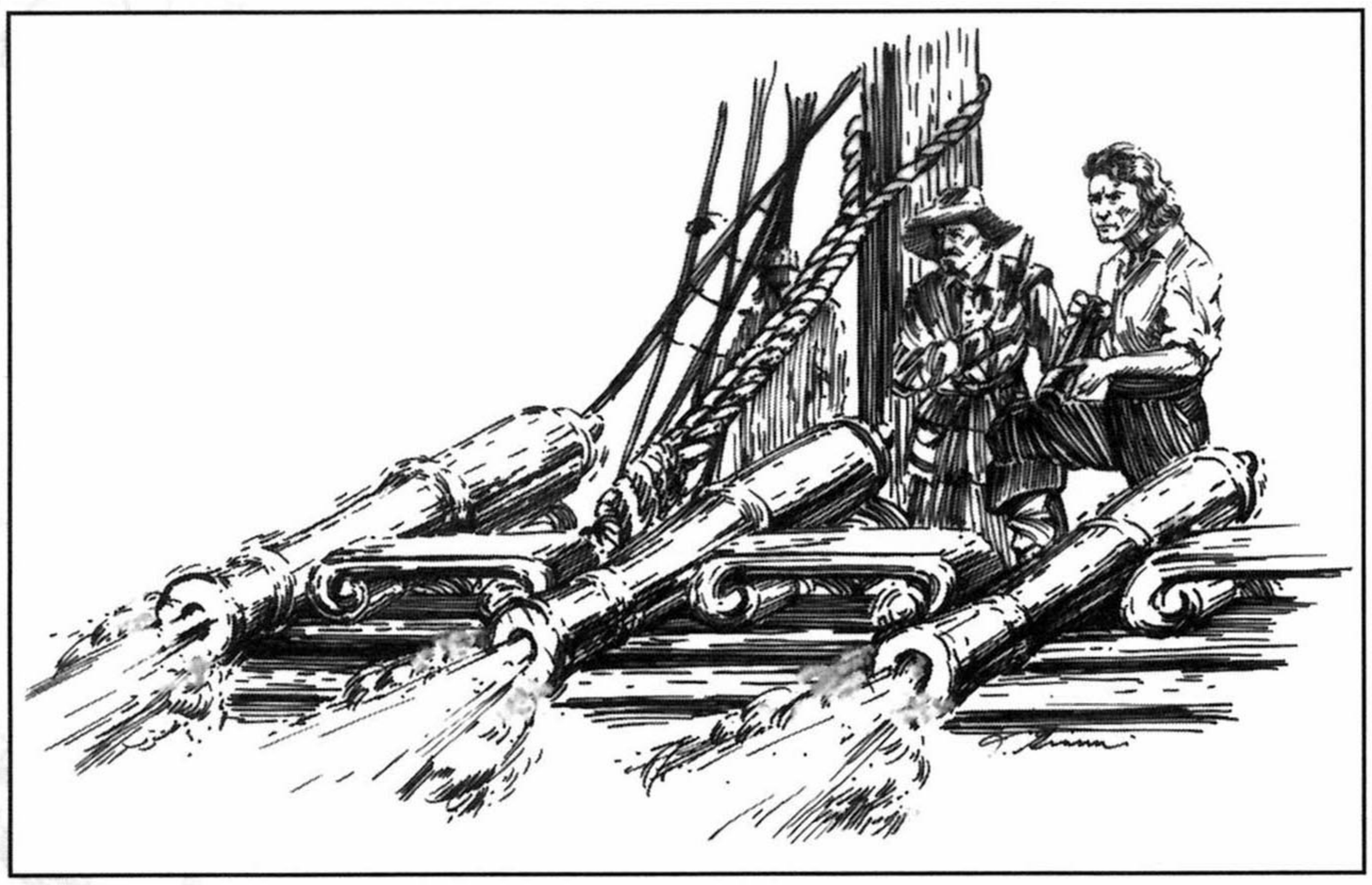
Navigation

The Théans possess magnetic compasses and astrolabes, but do not yet possess a chronometer that is accurate enough and resistant enough to the moist sea air to allow them to measure longitude. The Montaigne have a method that works, but it requires a noble gifted with Porté magic to teleport home and look at a clock there, then return. Obviously, this method doesn't see much use, but it does give the Montaigne navy the best maps of Théah. Most mapmakers realize that Théah comprises only a small part of the globe, but they believe the rest contains only oceans and the occasional island chain like those in the western seas.

Weapons and Warfare

Currently, muskets are the weapon of choice in warfare, typically supported by a line of pikemen. The Théans do not yet have rifles, so the accuracy of these guns is less than it could be. They have developed cannons as well, but do not yet possess the ballistic knowledge necessary to create mortars. The Montaigne have also developed primitive grenades, but the weapons have proven so unreliable that only peasant levies (grenadiers) carry them into battle. The average lifespan of a grenadier is three battles.

In duels of honor, rapiers or other fencing weapons are commonly used, with the saber reserved for the brave cavalrymen of the day.



Pirates and Privateers

It took only five days at sea for him to learn why the sailors sang songs about going home.
– *Two Years on the Waves* by Eliza Cunningsworth

A pirate hunts all colors; a buccaneer all but his own; and a privateer only those he is told.
– Sea proverb

Ships and shipping have played a large role in Théah's history despite the lack of a New World (which spurred their development on our own planet). With the continent surrounded by seas and bisected by a huge river, ships have always proven a more viable means of transportation than long and treacherous journeys overland. Théah's economic lifeblood literally travels over the waves. The two foremost economic powers – Vendel and Vodacce – depend on merchant shipping, and Avalon has used the Sea Dogs to similar (if more brutal) effect. An array of outlying islands in the far west have produced troves of riches from the Syrneth ruins, and the Crescent Empire can generally only be accessed by the water. Because of this, Théah has a thriving shipping industry, fueling its economy and giving rise to an entire subculture of sailors. And where gold and trade goods travel by sea, there are always pirates willing to plunder them...

The seas of Théah are almost a world unto themselves. Here, there are no nations, no borders, no towns or cities; just ships and the men who sail them. Each vessel is like a nation unto itself: a self-contained community with its own rules and customs. The simplicity and freedom of such a life can be remarkably tempting.

Théah's shipping lanes and ports of call form a subculture all their own: an exotic world with riches and dangers to stir the soul. Seamen talk about the thrill of spotting another sail, not knowing whether it's friend or foe; of colorful characters lurking in the back of seedy bars; and of untold treasures hiding behind loaded cannons. A life at sea can be both blessing and a curse, but it's never boring.

Every Théan nation maintains a navy, although Ussura's is more of a fishing fleet and Vodacce's is divided among its seven Princes. They guard important shipments, patrol trade routes for pirates, and spar with other navies if they can get away with it. The seas are large, however, and no navy can be everywhere at once. Merchant vessels often carry extra weapons, and countless mercenary ships sell protection to the highest bidder. Then there are the pirates: sharks searching for prey wherever they can be found, using terror and chain shot to send their victims to the bottom.

While the regular shipping lanes form the crux of Théah's naval activities, the western islands hold equal excitement. Besides exploration and the dangerous promise of the Syrneth ruins, the absence of civilization makes for tempting territory. Here, pirates can bury their booty, wanted men can vanish into an island paradise, and the great nations can hide all manner of secrets. Rival buccaneers fight personal wars amid these unexplored archipelagoes, while the Explorer's Society risks life and limb to bring secret Syrneth knowledge back. Here at the untamed edges of the sea, Théah's buccaneers can live as free as they choose... and die just as easily.

What is a Sailor?

A sailor makes his living serving on a sailing ship. His profession requires a vast array of skills. He must have sailor's hands (strong), be of stout heart (healthy) and have guts of iron (courage), or he's of no use at all. A ship's duties fall into many categories and a sailor knows a little bit about each of them. He must learn how to tie dozens of different knots, be able to work canvas so he can repair damaged sail, have incredible balance and fleet feet to move amid the ship's rigging and be able to work while cannon shot fires over his head or while a storm tries to rip him from the decks.

Any skills a sailor does not have when he steps on board, he learns quickly. Many apprentice sailors begin a voyage knowing next to nothing, having spent their entire lives in one village. They join a ship, spend months at sea, then return completely changed. Sailors usually learn to read while at sea (there's little else to do when the wind won't kick up), see whales and dolphins (in addition to less amicable sea creatures) visit foreign ports, experience foreign cultures, learn new languages, learn mathematics, survive starvation and disease, build their strength and resolve, misplace their money in a jenny's warm bed, and return to sea to earn back the money they lost.

Unfortunately, the romantic life of a sailor also has some very unromantic aspects. Any ship that sets sail usually returns with only a third of its crew, the rest lost to disease, violence, storms, starvation, thirst, negligence or accident. A sailor works twelve hours at a time, sleeps for four (if he can sleep at all), then drags himself from his swinging cot to work another shift. While on board, he must handle rigging fifty feet in the air with forty-mile-an-hour winds ripping at his balance, not to mention rain and sleet and renegade storm waves. The food he eats is usually rotten, the water putrid and the officers unforgiving of error. He must avoid conflict with his mates or risk a knife in the back, a slit throat while he sleeps or a shove while he's up in the rigging.

If the ship enters combat, his chances of survival plummet to almost ten percent, depending on the flag of the enemy ship. If the surgeon on board doesn't have the tools to deal with the wounds he'll earn, he'll probably bleed to death before anyone even knows that he's been hurt.

But at the end of the voyage, the paymaster will put more coins in his hands than he's seen in his entire life. In fact,

with the money he earns from one voyage, he could retire quite comfortably if he so chose. Of course, he usually spends the whole lot on wine and jennys in a foreign port, meaning he'll have to take another voyage to earn back his newly lost fortune.

That's the romantic life of a sailor.

Types of Sailors

Sailors in Théah fall into four basic categories.

Merchants are those who use their ships for trading or other commercial activities. They include businessmen hauling cargo from one port to another as well as fishermen, whalers, and explorers of the western seas. They also include less savory professions such as smuggling and bootlegging. More sailors belong to this class than any other.

Naval Recruits belong to a nation's official navy, serving as officers or seamen aboard a military vessel. They patrol the waters around their country, protect important convoys, hunt pirates, and do battle with other navies. Life on a naval vessel is notoriously bad, although there are exceptions (usually under competent captains).

Privateers form a nebulous category of mercenaries and ne'er-do-wells. They're essentially "pirates for hire," granted official sanction from a government to patrol the seas. They prey on their employer's enemies, stealing booty from rival nations while keeping the more formal navies from dirtying their hands. Privateers also engage in escort duties and other specific missions. The Sea Dogs, under the sanction of Queen Elaine of Avalon, are the most notorious privateers on the seas today.



Pirates are the wolves of the sea – outlaws who ride the waves in search of cargo to plunder. They answer to no one save themselves and most feel obligated only to the profits they steal from their victims. The dangers of a pirate's lifestyle are beyond counting, but they have more freedom than any other class in Théah. Because they are usually after the goods in their targets' holds, they rarely attack to sink ships, preferring instead to close and board them. Their bloodthirsty reputation has earned them few friends: military vessels have orders to sink all pirate craft on sight, and captured pirates are usually hanged without trial. Despite that, not all of them are malevolent. The famous pirate Gosse, for example, was renowned for his gentlemanly behavior, and the Brotherhood of the Coast, while ruthless, has brought a rough sense of honor – and the first stirrings of democracy – to the Théan seas.

The Ship's Crew

Under each officer is a brief description of his duties and the men he commands.

Captain

A captain's role on the ship differs depending on the nature of the ship. On naval vessels, the captain has ultimate authority. On many pirate ships, however, the captain's authority is defined by the ship's charter. Some charters allow the captain to act only as a general, taking authority only when the vessel battles another ship, while others give the captain the same authority he holds on a navy ship. The captain isn't often the most experienced sailor on board (see Ship's Master, below), but he is usually the man with the best command skills. He usually has a number of officers under his direct command, each listed below.

Lieutenant(s): A ship's lieutenant or "first mate" serves as second-in-command. He assists the captain and carries out orders to the rest of the ship. A captain may have a number of lieutenants, depending on the size of the vessel.

Ship's Master

The Ship's Master answers to the captain and his lieutenants, but otherwise holds complete command of the ship. The captain gives the Master orders, and the Master makes sure those orders are carried out. The Master's chief duty, however, is to navigate the ship. The captain of the ship usually assigns this duty to the most experienced sailor on the ship, thus capturing the crew's respect. The Ship's Master has a number of officers under his direct command, each in charge of duties assigned to the Master. They are listed below.

Master's Mate: The Master's Mate is a sailor training to hold the position of Ship's Master.

Quartermaster: The quartermaster is directly responsible for organizing the steering of the ship.

Helmsman: Helmsmen are the officers directly in charge of each of the ship's watches. There is at least one helmsman in charge of each watch, depending on the size of the ship.

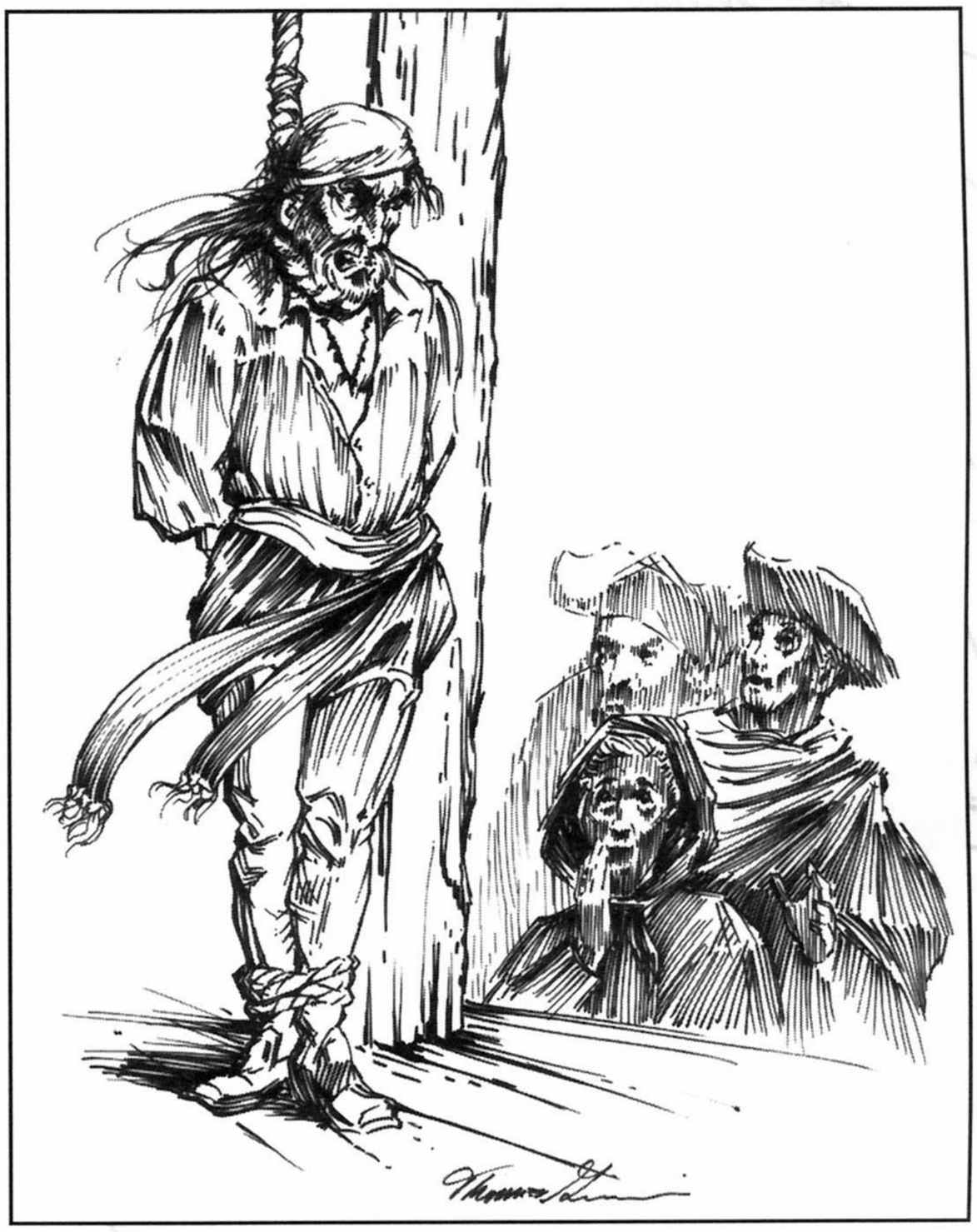
Purser: The purser manages all the ship's finances, and is responsible for all its cargo and supplies. Anyone who handles the ship's supplies, even the ship's cook, reports to the purser.

Steward: The steward is the purser's assistant.

Cook: A cook prepares the ship's meals.

Boatswain

The boatswain (commonly spelled and pronounced "bosun") is like the ship's sergeant. Whenever the captain makes a decision, he tells it to one of his lieutenants. The lieutenant tells it to the Ship's Master, who then tells it to the boatswain. Finally, the boatswain then organizes a group of men (called a "mess") to fulfill the order. He is the highest-ranking man on the ship to work with non-officers. More importantly, the boatswain handles the ship's discipline. When men get out of line, the most common punishment is flogging, done with the boatswain's cat-of-nine-tails. A common phrase used by sailors when they get into trouble is to "let the cat out of the bag."



Boatswain's Mate: The boatswain has a number of assistants who call out orders and gain the crew's attention, usually using tin whistles to do so.

Sailmaker: The sailmaker repairs the sails on the ship and makes new sails from the canvas purchased by the purser.

Master of the Tops: The Master of the Tops is in charge of setting the sails and working the rigging. Sailors who work above deck in the rigging are called "topsmen."

Master of the Forecastle: The Master of the Forecastle is in charge of the front of the ship. His duties include mooring, sounding the depths and raising and dropping the anchor.

Master-at-Arms: The Master-at-Arms is in charge of all small weapons (muskets and pistols) aboard the ship and keeps the key to the arms locker.

Gunsmith: The gunsmith repairs the small arms on the ship.

Carpenter: The ship's carpenter is responsible for all repairs, maintenance and modifications made to the ship's wooden parts. The carpenter usually is assigned a carpenter's mate and a cooper (a man who makes and repairs barrels).

Master Gunner

The master gunner (or simply "gunner") fires, maintains and repairs the cannons on the ship. There is only one key to the powder room on the ship, and he has it tied around his neck. The gunner must also be skilled in mathematics to correctly configure the aiming of the cannons. The gunner has only one man under his command: the gunner's mate.

Gunner's Mate: Gunner's mates answer to the master gunner. They are all in training to be master gunners, and while on the ship learn how to measure and mix gunpowder and figure the algebra used to aim the cannons. Gunner's mates are sometimes called "powder monkeys."

Surgeon

The ship's surgeon is responsible for the general health and welfare of the crew. Using his knowledge of herbs and medicine, he does his best to keep away scurvy and sickness – not an easy task. He also tends to the crew's wounds. The surgeon has two men under his command.

Surgeon's Mate: The surgeon's mate learns the surgeon's duties and assists him in his many duties.

Loblolly Boy: A loblolly boy runs errands for the surgeon and serves as his nurse, keeping watch over wounded and ill sailors, and informing the surgeon if their condition changes.

Midshipmen

A midshipman is a sailor training to be an officer. He usually spends his days learning different positions on the ship, testing his capabilities in each duty. He's almost always a veteran sailor with a couple of voyages under his belt.

Master Mariner

A master mariner is a sailor experienced in many positions, but he has not yet reached an officer's rank. Mariners are the most valuable non-specialized sailors on the ship, and usually provide insight and advice to the boatswain.

Able Seaman

An able seaman has one or two voyages under his belt and has gained recognition for his actions.

Ordinary Seaman

Sailors know how to tie knots and not fall overboard.

A Pirate Ship's Crew

Pirate ships have a far less regular retinue of men to draw from than a navy ship. The example crew above is a ship at its full complement. Pirate ships seldom, if ever, have the hands necessary to fill out a full complement; they have to make do with whatever they can patch together. However, pirate ships almost always have many more master mariners than a standard navy ship, and their men are more willing, ready and able to draw blood.

Superstitions

Red sky in morning, sailor take warning.
– Sailor weather rhyme

Sailor life is filled with superstition, most of which has a bit of fact hidden within it somewhere. Listed below are just a handful of the thousands of superstitions that haunt a sailor's every waking moment.

"Ring around the Moon, rain or snow soon."

A halo around the sun or moon indicates high ice-crystals in the atmosphere. More often than not a lunar or solar halo indicates harsh weather within three days.

"Rainbow in the morning gives you fair warning."
Weather in the middle latitudes travels from west to east and rainbows appear if the viewer's back is to the sun while looking at a rainstorm. Thus, if the sun is in the east, the shower and the rainbow are in the west. Because weather travels from the west to the east in middle latitudes, a rainbow indicates a storm on the way.

"Clear Moon, frost soon."
If the sky is clear and the moon is easily visible, it means the atmosphere is clear and Terra is rapidly cooling. If there is no wind and the temperature has dropped low enough, frost will begin to form on the masts and yards.

"Red sky in morning, sailor take warning."
A red sun indicates the two elements that are essential for rain to occur: dust and moisture. A red sun is a fair warning of foul weather.

Dead Men
Ships almost never carry dead men across the water; it's just inviting bad luck. When a man dies at sea, he's washed, dressed in clean clothes, wrapped up in cloth with irons tied to his legs and thrown overboard with a respectful prayer. Likewise, when a sailor is reported lost at sea, landlubbers never dig a grave or erect a headstone (or even speak of him as dead) until he's been lost for at least seven years. Digging a grave for a man before he dies is asking for trouble.

Sailors almost never speak of the departed, and when they do, they don't speak of James or Jack, they speak of "Poor James" and "Poor Jack." There is a profound respect for the dead on a ship, chiefly because the sailors know the tales of ghosts and ghost-ships all too well.

Mother Ocean

"What the sea wants, the sea shall have."

Sailors always refer to the water as "Mother Ocean," a sentiment quite similar to the Ussuran mother, "Matushka." Kissing a woman by the oceanside is always asking for trouble. The ocean is a jealous, protecting mother and does not like to see her sons wasting their time with women of low virtue.



Sailors also know never to tell their wives and loved ones how long they'll be gone, where they are going or when they'll return. A sailor's life is at the whim of the sea, and once he sets sail all those questions are no longer his to answer. They belong to Mother Ocean.

Likewise, sailors know that men who fall over the side of the ship are being claimed by the ocean, and those who try to save them from Mother Ocean are likely to be claimed as well. Therefore, sailors never reach over the side of the ship to save their brothers. On the other hand, when corpses wash up on shore, it's because Mother Ocean doesn't want them anymore.

"What belongs to the Sea returns to the Sea."
Sailors never dye their clothes with material from the sea, nor are sea stones used for ship's ballast. All too often when these rules are ignored, the ocean rises up to take back what once was hers.



Justice and the Sea

"A King may pardon a murderer, but the sea never will."

Mother Ocean is well known for distributing justice when mankind fails to do so. The most famous tale tells of a criminal who joined a crew under a false name to escape justice. When the ship reached her destination, the local magistrate informed the captain they were looking for the man; the captain reported that he was washed overboard during a vicious storm – the only man washed overboard, come to think of it.

The ocean never forgives, and those who do not respect her rules are destroyed by them. Pirates are typically hanged over water and left in the rope while three tides wash under them. Then the pirate is buried on the beach between high and low tide.

One last story tells of a man who tried to bury his murdered wife near the ocean. No matter how many times he tried, the ocean dug her back up, and she was always found in the same position: pointing at her home with her left hand – where her wedding ring rested.

"Foul Weather Jack"

"Foul Weather Jack" is a term for any sailor who brings the ship bad luck. If the majority of the ship is blond, the black-haired sailor is Jack. Any foreigner on a ship of nationals will bring bad luck, as well as anyone who does not respect the sea. All too often, landlubbers are the doom of ships in stories and songs, and sailors rarely forgive a prideful fool who brings Mother Ocean's wrath down on the crew.

Good Fortune

There are thousands of methods of bringing good fortune to a ship. Listed below are just a few.

Sailors pierce their ears because it enhances their vision. Captains only pierce one ear – the one opposite the eye they use to look through their telescope.

What a sailor eats is always important; you are what you eat, after all. A sailor chews shark's teeth to make sure his teeth don't fall out, eats turtles for a long life and rubs fish oil on the bottom of his feet to keep them warm. On the other hand, a sailor never eats fish heads. Fish are too dumb to find their way out of a fishing net.

All sailors know that when you catch your first fish of the day, you spit on him and throw him back into the water. That guarantees you'll catch ten more fish that day. They also know that after a promotion, they should give money to the first person they meet.

Birds are always good fortune for sailors, especially the albatross who soars through the sky without ever flapping its wings. Dreams of birds are good fortune, as are dreams of green fields (a place called "Fiddler's Green", the sailor's paradise) and dreams of corn and swimming children.

Bad Fortunes

"Cards, dice and women can only lead to trouble."

For an apprentice sailor, there are earfuls of advice a Ship's Master can give him.

To begin with, an apprentice should make certain he stays away from hares, foxes and cats. Hares are kind enough until the fall when they go mad, foxes have always been known as tricksters and cats hold storms (static electricity) in their hair – an obvious sign of witchery.

Women are another problem all together. All too often, sailors beguiled by women in foreign ports are promised nights of passion and end up with their noggins knocked or their throats cut by a greedy pimp. Théah, however, has more female sailors than our own world did, so women as a group aren't considered bad luck – as long as you know who they are and what they want.

Pirates of Théah

"Hop to, lads, and raise every stitch of cloth we've got aboard! If that man-of-war catches us, then the sirens will sing over our bones before the day is through!"

– Reputed last words of Captain Aaron Guy, Avalon pirate

There are six well-known bands of pirates roaming the seas around Théah, but many smaller pirate crews operate independently of these groups.

The Brotherhood of the Coast

Haunting La Boca de Cielo, the Brotherhood of the Coast has declared war on the world. They were originally the inhabitants of the impregnable Castillian prison island known as *La Bucca.* A sudden outbreak of the plague caused a complete panic, allowing the prisoners to capture the island and two supply ships docked on the shore. A few successful attacks against Vodacce merchantmen later, the inmates had built a small fleet and declared themselves a nation of free men. Now they roam the southern coast of Théah and have proven to be a scourge to shipping.

Their leader is a man named Allende. There are confused reports identifying him as either a Crescent or a Castillian. Most people believe him to be a sorcerer, since the first mate of a Montaigne man-of-war has testified that he placed his pistol directly against Allende's chest and fired it off. Allende was thrown overboard, but was otherwise unharmed. Since this incident his men have become fanatically loyal to him, believing him blessed with good fortune.

The Brotherhood attacks mostly Montaigne and Vodacce shipping. They only occasionally attack Castillian ships, which lends some support to the reports that Allende is a Castillian.

The Vesten Raiders

The Vesten Raiders haunt the northern waters of Théah, attacking any merchant ships that cross their paths. Often rowing their longships out of chilly fogbanks to surprise unwary merchants, the Raiders have the powers of several Vestenmannavnjar sorcerers at their disposal, as well as a number of stout Eisen mercenaries. There is little the Vendel fear more than the steady thrumming of their heavy drums, beating time for the oars as the Runemasters steal the wind from the sails of their chosen victims.

When they first appear, the Vesten Raiders blow a ram's horn three times. Their victim then has a choice: lower sails and surrender, or fight to the last man. The Vesten are not interested in taking prisoners, as their own men work the oars more reliably than any chained slave. However, in spite of this 'no prisoners' policy, the Vesten are careful to leave one man alive from each crew who fights them, to spread the word of their deeds far and wide.



Hysterical stories have begun to circulate about ships with rune-covered figureheads which can spit lightning, and battle-maddened Raiders wearing horned helmets and shrugging off blows that should have killed them. Sensible merchants ignore these rum-induced tales, but there's no mistaking that the Vesten Raiders are a serious threat to Vendel shipping. A huge reward awaits anyone who rids the Vendel League of this thorn in their side.

The Crimson Roger

This 'group' of pirates consists of a single ship named the *Crimson Roger.* They are brutal, bloodthirsty men led by an equally fearsome captain. No quarter is ever offered to their victims, and no prisoners are ever taken. The pirates simply attack, murdering everyone they find. Ships carrying cargoes of Syrneth artifacts seem to be most at risk from them, as though they can somehow sense the presence of such devices. The only eyewitness accounts of these pirates come from the captain of *His Lordship's Mistress,* a merchant brigantine that managed to escape the *Crimson Roger* after her sister ship, *The Grey Dog,* was plundered. Apparently, the pirates used strange devices, possibly of Syrneth origin, in the fight. The captain was a tall man with curly black hair who wielded a strange scythe, effortlessly cutting through man and metal alike.

As *His Mistress* sailed away in a panic, the mysterious pirate Captain hollered out for them to hear, "Run, you dogs, and tell the world what you've seen of the Crimson Roger and Captain Reis! Next time we meet, I'll split you all from top to bottom!" The captain of the brigantine was so distressed by this threat that he retired and refused to go to sea ever again. It seemed as though his instincts were correct: within a month his old ship vanished at sea. The captain himself was found in his study a week later, split in half by some fearsome weapon. Written in blood upon the wall was the word "Reis."

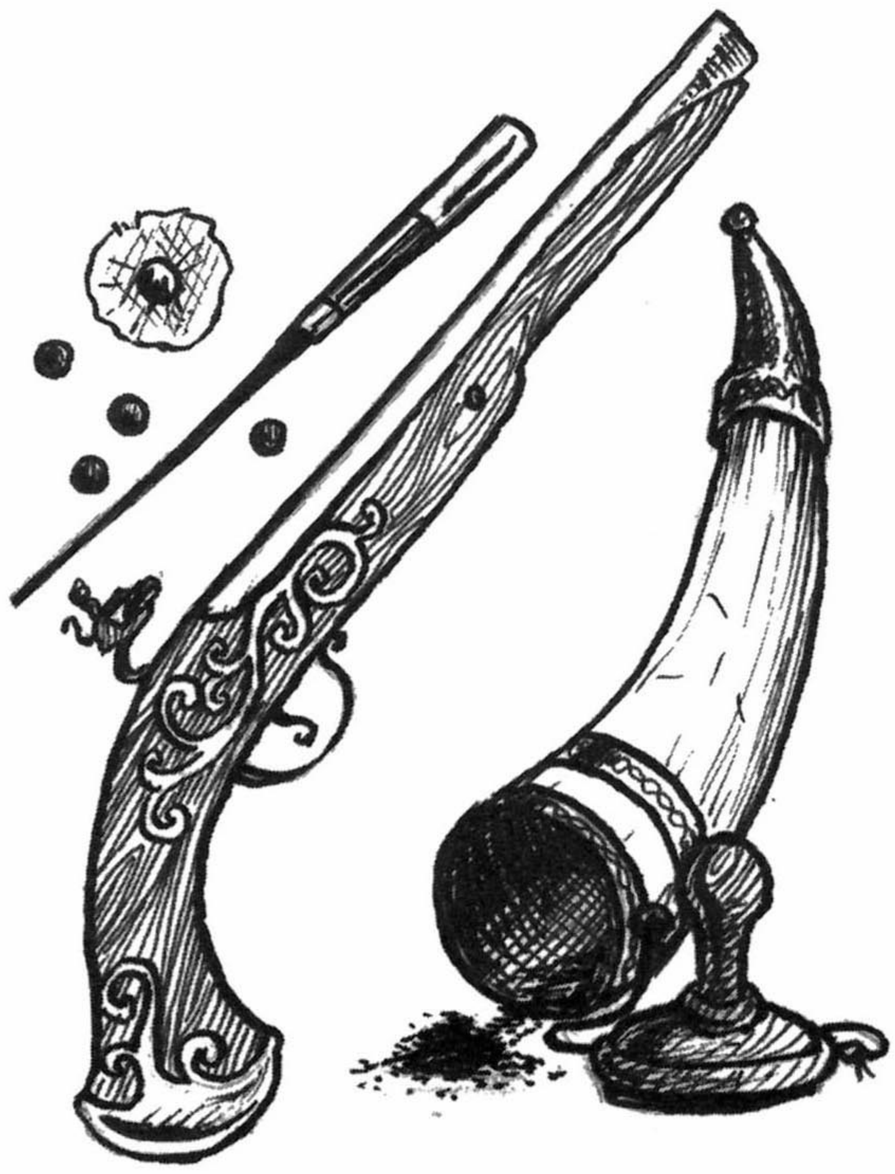
Queen Elaine of Avalon has offered an 8,000 Guilder reward for proof of Reis' death, which would presumably include his unusual scythe.

The Sea Dogs

Operating along the northern and western coasts of Theah, the Sea Dogs focus their attacks on Montaigne and Castillian ships. These pirates sail in small, maneuverable sloops, and never harm Avalon ships. It has been suggested that there is some connection between these men and Queen Elaine, but she denies sponsorship of the Sea Dogs. The rulers of the other countries are not convinced of her sincerity.

There are several Sea Dogs seemingly acting independently of each other, but the most famous of them is Jeremiah Berek, captain of the *Black Dawn.* Captain Berek is a dashing, handsome man whose crew would follow him into the Abyss itself. Cynical comments made by other captains suggest that Berek uses Glamour to cultivate this unnatural loyalty among his men, but there is no hard evidence of this.

Captain Berek and the other Sea Dogs appeared at the battle with the Castillian Armada. Berek's ingenuity and leadership during the fight contributed immeasurably to the Avalon victory. Of course, this only strengthens the claims that he is working for Queen Elaine.



Captain Gosse's Crew

There are more stories told about Captain Philip Gosse than any other pirate. Serving in the Montaigne navy some forty years ago, he quickly rose through the ranks and befriended Hernando Ochoa, a priest with most unorthodox views. 'Chaplain' Ochoa was an atheist who advocated a lifestyle in which all members share the work, and its fruits, equally. Completely converted to the priest's beliefs, Gosse convinced the crew to mutiny and turn pirate.

Sailing the seas in search of merchants, they reportedly never took a life unless circumstances demanded it. Often, the crews of the ships they raided would join as well, sailing under the capable leadership of Captain Gosse. Knowing Gosse's reputation, most crews surrendered without a fight. Eventually, Gosse and his men tired of the piratical life and settled down on a distant island, modeling their society after Chaplain Ochoa's beliefs.

Captain Gosse was considered a bedtime story until two years ago, when a barely seaworthy schooner sailed up to a merchant ship in Avalon's waters and boarded her. A kindly old man led the pirates, declaring to one and all that he was Captain Gosse. Not only did the pirates treat their prisoners civilly, they left them ample stores with which to reach land, and even threw a drunken party with the captured crewmen. The victims of this not-so-nefarious crime were left to wonder at their good fortune as Gosse shared one final toast with them, then left them to find their way home. It is uncertain whether this signifies Gosse's return to piracy, or if he was simply longing for one last voyage on which to relive his distant youth.

Kheired-Din's Corsairs

Of all the pirates in Théah, perhaps none are more feared than Kheired-Din's Corsairs. Hailing from the Empire of the Crescent Moon, the corsairs appear without warning and sack entire towns. In contrast to his western contemporaries, Kheired-Din is more famous for taking prisoners than for raising the red flag. It is unknown how they slip past the garrison forts on the Vodacce Keys, but they have carried off thousands of innocent Théans over the past twenty years. None of these people have ever been heard from again. It's as if they've fallen off the end of the world.

The corsairs prefer large galleys, both for the manpower and the cargo room it allots them. During a typical raid, they land near a city, then charge into the town in a demonic howling mob. They kill and loot indiscriminately, attempting to capture as many slaves as possible, then load their captives onto the galleys and force them to row towards whatever dubious fate awaits them.

None of the corsairs are as frightening as Kheired-Din himself, however. An enormous, muscular Crescent, his fiery red beard is unique among his people. A fastidious follower of the Second Prophet, he has been known to kill any sorcerers he encounters. His wrath is famous as well; it is said that he once fed one of his crew to a shoal of sirens when he caught the man drinking aboard ship. The Church has offered a reward of 10,000 Guilders for proof of Kheired-Din's death.

Secret Societies

"They are nothing more than a very private organization with a very public agenda."
– Ésteban Verdugo

Secret meetings in dark rooms are as important to Théah's history as the armies who march across her green fields. Her history is spotted with wars, but the most important conflicts are not fought with swords, guns or cannons, but in the shadows with knives and whispers. Those innocent of such activities are both blessed and cursed: blessed because they do not know how their lives are directed by these organizations, and cursed for the very same reason.

There have always been clandestine organizations operating behind the scenes. These groups all have hidden agendas, and while you may never know of their existence, it is guaranteed that they know of yours.

This section takes a look at Théah's most important secret societies and their means and objectives.



The emblem of the Explorer's Society

The Explorer's Society

Founded in 1598 by Cameron MacCormick, the Explorer's Society has been the at the forefront of archaeological research and discovery for almost nine years. They have unearthed sites of Syrneth cities, catalogued nearly five hundred individual artifacts, and maintained the largest library of maps in Théah. Members openly display their affiliation with the Society, wearing silver pins and rings that display the magnetic compass with pride.

The Society has captured the imagination of the public, and their fame rivals even that of the Knights of the Rose and Cross; many plays and novelettes have been written with Society members as main characters.

MacCormick founded the Society to discourage "diggers" – men and women raiding Syrneth cities and stealing the artifacts to sell to nobles. The Society is much more concerned with categorizing and studying artifacts than selling them. The long, heavy leather coats worn by Society members are often called "digger coats", a title the Explorers could live without.

Strangely enough, the strongest opponents of the Explorer's Society are members of the Vaticine Church. The Third Prophet denounced exploring the Syrneth ruins, saying such activity led to corruption of the soul. While some Cardinals have come to the Society's defense, the Church's stance has remained unbending: "such activity is heretical and will be punished if need be with death."

The current headquarters of the Society is in the Avalon city of Carleon (MacCormick's home city). Regional headquarters can be found in Montaigne, Vendel and the Eisen city of Freiburg. Members must give hospitality to any member who asks for it (including sanctuary from Church officials if it should become necessary).

The Invisible College

For nearly one thousand years the universities of the Vaticine Church have searched for answers to Theus' riddles. The tools and techniques they developed have brought incredible discoveries in science and technology, leaps that another culture – with slightly different circumstances – may not have stumbled across as quickly.

When the recent troubles with the Inquisition began, the push for scientific research fell by the wayside. Funding for many smaller universities was cut off, and professors were dropped from the larger schools. But the Inquisition's "revision" did not stop there.

Recently, with the Church in chaos and the Cardinals trying to keep things in order, the need for scientific advancement and discovery has also fallen by the wayside. Then, as if circumstances were not bad enough, a highly influential Cardinal, Guiseppe Verdugo, brought the Inquisition into the sacred halls of learning.

Verdugo's Inquisition has called for all scientific research to cease and all experimentation to come to a complete stop.



The seal of the Invisible College

As Verdugo himself preaches: "The time of the Fourth Prophet is here. It is not time to research this world; it is time to prepare for the next." He will not tempt Theus' wrath because "scholars" wish to keep prying into the Creator's secrets. Those who have ignored his commands have found themselves on the end of a rope or tied to a burning stake.

Church leaders are too preoccupied with the Montaigne invasion (and the lack of a Hierophant) to worry about Verdugo's crusade, a sad fact for Vaticine scholars. But despite the watchful gaze of the Inquisition, research goes on, even if it must be veiled in secrecy.

Calling themselves "the Invisible College," these hidden scholars do their best to continue experiments while dodging the discerning Inquisition. However, without Church funding or resources, their experiments cannot go far. Therefore, they have used their own assets and the investments of others to continue their work. They have also created an underground system of communication, passing on the data, facts and evidence they gain to others within the College.

So far, Verdugo has not learned the identities of any of the members, and the only papers he has confiscated are written in a complicated code he has not yet been able to decipher. The members know each other only by pseudonyms and each knows only two others. Verdugo estimates that there may be as many as two dozen members of the Invisible College, but since the members themselves are uncertain of the true number, who can say how many scientists and scholars may be included?

Knightly Order of the Rose and Cross

"Just as wicked men will stop at nothing to do evil, so should just men stop at nothing to do right."
– Rosenkreuz

The Rose and Cross is one of Théah's strangest secret societies... chiefly because it is not secret at all. In fact, so much folklore and legend have sprung up around this "secret society" that is is difficult to discern fact from fiction.



The seal of the Knights of the Rose and Cross

The Knightly Order of the Rose and Cross is a "gentleman's society" devoted to meting out justice, righting wrongs, and protecting those who cannot protect themselves. Many Knights are fifth or sixth sons of noble lords with few prospects. They join the Knights in order to gain a reputation for themselves or to attract the wandering eye of rich noble daughters (or in the case of the Order's female comrades, rich noble sons).

There are many chapter-houses of the Order scattered throughout Théah, and their doors are open to any who hold a membership. Some noblemen purchase nominal memberships in order to support the Order's cause (and to claim membership in the most famous order of knights in the world). The headquarters of the Order is in Montaigne, in the city of Crieux. The leader of the Order is Aristide Baveux, whom one Church official has called "the most beloved man in all of Montaigne." He has proven a great asset to the Order, furthering its influence and gaining its prestige in almost every court in Théah. Currently, the Empereur of Montaigne can count five Knights in his entourage of bodyguards, and the King of Castille boasts three. Even Avalon's Queen Elaine has flirted with the idea of adding the banner of the Rose and Cross to her court (although rumor has it her high advisor, Derwyddon, has advised against it).

Joining the Order is no easy task. Those with heavy purses may purchase honorary positions, but may not refer to themselves as Knights. Instead, they are called

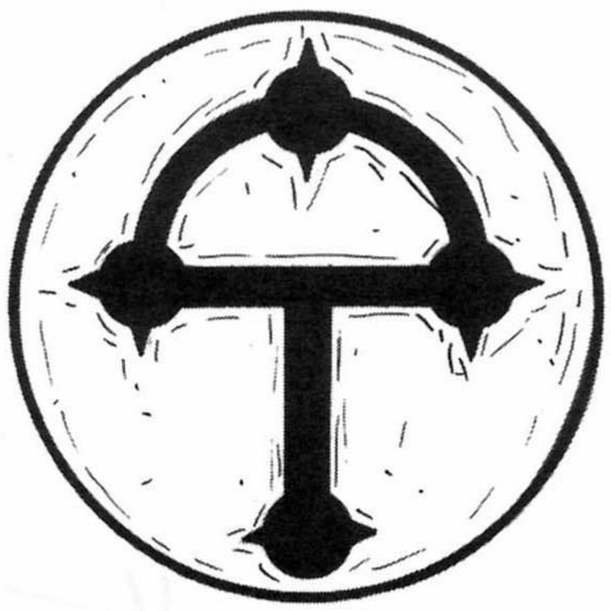
"Benefactors", though they are treated with high regard by the Knights they support. Those who wish to earn the title of Knight must undergo three years of service to the Order, three of the hardest years of their lives. They must serve the Knighthood without question, venturing on quests and duties that, it would seem, only a madman would undertake. However, if they prove themselves worthy, they are allowed to wear the Seal of the Rose and Cross and call themselves "Knight."

The Order is highly structured, with Knights gaining position and favor within the organization through acts of valor, selfless courage and generosity.

Die Kreuzritter ("Knights of the Cross")

"Today we may die, men, but we will die like men."
–Headmaster Kurgen, 1411, at the Battle of Tannen

Die Kreuzritter, or the "Knights of the Cross", once provided hospitals for the poor, donated food to the needy, and fought against the unbelievers in the Crusade. Their membership was primarily Eisen, and their symbol was a black cross on a white background. Their order flourished until 1411, when the Eisen Imperator had a puppet Hierophant declare them heretics and destroyed them at the battle of Tannen. As is often the case, tavern-house rumors of disguised Kreuzritter doing the work of the Hierophant persist to this day.



The seal of Die Kreuzritter



The seal of Los Vagos

Los Vagos

"Live for Castille. Bleed for her people. Die in their name."
– El Vago

Castille has never been in such dire straits as it is today. Foreign invaders control nearly a third of the country, the Inquisition moves openly through the streets, and the crowned head is a young boy with no experience in worldly matters. In these dark times, the people cry out for a protector. Los Vagos have answered their call.

Led by the mysterious vigilante known as the Vagabond, this clandestine organization of Castillian patriots works to protect their country from all enemies. Their mission is simple... defend King Sandoval from corruption, save the people from the oppression of the Inquisition, and liberate the western territories from the occupying Montaigne. They work in secrecy and never reveal their true identity, for Castille is awash in potential enemies. Their numbers are small, but prominently placed; they have sympathizers in the highest avenues of power.

The actions of Los Vagos have reverberated far beyond their immediate scope, restoring hope to a nation on the verge of despair. They rescue helpless citizens from the Inquisition's flames, and sabotage the war efforts of the invading Montaigne. They have prevented at least three assassination attempts on Good King Sandoval, and rumor has it that one of the King's advisors belongs to the order. With each new

rescue, with each thwarted plot, they encourage other Castillians to stand up for themselves. As the nation braces itself for an ever darkening future, its people look to the rooftops – and the shadowy form of El Vago – to see them through.

The Rilasciare (Ril-ah-shee-AR-ay)

"The Creator gave us all we need. Why do we sell our freedom to those who offer us more?"
– from a pamphlet found on the lawn of Cardinal Inez Guzman of Castille

This secret society is known by at least a dozen different names: the Freeman League, the Oppositionists, the Freethought Society and the Guerrilla ("Little War") Alliance. They are the most unorthodox of all of Théah's secret societies – at once the most united and the most disjointed.

The goal of the Rilasciare is the dismantling of any and all forms of authority, which they refer to as "the Enemy." The Rilasciare oppose anything that limits human freedom, including public (read: Church-founded) education, government, monarchy, the concept of ownership, money, religion, and even the "sorcerous bargains" that were made sixteen hundred years ago.

Their philosophy is simple – no human need ever ask or want for anything. The Creator provided a world and minds to utilize it. Only those who lack, need; and those who lack most demand the most.

The Rilasciare make poignant examples of those in positions of power, asking demanding questions of both their position and their need of position. Have you ever noticed that those who hold high position seem the least worthy of it? That's because government and position were created by the weak to protect themselves from independent thinkers. Laws were created to protect those who cannot protect themselves. In other words, laws protect the weak and punish the strong for taking advantage of their strength.

The Rilasciare know that strength comes from free thought, and from free thought comes *vero coraggio* ("true courage"), the highest virtue that mankind can achieve. True courage makes men risk their lives for another, what makes men spit in the face of tyranny without a trace of fear in their eyes; men in power do not want mankind to discover *vero coraggio.* Men enlightened with true courage have no need for rulers or laws – *vero coraggio* makes its own justice.

There are no headquarters for the Rilasciare, nor are there any official meeting dates or places. The members are aware of each other by secret signs and the "coat code" – a way for members to identify each other by the clothing they wear. Their guerrilla war against "artificial authority" has gone on for nearly a century now, and while they may be one of Théah's smallest secret societies, they are certainly its most vocal.



The seal of the Rilasciare

Sophia's Daughters

"The puppet never sees the strings that make it dance."
– Duchess Anne Shallott

Ostensibly, Sophia's Daughters exists to bring equal rights to Théah's "fairer sex." In practice, however, they are far more than that – a veiled political machine maneuvering important men in directions they could never hope to perceive. Using boarding and finishing schools, they train young women in matters covert and clandestine, then place them near men in powerful positions – to point them in the "proper" direction. Through their actions, they have slowly



The seal of Sophia's Daughters

gained strength. Eventually, they hope to move in public rather than in secret, taking their agenda to the streets of Théah.

When not engaging in such activities, they make efforts to keep women safe from abusive fathers and husbands. They also help lower-class women better themselves through earnest work and diligence. The merchant guilds (especially the Jenny's Guild) has been particularly useful in this matter, as have Vodacce's courtesans, who form the Daughters' largest bloc.

The Daughters have used magical as well as political means to further their goals. Glamour serves to beguile the weak-willed, while Porté allows them to pass secret orders and Sorte can manipulate the strands of fate to their advantage. An abnormally high number of the Daughters are sorcerers; it is even rumored that they have rejuvenating potions to extend their members' lives. The Daughters' leadership hotly denies such rumors, of course.

Each member of the society is required to keep a detailed journal, sending copies to Daughter-controlled nunneries where they are organized into a great library. Hundreds of Daughters compile and catalogue these journals, which comprise one of the most accurate recordings of history in the world. The Rilasciare makes use of the records from time to time in exchange for other secrets.

The Vaticine Church of the Prophets

We believe in one true God, the Creator Almighty, Maker of Paradise and Théah, and of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one holy and prophetic Church.

And in its Prophet; who for us men and for our salvation spoke the Creator's message, and foretold the coming of three further Prophets; and delivered himself unto his enemies and was martyred for us in the days of Augustin Lauren.

And in the Second Prophet, who bore a staff; spoke the Creator's message, and delivered men from evil; and was betrayed by the unfaithful and was martyred for us.

And in the Third Prophet, who bore a sword of pure flame; spoke the Creator's message; divided the righteous from the unrighteous; and made the way smooth for him who shall follow.

And in the Fourth Prophet, who shall bear a balanced hourglass, who shall be announced by trumpets; and he shall awaken the dead and he shall reign in the visible and invisible world forevermore.

The Reformed Vaticine Church ("vaticine" meaning "prophet", therefore "the Prophets' Church") is one of the most powerful and influential organizations in Théah. Drawing power from the common people – and the nobles who support its beliefs – the Vaticine (VAH-tih-seen) Church and its flock are a force to be reckoned with. Beginning with the first Prophet who spoke to the Old Republic so long ago, it has amassed its own army, developed a system of education, and instigated most of the world's technological and philosophical advancements.

However, the Church has fallen under harsh criticism in recent times. Accusations of corruption and greed have caused many to doubt its authority, and even its veracity. The Objectionist Movement that began in Eisen over one hundred years ago has changed the Church forever; almost a third of its flock has turned to the Objectionists for guidance. It is a hard time for the Church, but many within

its structure would argue that it has brought these troubles on itself, and that they could have even been avoided, if only the Cardinals had listened.

The Message and the Messenger

"The Creator is all around you; his face is hidden in his works."
– The Book of the Prophet, Volume I, Verse Seven

The message of the Vaticine Church is simple. The Creator made the world as a riddle for humanity to unravel. The closer to solving the riddle mankind comes, the closer he comes to understanding the mind of the Creator.

Credo ("What I believe")

Shortly after the death of the First Prophet, Emperor Corantine adopted belief in the Prophets as his Empire's official religion. He also demanded there be a "credo" – a unified expression of faith. In 325 AV, the Corantinian Convention put together this credo and presented it to the Emperor. He was satisfied.

The credo consists of six Articles of Faith, tenets that all believers hold to be true. The faithful memorize the Articles and recite them during Mass and all other Church activities. In order to understand the Church, one must understand its credo.

Article One: One True God

We believe in one true God, the Creator Almighty, Maker of Paradise and the World, and of all things visible and invisible.

The First Article declares that there is only one true Creator – Theus, the Maker of the Universe. Those who are members of the Faith cannot believe in any other gods or powers, including sorcery (which the Church has proclaimed comes from Legion, the Great Adversary). The use of sorcery is acceptance of powers other than the Creator, a heresy that can only end with death and the burning of the guilty person's corrupted body.

Article Two: One True Faith

We believe in one holy and prophetic Church.

If there is only one true God, there can be only one True Church, and that is the Vaticine Church. In other words, only the rituals prescribed by the Prophets are ordained by the Prophets, and therefore ordained by the Creator. Those who follow the rituals and beliefs of the Church shall stand as the armies of the Prophet at the end of the world. All other churches are false faiths, deceitful lies that will lead a soul not to Paradise, but to the Abyss.

Article Three: The First Prophet

And in its Prophet, who spoke the Creator's message for man and his salvation; who foretold the coming of three further Prophets; who delivered himself unto his enemies; and who was martyred for us in the days of Augustin Lauren.

The First Prophet is the key to the Church's credo. It was he whom the Creator made to bring his message to the world, he who spread the prophecy of three who would follow, and he who told of the wonders they would perform, "continuing his work in Theus' name." He gathered followers, the first saints, who had achieved a state of enlightenment through reason, and with them preached that only through acceptance of one's fellow man (even those tainted by magic) can a person obtain salvation. Finally, it was he who – at the hands of vicious sorcerers and their corrupted rulers – was consumed by the raging flames of hatred and fear.

Article Four: The Second Prophet

And in the Second Prophet, who bore a staff; spoke the Creator's message, and delivered men from evil; and was betrayed by the unfaithful and was martyred for us.

The Second Prophet arrived from the now-infidel Empire of the Crescent Moon, claiming to be sent on a pilgrimage ordained by Theus. Though he was doubted, both for his claim and his skin, he struck dumb those who opposed his mission, and made powerless all sorcerers he encountered. And it was he who – claiming his flock were slaves of their homeland – led them back into the desert, only to be betrayed and murdered by the brothers of his birth.

Article Five: The Third Prophet

And in the Third Prophet, who bore a sword of pure flame; spoke the Creator's message; divided the righteous from the unrighteous; and made the way clear for him who shall follow.

The Third Prophet was born into a time of unrest, when the world was braced for coming conflict. Unlike his predecessors, however, he was neither understanding nor tolerant of the world's convictions, rising from within the ranks of noble blood and casting the gauntlet back at them, becoming the spark that ignited a war of faith. He shifted the home of the Church from Vodacce to Castille and changed the manner of thought across the world in one, decisive act, rupturing the harmony of the Church.

Article Six: The Last Prophet

And in the Fourth Prophet, who shall bear a balanced hourglass, who shall be announced by trumpets; and the dead shall awaken and he shall reign in the visible and invisible world forevermore.

Inevitably, mankind will learn the awful tribute due at the end of time. The Fourth Prophet will bring Armageddon, casting the world into a cosmic battle for the souls of man. His kiss will be the breath of life across the globe, and his army will be the ranks of the fallen. He will lead them all through death and anger and conflict into a new age of brilliant truth and glory, where our fates are our own and the faithful shall live in the beauteous service of Theus forever.

Organization

Since the foundation of the Vaticine by the First Prophet, the administrative system has used the number ten to divide each tier of its hierarchy. Entire nations are divided up into religious districts, even if they do not necessarily conform to political districts, and governed by a Church-appointed official.

The Church

In any region of Théah that has even the least recognition of the Prophets, one can find a church to tend the religious needs of the local citizenry. In fact, as of the Third Prophet's Declaration of Deference in 1267, "any fellowship without the blessing of a place of worship to the Creator shall be considered without the blessing of His Church", and so the first building erected in any new town is often a church.

In many places, the local church is the center of community and not only conducts Mass, but frequently becomes a court for magistrates, a hall for town meetings, and the center of a wide variety of festivals and holiday celebrations. It is a place of refuge for the needy, a hospital for the sick, and a sanctuary for those who claim to have seen the error of their ways.

The administration of a local church falls upon the most senior of its ordained priests. The High Priest, appointed within his own church by a vote of his peers and their congregation, represents the church in the Parish Council.

The Parish

The smallest district of Church administration is the Parish. A Parish consists of ten churches in close proximity. A Parish is governed by a Monsignor, who represents it in the local Diocese Council, and who is elected from among the High Priests of their Parish.

The Diocese

The next level in the Vaticine Church system is the Diocese. Each Diocese is made up of ten Parishes. A Diocese is governed by a Bishop who is also an elected position from within the Diocese.

The Arch-Diocese

The second highest, and most powerful, district within the Vaticine Church is the Arch-Diocese. Each of these extremely large districts is made up of ten Dioceses, and is governed by an Arch-Bishop who represents his district in the Hieros Council. An inner circle of ten Cardinals are elected from within the council of Arch-Bishops, represent their own Diocese, and maintain their Rectory in both Vaticine City and the seat of his council. It is considered quite an honor to have a seat of religious authority reside in a city, and many have gone out of their way to build elaborate cathedrals to house (and entice) Church officials.

The Hieros

With the exception of a Prophet, the most powerful position in the Vaticine Church is that of Hierophant, and the whole of the Prophets' Church is known as the Hieros. Each Hierophant has been elected to a life-long position from within the Hieros Council, consisting of the ten Cardinals of the Arch-Diocese. The Vaticine Church's highest seat resides in Vaticine City, located in the province of the Aldana family in Central Castille since the middle of the thirteenth century.

The position of Hierophant is a stressful one. As a method of making this burden bearable, the Hierophant has traditionally made use of the wise counsel of his Cardinals. Is has also been a tradition for the Hierophant to make visits every other year to one of the courts of the Vaticine Monarchs (King Sandoval or one of the Vodacce Princes) during the summer months.

Until the time of the Third Prophet, the seat of the Vaticine Church resided in Vodacce, and a vast majority of the Hierophants hailed from there until it moved to Castille in the thirteenth century.

Gender

The Vaticine Church believes in and promotes equality between the sexes, and its titles are genderless. There are no "priestesses" and such – only female priests.

Church Positions

Hierarchical positions (Monsignor and higher) in the Vaticine Church are elected from a council of their peers within the same district. Each term of service is for life or until such time as the Church official decides that retirement is preferable to expiring in office. Retired Church officials return to their duties as priests in the local church they began their religious careers in. The Vaticine Church canon that guides such procedures prescribes that all ten members of a council be present for a new leader to be elected. Decisions on matters of policy are usually put on hold until the election has taken place.

Rituals

There are an immense number of rituals performed regularly by the Priests of the Church of the Prophets. The following are among the most common.

Mass

This is the standard gathering of faithful within a church for the purposes of communal prayer. Most churches still hold Mass in Old Théan, though a few nations (Eisen and Avalon in particular) have translated the hymns and responses into their own native languages.

Baptism

Baptism within the Church of the Prophets occurs at the age of ten. The child in question receives an oral exam of his understanding of holy scripture. Failure results in a one-year grace period – called "deferment" – allowing the child to continue his studies until he succeeds.

Ordainment

Like Baptism, an oral exam is required for those who wish to join the Church as priests. As would be expected, the test is difficult, and failure results in a three-year deferment before another can be attempted. If the student fails again, he is not allowed a third attempt.

Marriage

Marriage is considered a social contract before Theus by the Vaticine Church. The wedded couple agree both to uphold the tenets of the Creator's message and to provide a new generation of children to do the same. Priests may marry, though their prospective mates must be baptized members of the faith.

Tomes

There are two primary books used by the Church of the Prophets. The first is the *Vaticine Book of Common Prayer,* which details religious etiquette, procedures and hymns, and the rituals of the faith. The second is the *Book of the Prophets*, which consists of four Vigils, one for each of the Prophets who have already come, and another for the Last, which was

delivered to the Third directly and allegedly documents the end of the world.

Church Philosophy

A gnostic church like the Vaticines is a little different from modern European faiths. The Gnostics were unconcerned with faith, but – as their name suggests – put a great deal of emphasis on knowledge. As far as the Church is concerned, it is knowledge, not faith, that brings one closer to the Creator, for understanding His works gives you insight into the secrets of the Universe. Listed below are a few philosophical quandaries the Church has investigated but so far has found no answer to.

Sorcery

There are many different philosophies within the Church regarding knowledge and its importance in understanding the Creator. However, almost all of them know that sorcery is a tool of corruption. It was not made by the Creator, but by an alien force that seeks to ruin the order in the universe. All sorcery is destructive in some fashion or another. Fate Witches rip at the strands that bind destiny together, while Montaigne Porté mages rip holes in the world itself. The Sidhe have taught the Avalons a clever parlor trick, Rune mages readily admit to meddling with the very source of Creation, and Ussuran shape-shifters are a strange lot on whom the Church has yet to declare official policy.

Determinism vs. Free Will

The main conflict going on in Church universities right now is the debate between determinists and those who hold faith in a new concept called "free will."

Determinism – at this time period – is the theory that all decisions that mankind makes can be predetermined. It is summed up with a pair of syllogisms:

Every event has its explanatory cause.
Every human choice or action is an event.
Therefore, every human choice or action has its explanatory cause.

That syllogism is followed up with:

Every human choice or action has its explanatory cause.
To have explanatory cause causes it not to be free.
Therefore, no human choice or action is free.

Many scholars within the Church have used this formula to defend the concept that mankind is indeed not free, as he supposes he is.

On the other hand, many scholars have argued that mankind must have a choice. They do not argue the logic of determinism, but instead argue the importance of indeterminism. "If man cannot choose," argued one scholar, "then all of nature is an impersonal, uncaring force and not the patriarch we have painted him to be." It is a heated debate among scholars, and not likely to be resolved any time in the near future.

Romantic Love

In our world, we have come to accept the existence of an emotion called "love." However, in Théah the very thought that such an emotion exists is one of the most controversial debates in history. The Church recognizes love as a concept, but not the love the poets write about. A man must love his neighbor, no matter who he is. A man must love his wife, no matter who she is. A wife must love her husband, no matter who he is. Love is for all of mankind, not just for one. The love the romantics write about is nothing more than lust, a base emotion.

On the other side of the fence, the romantics sing about a new kind of love, a love between two people that no other can experience, share or understand. It is a fire that flares up without reason and burns forever.

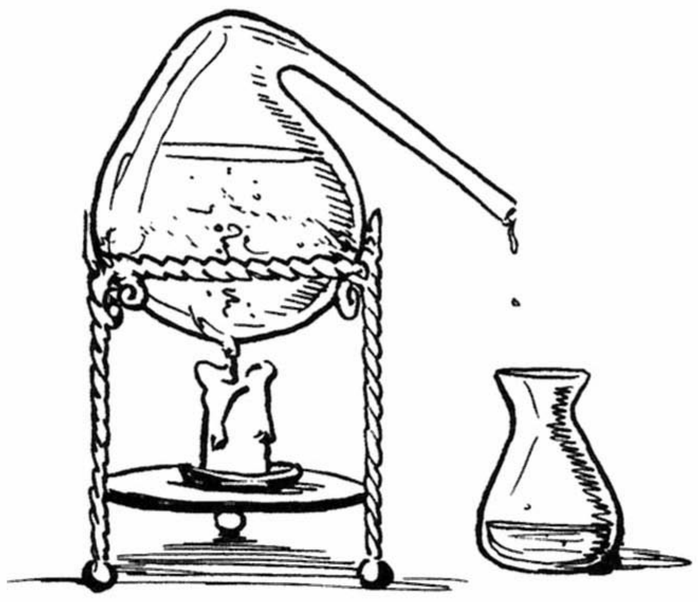
Is love as impersonal as the Church dictates, or is it as the poets claim, a mingling of two souls into one? Is there such a thing as True Love, and so, have any truly fallen under its spell? These questions are popular discussion among the courts of Théah, and while many scholars have secretly written on the subject, the Church has all but forbidden research into the subject of love in lieu of more practical and tangible matters.

The Inquisition

The Inquisition is a secretive order within the Church, created by the Third Prophet following his rise to power. He charged it with seeking out and destroying sorcery in whatever form it took. Inquisitors were answerable only to the Hierophant, and had vast authority over Church procedure. Vaticines were expected to assist them in any way they could. Thanks to their efforts, sorcery in civilized Théah remained underground for many centuries.

Luckily, they were always kept in check by the Hierophant. Each successive leader kept a close eye on the Inquisition, limiting its membership and ensuring that its power never grew beyond control. Overly ambitious Inquisitors would be quietly removed from their positions, which kept the order focused on its duties instead of seeking to control the Church.

Recently, however, that has begun to change. Over the centuries, the Church has gradually grown more conservative, giving the Inquisition greater leeway in carrying out its duties. That rising tide crested when the current Hierophant disappeared. Now, the Inquisition is answerable to no one and cannot be stemmed until a new Hierophant is chosen. Cardinal Ésteban Verdugo has moved quickly to seize power, expanding the Inquisition's goals and filling its ranks with devout fanatics. They declared war on Théah's universities: burning books and hanging professors who oppose them. Their enemies are kidnapped and executed as heretics; many who might oppose them are too frightened to act. In the space of a decade, they have come to dominate the Church's affairs.



The Inquisition's stated goals are the destruction of heresy and saving souls from Legion's flames. In practical terms, that translates into a ruthless campaign against sorcery, Objectionism and all forms of learning. Théah's universities in particular have suffered; Cardinal Verdugo has declared that the time for learning is past, and that humanity must prepare their souls for the Fourth Coming. He has cut university budgets, bullied professors into abandoning experiments, and killed those who persist in "unholy" studies. Most believe that his actions are a naked grab for power, but Verdugo insists that he is merely saving as many souls as he can. With the vast control he currently exercises, the argument is moot.

Organization and Methods

The Inquisition is organized around a small group of "High Inquisitors" – priests and Bishops charged with fulfilling the Third Prophet's edicts. They answer to Cardinal Verdugo, the Grand High Inquisitor who controls the entire organization. Beneath them is a bewildering array of assistants, lackeys and contacts, which they control through loyalty, fear or blackmail. Those willingly involved in the Inquisition's affairs may hold the title of "Inquisitor" if they wish – a rank beneath the High Inquisitors who command them.

Because the order is ostensibly secret, Inquisitors and High Inquisitors all have normal positions within the Church. Most masquerade as ordinary priests or mundane agents of Vaticine authority. That way, they can move among the populace and sniff out their prey without raising suspicions. Their targets are heretics – scholars, sorcerers, Objectionists and anyone who questions the Church's policies. Often, "blasphemous" literature and scientific research are targets as well. When they have amassed enough evidence against someone, they strike without warning, using surprise and terror to keep their target confused. They attack at night if they can and always make sure the local authorities cannot intervene. Victims are hanged on sight, or burned if the Inquisitors have time. Experiments, books and research notes are burned as well. The Inquisitors then vanish without a trace, leaving cryptic warnings to accompany the bodies. By maintaining their mundane identities, they can

fade away before help arrives. Their tactics have been devastatingly effective.

The Inquisition holds the most power in Castille, where the Vaticine Church is strong. Castille is the only nation where they can move openly among the populace, without hiding their true purpose. In the most fanatic areas, they can even act as *de facto* rulers. Other nations require more subtlety. Montaigne Inquisitors use the peasantry – who are still largely Vaticine – to mask their movements against the heretical nobility. The chaos of Eisen makes it easy for them to operate in that broken country, although they must avoid the forces of the *Eisenfürsten* who dislike religious fanatics. Vodacce, while dangerous, is tightly wound with political infighting, which the Inquisition can use to their advantage. There are few Inquisitors in Avalon, Ussura, or Vendel; all three nations are hostile to Vaticine zealots.

Two forces currently stand against the Inquisition: the secret society known as the Invisible College and the mysterious vigilante called El Vago. So far, they have been able to stem the worst of Verdugo's crimes, but unless a new Hierophant is chosen soon, their efforts can only slow him down.

The Objectionist Reform

In October of 1517, a twenty-eight-year-old monk walked up to the door of his Bishop and nailed a piece of paper upon it. This was not a unique act; there were other pieces of paper nailed to the door, each a list of topics the monks of the mission wished to discuss at the end of the week. But this paper was different. The author was named Matthias Lieber, and within the span of five years, the whole world would know his name.

Lieber's paper contained a list of inflammatory questions which he brought with him to the annual Diet in Castille. They challenged every notion of Church authority, calling for widespread reform and a fundamental shift in Vaticine philosophy. Lieber denounced his fellows in the presence of the Hierophant, demanding an explanation for "the Church's inexcusable crimes and decadence." The Hierophant excommunicated Lieber on the spot, demanding his death, but he was smuggled out of Castille by King Franz II and returned to Eisen.

In the safety of his homeland, Lieber used a new invention, the printing press, to spread his news. He also translated the Books of the Prophets into Low Eisen, and distributed them throughout the country. Through his efforts, a new religious movement called Objectionism slowly spread, first to Eisen and then to the entire world. Within a few years, it had reached every corner of civilized Théah.

Objectionism embraces the same basic ideals as the Vaticines, but with key differences. Under it, the Church no longer acts as an arbitrator between Theus and humanity: no one can interpose or "filter" the teachings of the Creator. Theus is everywhere and therefore needs no human institution to interpret His will. Priests cannot absolve sins; only Theus can. The Church cannot create miracles; only Theus can. Therefore, humanity should appeal *directly* to Theus for absolution and guidance, not depend upon the Church to do it for them.

They can do this by reading the Books of the Prophets and acting on what they read. They can express their faith through charity, hard work, and helping others in need of aid. "Theus," Lieber wrote, "has granted every creature a measure of His grace, which we must use to further His good works." While the Church can act as a facilitator in this scenario, it cannot claim any absolute authority or interpose itself between Theus and the individual.

Objectionism is organized roughly along Vaticine lines, but with fewer ranks and less authority. Individual priests are called "chaplains," who each oversee a single church. "Deacons" are senior chaplains who each coordinate twenty churches. Above the deacons are "Apostles" who coordinate the church's efforts for an entire province or nation. They are the highest branch of the faith; there are twenty-five of them in all. No apostle has authority over any other, and each is considered equal in the eyes of the church. Apostles are elected by the deacons, who can also remove them from office by a vote of no-confidence.

There are no dioceses, no bishops and no Hierophant; chaplains cannot absolve sins or declare heresies. Fasts,

pilgrimages, and miracles are unnecessary. Baptisms take place at age seven, and the children are not required to take an exam. A chaplain's official duties are fairly limited – holding mass, overseeing marriages and conducting funeral rites – but he or she is expected to serve as an example to his or her congregation. When not spreading the word, Objectionist priests are expected to work in universities and hospitals, bettering the lives of their fellow men.

Needless to say, the Vaticine hasn't taken well to this new faith. For one hundred years after Lieber's teachings, tensions between the two sects rose until exploding into the War of the Cross. After thirty years of bloodshed, Théans have come to the inevitable conclusion that the continent will remain forever divided between Objectionist and Vaticine faiths.

The Nations and Their Faiths

Avalon

Elaine "refused to acknowledge the Castillian right to rule Avalon" by throwing off the Church's control in 1659. Elaine also declared herself the final authority on all spiritual matters, making her the Hierophant's ecclesiastical equal. Inismore and the Highland Marches have always resented Church authority and were quick to follow her lead.

Castille

No nation is as devoutly Vaticine as Castille, the home of the Church of the Prophets. Every Castillian attends Mass at least once a week and the few Objectionists in the country are very quiet about their affiliation. While Castille may be the stronghold of the Church, however, she still finds a vengeful foil in the Vodacce cardinals. The Vodacce have such a firm hold on Church hierarchy that Castille must bargain for any political ground.

Eisen

No other nation shows the scars of the Church's recent troubles more than Eisen. Half of Eisen is Vaticine and the other half is Objectionist.

Montaigne

Montaigne is currently divided between its peasantry, who are devoutly Vaticine, and its nobility, who have consistently rejected Church authority. If the Cardinals had their way, the entire nation would be excommunicated. However, it takes a Hierophant to perform such an act, and the Church is missing one of those these days.

Ussura

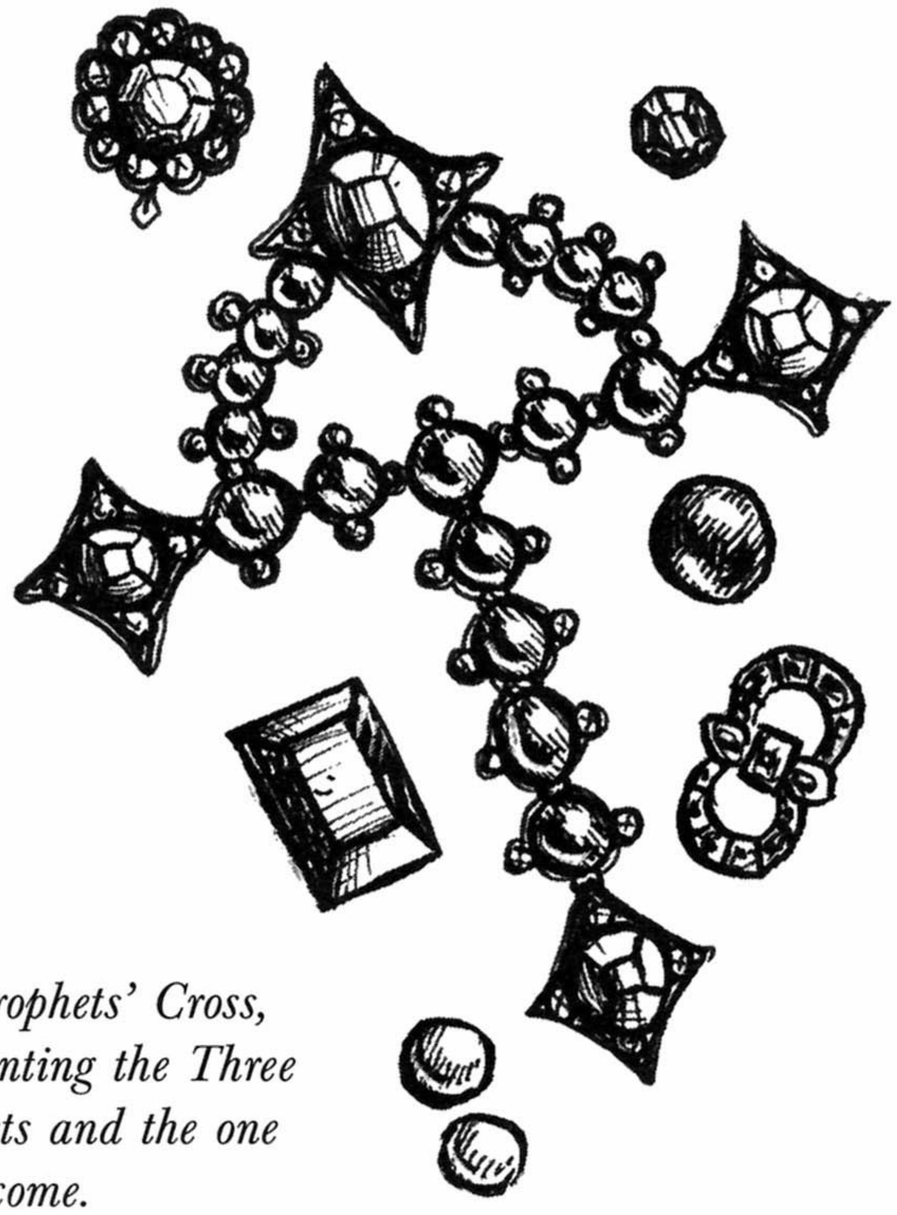
The Ussuran Orthodox Church follows the teachings of the First Prophet only. The First Prophet got it right the first time, after all. Why do you need a second and a third? The Church, on the other hand, couldn't care less what a country of backward-born barbarians believes.

Vendel

While the Vestenmannavnjar cling to their ancient pagan religion, the Vendel have taken up with the more forward-thinking Objectionist movement.

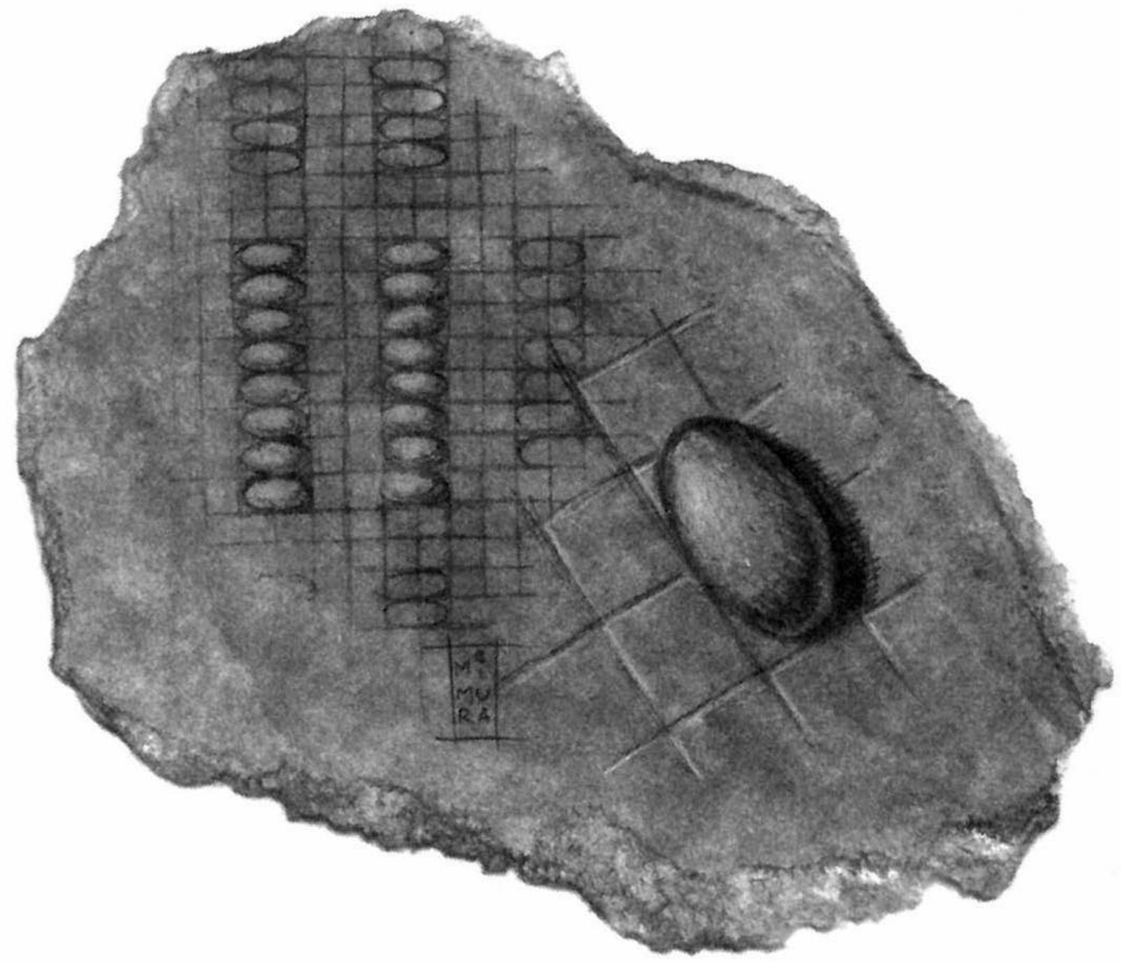
Vodacce

Vodacce was, is and always will be Vaticine.



The Prophets' Cross, representing the Three Prophets and the one yet to come.

Syrne Ruins in Théah



Scattered throughout Théah lie the ruins of a society older than man, generally known as the Syrne. The ruined cities of this elder race are a treasure haven for men and women willing to risk their safety for the knowledge and riches of the unknown.

Who the Syrne were remains largely a mystery. Vast caverns have been discovered in Montaigne, Vodacce and Eisen, caverns which were never carved by human hands. Although there some believe the miles of catacombs beneath Vodacce might be a product of nature, there is no such doubt about the other sites. Both the extensive tunnels under Montaigne, and the huge caverns in the Hills of Eisen show signs of construction and ornamentation by an intelligent race.

The Syrne apparently lived across most of Théah at one time, and partial artifacts appear everywhere from the most distant islands to recently plowed farmers' fields. Well preserved sites are more difficult to come by, but optimistic adventurers continue to search for them.

Scholars have long sought objects and artifacts recovered from these old civilizations, and items composed of precious metals and gems have attracted those seeking wealth. But more recently, two specific groups have raised the stakes of the game.

More than half a century ago, Cameron MacCormick founded the Explorer's Society in Avalon. Since then, the group has grown in power and prestige, and boasts houses in several nations. Members of the Explorer's Society dedicate themselves to learning as much as they can about mankind's predecessors. They constantly seek out new ruins and record whatever they learn. The artifacts they find are preserved and sent back to the Society Houses for study.

On the other side of the coin, groups of adventurers, either independent treasure seekers or parties funded by Théah's nobility, have also stepped up their search for Syrneth remnants. Less interested in the tedious pursuit of information, these groups care mainly for the money. In the last few years, Syrneth artifacts have become the fashionable hobby of the nobility. Private collections are a source of prestige, and the truly decadent show off their wealth by incorporating the artifacts into their daily dress and ornamentation. These nobles offer a high price for such trinkets, keeping fortune hunters of all stripes busy searching for more.

The Sites

The remains of the Syrne are obvious in some places. Buildings in Montaigne, inhabited for centuries by human beings, were clearly not built by them. They stand tall but impossibly slender, with no means of support. In other parts of Théah, whole cities have been buried by more than a millennium of dust and weather. Only through extensive excavation have explorers learned anything at all about them.

Along with the natural dangers of this kind of exploration – cave-ins, flooding, poisonous gas – elaborate traps lurk at some locations, ready to strike the unwary. Other areas are homes to unnatural animals not listed in any encyclopedia or travelogue who attack any hapless adventurer unlucky enough to wander into their lairs.

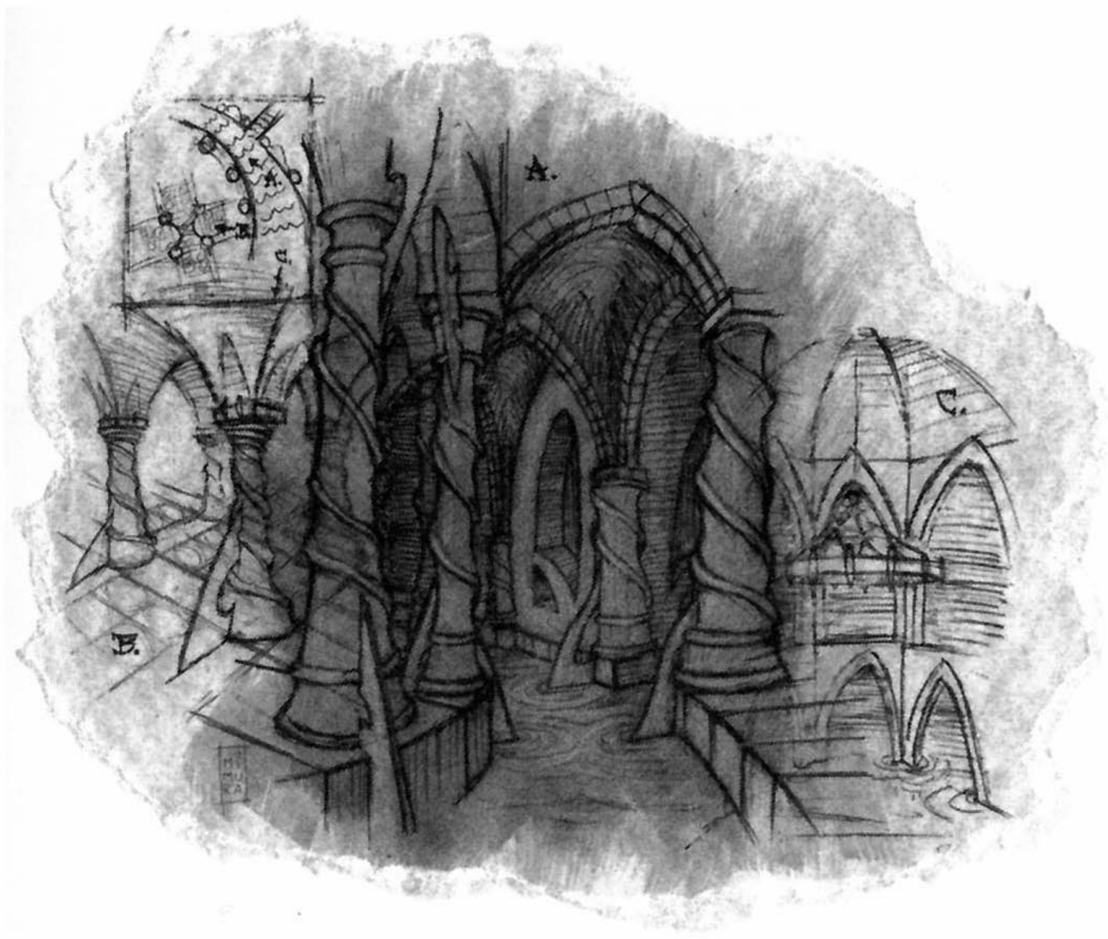
The Montaigne Tunnels

Beneath Charouse, the capital city of Montaigne, runs an extensive set of tunnels. Although maps detail some of the major tunnels, no record exists of exactly how far they extend, and many of the narrower off-shoots are unrecorded. The major caverns are approximately 15 feet tall and 10 feet wide, although in some intersections they are much larger.

The tunnels have existed longer than the city and were obviously created by a deliberate hand. Spiral pillars support stone archways, and decorative carvings are etched into some of the blocks lining the walls. The stone is not identifiable as any normally found in the region.

Whatever purpose they may have served initially, the tunnels are presently used as the city's sewer system. The bulk of the city's refuse runs through the lengthy tunnels, but as of yet, no one is quite certain where that waste drains to. Portions of the tunnels also function as home to some of the city's less fortunate residents.

Several parties from the Explorer's Society have made forays into the tunnels beneath Montaigne's capital city. Although the most accessible passages are filled with grime, some parties have made interesting finds further in. They've discovered several pieces of metal which appear to be body ornamentation that would fit a humanoid figure. Some have argued that the pieces aren't artifacts at all, but instead discarded pieces of Montaigne finery. However the style is unlike anything in the Théan courts, and the items were unearthed further down than any of the city's waste has traveled.



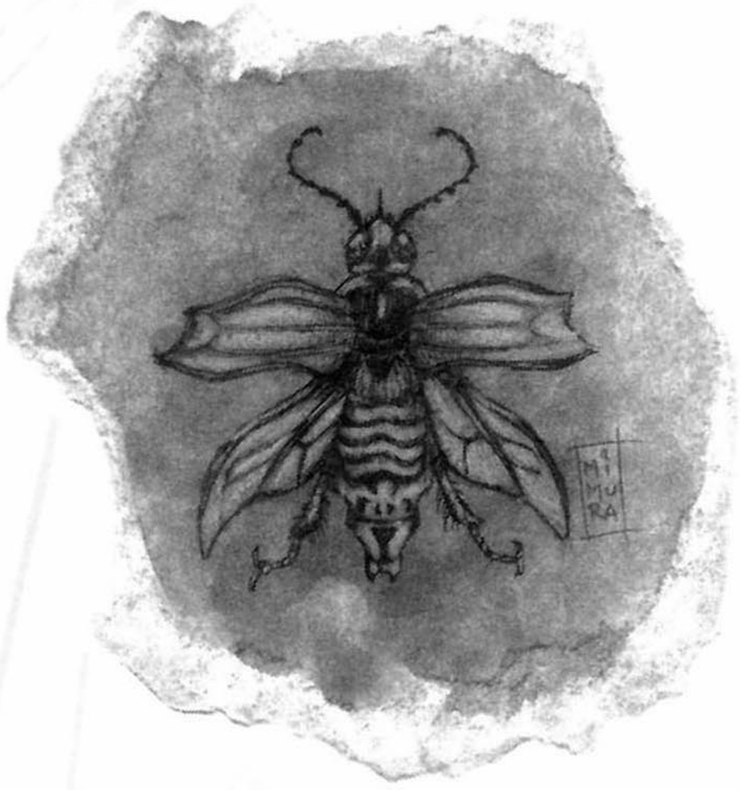
The most impressive discovery has been the "Star Map" located deep in the tunnels. It consists of a vast, spherical chamber, with a narrow bridge running through the center, suspended nearly 50 feet from the highest and lowest points of the sphere. Gemstones line the walls, floor and ceiling, creating what appears to be a fairly accurate map of Théah's heavens. However, along with the familiar points of light, a number of stones are set at points that appear in the sky to be only empty space. The explorers who found it estimate that the chamber lies almost directly beneath the Empereur's palace.

The Empereur of Montaigne is not friendly toward the Explorer's Society. Charouse's city guard and the local residents have gone out of their way to make the visitors feel unwelcome. Shortly after the discovery of the star map, the explorer party found their rooms ransacked and many of their research notes missing. This has led to some speculation as to how much the monarchy knows about the strange site beneath their city... and what they'd like to keep hidden.

The Eisen Caverns

Further evidence of the Syrne lies in the hills of Eisen. Little exploration has been done, since all of the known sites are uncomfortably near to the Dracheneisen mines, but a few freelance adventurers have dared enter the closely guarded mines. Those who did so and lived came away with indisputable evidence that something walked on Terra before men.

Caverns over 200 feet in height lie hidden in the great hills. Stalagmites the size of whole buildings dot the rocky surface. It could be argued that the caverns occurred naturally, but there is no way to say the same of the detailed and deliberate carvings that cover the stone from top to bottom. The carvings portray spiraling designs and etchings of figures both humanoid and animal. The figures are carved



in such a consistent way as to suggest a method of communication as well as a work of art.

Of all the Princes, only Nicklaus Trägue of Freiburg allows strangers to see the interior of his mines. For a price, he took a group of Explorers into the caverns, where they saw the great embroidered and bejeweled cloths with symmetrical cutouts positioned like some kind of a harness. However any animal that the cloth could fit would have to be enormous, with a head at least twelve feet long.

The Vodacce Catacombs

There is a great deal of debate as to whether the labyrinths beneath Vodacce are a naturally occurring geographic feature or a deliberate accomplishment. Each of the Vodacce islands formed from hard, non-porous rock. The cities rise up from the surface, but beneath them runs an even more complete set of tunnels. They do not appear to follow any set pattern, and their surfaces are rough and unpolished. However, shelves in the stone appear at regular intervals along both sides of the passageway.

The tunnels span for uncharted miles, similar to those in Montaigne. These are smaller, some 7–8 feet high and 5–7 feet wide. Also, they run in levels, stacked one on top of the next, which appear to go all the way down below sea level. Salt water floods the lower levels, reaching higher when the tide rises.

Since Vodacce islands are small and rocky and their mainland is largely marshy, the Vodacce have put the tunnels beneath them to good use. The niches in the cavern walls can accommodate a human body, so they've served as the Vodacce's tombs for several generations. This raises another exploration problem: it can be difficult to tell if anything found in the tunnels has remained there for hundreds of years, or whether the sea has recently washed it in or down from the human remains above.

The Vodacce Mountains

In the mountains on the eastern border of Vodacce, just at the edge of the Crescent Empire, lie a series of passages carved directly into the hillsides. They were discovered some 30 years ago by a group of bandits, seeking a place to hide, who found an entrance covered by dense vegetation.

A group of Knights of the Rose and Cross tracked the bandits sown soon after, and dispatched them in short order. Within the caverns they discovered large rooms connected by narrow paths. The walls were set at regular angles, but the shapes of the rooms were odd. Upon careful study they learned that the chambers could be broken down into regular-sized hexagonal segments.

Within the deeper chambers, the Knights found whole walls of a substance similar to amber, but more brittle. Pieces of what appeared to be armor, shaped roughly for a humanoid figure, were encased in the substance. In some cases, whole suits hung suspended in place. In others, the "amber" had crumbled leaving odd pieces: a forearm segment here, a helmet there. The amber substance was brittle enough that a few sharp blows could shatter it, but this damaged the encased armor as well in some cases. Members of the Explorer's Society were called in; they discovered that the substance could be heated until soft and the armor could then be removed safely. Since its discovery this "Syrneth armor" has become extremely popular with members of the nobility. Although too delicate to withstand any real damage, it's widely worn for effect.

Additional caverns have been found through the mountain range and freelance "diggers" can be found there regularly looking for pieces to bring back. Expeditions in the area are

somewhat treacherous though. Because the area is so near the border of the Crescent Empire, the Vaticine church is particularly unfriendly, and regularly patrols through the area. Rumors have spread of similar sites in the mountains north of the river, those separating Eisen from Ussura, but as of yet those rumors are unconfirmed.

Other Sites

In addition to these well-known areas, smaller pockets of Syrne civilization are scattered about Théah. The most notable are those on the far western isles, which were apparently a haven for the Syrneth civilization. The most famous of these are the Thalusian Islands, located to the west of Avalon, but countless others exist as well. Every island and archipelago, it seems, has some trinket waiting to be discovered. Explorers journey there on a regular basis, for they do not need any nation's permission to search the ruins. They must dodge pirates and treasure hunters, as well as the dangers of the ruins themselves, to find what they are after.

Other areas in Théah have produced more stories than artifacts. Groups returning from Ussura have reported aeries high in the mountains too large for any bird they've seen. Pirates tell tales of boiling lakes on islands far to the south, and the remains of giant insects that they've found there. Some tales are more outrageous than others, but anyone who enters Syrneth ruins without taking every precaution can only blame himself should the unexpected occur.

Théah's Monsters

Legends of foul and terrifying creatures abound on Théah, mostly in wild and uncivilized areas. They differ from mundane creatures by their ferocity and their threat to human beings. Most are unintelligent, though some have the capacity for reason. It is these intelligent monsters that explorers have learned to fear the most. They sometimes



establish civilizations far from the shores of man, and when explorers dare to intrude on their homes, they inevitably receive an unfriendly welcome.

The Bestiary

Constanzo Rodriguez, a notable member of the Explorer's Society, has spent most of his life cataloguing Théah's more remarkable fauna. His *Complete Bestiary* is an ever-expanding work that has brought great prestige to the elderly Castillian. The largest entries – the ones listed below – are creatures most often seen by Théans, or at least, the creatures that cause mankind the most trouble.

Ghosts

Ghosts seem to be the lingering spirits of the departed. Often wandering the places they died, ghosts usually look exactly as they did at the instant of death. This means that they might be carrying their head around if they had it lopped off by an executioner, or their clothing might be forever stained with blood. Some ghosts are believed to interfere with certain types of sorcery in their vicinity. For instance, ghosts spotted in Montaigne will often prevent Porté from working near them. The Montaigne have also been able to catch ghosts in mirrors (a very specialized and rare talent), and many nobles use these captured souls for ghastly entertainment at their lavish parties.

Ghouls

Ghouls are strange, ape-like creatures that seem to sense wounded creatures from miles away. They prefer to feed on still-living flesh, but are usually too weak to capture it themselves, so they feast on animals that have injured themselves. These beasts make no distinction between wounded animals and wounded humans. Often, field hospitals must be guarded at night, for ghouls have been



known to slip inside and attack the wounded men. Most soldiers are deathly afraid of being found in a weakened state by a ghoul, and ghouls following an army are seen as a very bad omen.

Kobolds

Often encountered in uninhabited forests, such as *die Schwartzen Walden* in Eisen, kobolds are the models for the grotesque stone rainspouts often found atop cathedrals and other important buildings throughout Théah. They are bloodthirsty, territorial beasts who will not move into an area if they see another of their kind living there already. The statues are an attempt to fool them into thinking that the area is already inhabited. These beasts attack using their oversized fangs and claws, and are difficult to injure. Their bite is mildly poisonous. Kobolds often hoard shiny objects in their lair, which might be a burrow, a cave, or just a hollow log.

Sirens

The sirens possess an upper torso similar to a woman's, and the lower body of a fish. They feed almost exclusively on meat, and have a preference for human flesh. They have been known to imitate drowning women near ships, in the hopes that a gallant sailor will attempt to rescue them. In other instances, they swim up next to ships anchored in shallow bays and motion for the sailors to join them for a swim. Should all these subterfuges fail, sirens will still follow a ship in hopes of a shipwreck. Once a sailor is in the water, the sirens quickly swim up to him, emitting a soothing warbling noise. They use their shark-like teeth and sharp nails to tear the sailor apart, gobbling down large chunks of meat, which their necks stretch to accommodate. The keening noise that they make while feeding seems to be a sound of satisfaction or happiness, and has come to be known as the "siren's song." There are few noises a sailor fears more.

Zombies

Zombies are corpses that have not ceased to move. They disdain the use of weapons, preferring their own filthy talons. In spite of this primitive attitude, they show a fair degree of cleverness, and perhaps even actual reasoning, although they never speak. It is believed among churchgoing Théans that zombies are created when a man who is too proud of his own accomplishments dies of unnatural causes. Their obstinate pride prevents them from moving on into the afterlife. Constanzo's *Bestiary* has disputed this claim in its latest edition. He says that there is evidence that a zombie's condition is similar to a disease, and that the condition is spread through contact with existing zombies. Unfortunately, since zombies are so difficult to destroy, the few cadavers he has obtained have been too mangled to perform a proper dissection on. Zombies are encountered near the seas more often than anywhere else.

Other monsters of note include the drachen, the griffons, and the night terrors. None of these beasts are encountered very often – no one has seen a drachen in living memory – and they are poorly understood. It is known that night terrors somehow invade a person's dreams to attack them, and that griffons attack in packs of fifteen to twenty members, but the details of their behavior are so sketchy as to be worthless to the average explorer.

Monsters as the Seven Sins

The Church has identified certain monsters with the seven deadly sins. The following litany is taught to young children to help them identify the sins within themselves. These monsters aren't necessarily the most common, simply those the Church feels best exemplifies the seven sins.

"The Pride of the Zombies has brought them to doom,
The Ghosts, full of Envy, lurk near in the gloom.
The Greed of the Kobolds drives them to kill.
The Gluttonous Ghoul on men has his fill.
A Lust for the Sirens brings a man's death.
The Night Terrors steal a Slothful man's breath.
The Wrath of the Drachen roars from its den,
But a man without sin is a king among men."



Hero

Part Three

Helena

She dodged another sword thrust, this one leaving a hole in her coat that would require stitching. Helena spun backward, caught the sailor's arm, wrenched hard until she heard the bone pop, then clobbered him over the head with a heavy punch that splintered pain into her fist.

"Theus!" she cursed as another sailor jumped at her. She side-stepped his leap, fell over a body and cursed again. "To the Abyss with this!" she screamed, pulled her flintlock from her coat and put it out in front of her. Two sailors spotted her and smiled, advancing.

"One of you is fish feast tonight," she shouted. "Which one?"

Both stopped. She nodded. "I thought so."

She spotted a doorway and stairs leading down. She pushed her feet against the blood-slick deck and ran for the hold.

The stairs led to a long hallway, half-filled with sea water. Helena lifted the flintlock above her head and started wading through. The water seeped through her clothes, almost freezing her skin. She gasped and heard her voice echo down the corridor. Further down, she heard steel against steel. She tried moving faster, but the icy waters refused.

She moved closer. Voices echoed back at her. Then, a shot that stopped her and the sound of steel clashing. She felt the water pulling on her balance, but she stood still.

Damn it all, girl. You've dodged Syrneth death traps. Move your damn feet!

She heard the sound of wood cracking and the water began to move. Fast. She kicked against the suction, but it dragged her faster and faster forward. She spilled into the hold, catching a heavy crate just in time to see a black-clad figure get sucked straight into a hole in the hull and out into the water.

Two more men were there, each holding tight to wooden beams.

"Damn!" one of them screamed.

Helena looked up, recognizing the voice. "O'Connell? Is that you?"

"Helena? What are you *doiughb*..." his last words cut off by a gulp of salt water.

We have to get out of here, she thought. Think, girl, think!

The ship lurched, and the second man was sucked out the hole, screaming as he went. Helena saw his slender, fear-filled face as it disappeared and wondered if she'd ever be able to forget it.



O'Connell

Losing grip with just one finger sucked him under the water. He went spinning toward the breach when he slammed one of his blood-stained knives into the side. His head felt like it would explode at any moment. He plunged his second knife into the hull and pulled upward. Then, he pulled out the

first knife and did the same. Within seconds, his head was above water and shouting Helena's name.

"Over here!" she shouted.

O'Connell looked around, his wet hair splashing into his eyes. "Where?"

"By the entryway! O'Connell, the water is too high! The corridor's flooded. We can't make it back that way!"

The Inish shook the water out of his eyes and looked for something – anything – they could use. *Don't fool yourself, lad*, he heard himself think. *The ocean takes what she wants. You know that.*

"When did the ocean ever want the likes of me?" he said out loud, almost finding his smile.

The water was nearly to the top of the hold and rising. Already, he could feel the burn fading in his toes and fingers.

"Helena!" he shouted. "Grab a crate, cut the line and hold fast!"

"Did you hit your head, Inish? We'll be crushed!"

"Better than drowning!" His left knife was already slicing a line while his left wrist twisted through the ropes tied to the crate. "Do it! The crates will float to the surface. We can swim back to the ship!" One last slice and he'd be sucked out the cavity. "Are you ready?"

No response.

"Helena? Can you hear..." his line snapped and he felt his body lurch toward the breach. He tried screaming her name once more, but got a mouthful of sea water for his effort. Something hit the back of his head and everything went cold and black.

Villanova

Cold. Cold. Cold.

A flash of light in the darkness.

A voice.

Warm. Warm. Warm.

He was on her floor, in her arms, and she was holding him tight. His wet clothes clinging to his frigid skin. The night air like a thousand slivers. He couldn't stop shivering.

"Giuseppe, be still."

He opened his eyes, looked up and saw her beautiful face, looking down at him.

"You're safe now. Safe here with me."

He smiled, his teeth chattering.

"I live," he whispered.

"Indeed you do."

He lifted his hand to touch her face. His fingertips felt the heat of her skin and it almost burned him. "My beloved," he whispered. "I have it. The Vendel thought she could steal it from us, but she was wrong."

"My beautiful, cunning lord. I knew you would bring it back to us." She held him closer. "Where," she asked, "where did you hide it?"

"It is close. Well-guarded."

"You shouldn't have taken the risk, beloved. You should have come to me first."

He shook his head. "No. It is safe. Safer than the grave."

A knock on the door made her move. "Dry clothes and towels for you, my love." She left him, went to the door and opened it just enough to grab the clothes. "That will be all, Lucia." Then, she shut the door behind her.

She put the clothes by his side and reached for his shirt. He stopped her, holding her hand, glaring into her eyes. "Do not betray me, Clarisse."

She smiled and pulled his lips close. "Beloved. By tomorrow night, Good King Sandoval will be..." she hesitated, her lips touching his, "...safe within his grave."

Introduction

Before you sit down to play *7th Sea,* you are going to need a Hero. You learned how Heroes work in the *7th Sea* Primer at the beginning of this book, and now we're going to show you how to make your own. This is your opportunity to create a hero just like your favorites in fiction and film. The numbers and words on the Hero sheet aren't enough; you've got to know more about him than Traits and Ranks. There are some very important questions you'll have to answer first, questions that will turn your Hero from a two-dimensional caricature into a three-dimensional character. Start by getting a copy of the Hero sheet located in the back of the book. Then follow the procedure below.

Note: Some of the information presented here is also in the 7th Sea *Primer at the beginning of this book. We're presenting it again here so all the information is in one convenient location.*



Hero Concept

Before you start making a Hero, you should consider what kind of person you want to play. What country will he be from? Is he a noble? Where does he get his money?

The questions below will give you all the information you'll need to fill in the blanks on the Hero sheet.

You don't have to have a strong idea of your Hero's identity before you start, just a vague concept. But when you answer the questions below, take a moment to think about each one. How exactly does your Hero's smile grow on his lips? How does he handle hiccups? If he was forced to choose between his loyalty to his friends or his crown, how would he choose? Every question you answer brings you a little closer to a Hero that feels real.

The Game of 20 Questions

To better understand your Hero's personality, take a moment to look through and answer the questions below. By the time you are finished, you should have a much clearer idea of the Hero you want to play.

1. What country is your Hero from?

This question gives you a foundation upon which to build. When you understand your Hero's culture, you will begin to understand your Hero. Imagine how his environment helped shape his personality. Your homeland stays with you no matter where you go.

2. How would you physically describe your Hero?

First off, is your Hero male or female? Théah doesn't have as many prejudices as Europe did in the 17th century, but women can expect raised eyebrows when accepting challenges on their own behalf and performing other such "manly deeds."

Aside from sex, how does your Hero look? Start at the top of his head and work your way down to his feet. Focus on the things that reflect his personality and the way he is treated by others. Which is more interesting – the fact that your Hero is blond, or that he wears his hair in a single braid and scents it with contraband Crescent lotions?

Build and height are also important in determining how others see your Hero. The average height in modern Théah is about 5′ 6″, although certain nationalities are a bit taller or shorter.

3. Does your Hero have recurring mannerisms?

An accent, a nervous habit, or a peculiar expression of speech can serve as shortcuts to developing a personality.

Too many can turn a character into a clown, so pick one or two and run with them.

4. What is your Hero's main motivation?

What keeps your Hero going when his ship has been sunk and he's marooned on an island? Is it greed, love, or revenge? Perhaps the Hero dreams of freeing his homeland from foreign occupation or hopes to find a younger sister who was carried off by pirates.

5. What is your Hero's greatest strength? Greatest weakness?

Is your Hero really good at one particular thing? Maybe he's a master navigator and can guide a ship through the blackest night with only his wits to work from. On the other hand, does your Hero have something he's terrible at? Maybe animals don't like him, or he's nervous around ladies and blurts out less than intelligent comments. A Hero with no strengths is difficult to keep alive; one with no weaknesses is difficult to sympathize with. A Hero with both strengths and weaknesses has a more balanced personality and will develop into a richer roleplaying experience.

6. What are your Hero's most and least favorite things?

The secret of the soup is in the details. Does your Hero hate eggs? Perhaps the glistening sickly yellow of the yolk disgusts him. Maybe he has a favorite breakfast that he eats every morning, such as a cup of tea and a slice of toast spread with apple butter. Maybe it's not a food that your Hero loves or hates but a particular sight or smell? Some people find great solace in the sight of the stars above them, while others aren't happy unless they can smell the salt spray of the sea. This is a grand opportunity to add a touch of poetry to your Hero's soul.

7. What about your Hero's psychology?

Is it hard for him to restrain his anger or hatred? Does his passion always get the better of him? Maybe he thrives on the rush of adrenaline that battle brings with it and disturbs his comrades with his laughter during a fight. Does a particular song bring him to his feet stomping and clapping? What song or play brings tears to his eyes?

8. What is your Hero's single greatest fear?

It is a rare person that fears nothing at all. Even the greatest warriors may have a fear of heights or dread growing old. If your Hero is terrified of dying of old age and hears a rumor about a fountain that brings eternal youth, might he not search the world for it, even if the rumor came from an unreliable source? Sometimes a man's fears propel him to his greatest achievements.

Of course, many people fear simpler, more physical things than old age. Some have a dread of snakes or spiders, others have a horror of worms and slimy things, and a number of people experience panic attacks in dark, narrow places.

9. What are your Hero's highest ambitions? His greatest love?

When your Hero dies, what does he want people to say about him? Does he want to be remembered forever for his poetry? Maybe he hopes that tales of his battle exploits will outlive him. Maybe he just wants a small house and a loving wife, but ridiculous fortune keeps obligating him to go on one adventure after another. Perhaps he dreams of glory and a kingdom of his own, or a country reunited by his hands.

If he could live forever, what would he want to spend eternity doing? Sailing? Wooing beautiful women? Cataloguing the artifacts left behind by the Syrneth? Whatever his greatest love is, your Hero will take every opportunity to indulge in it.

10. What is your Hero's opinion of his country?

Is your Hero a die-hard patriot, blind to the flaws of his countrymen, or is he a man without a country, having grown tired of his homeland's foolishness long ago? Most people are somewhere in between, neither hating their country nor believing it can do no wrong.

11. Does your Hero have any prejudices?
Is there a group of people that your Hero immediately turns up his nose at? Perhaps he can't stand the smell of "those filthy peasants", or maybe a Vodacce Fate Witch killed his brother. There may be no reason for the Hero to hate this group, but he believes there's one. Traumatic childhood incidents can lead to a lifetime of hatred and prejudice that the Hero may never get over. For the sake of party unity, it's a good idea to hate a group that you know none of the other players want as characters.

12. Where do your Hero's loyalties lie?
Does your Hero loyally serve a certain noble? Maybe his loyalties lie with his family or his spouse. Perhaps his first concern is looking out for himself, or maybe he serves a greater cause.

13. Is your Hero in love? Is he married or betrothed?
Is there someone who makes your Hero's heart beat faster? Perhaps he is already married to the love of his life. If so, do they have any children? How old are the children? Maybe he's just betrothed to be married sometime soon, and the happy (or unhappy) event has yet to take place.

14. What about your Hero's family?
Decide on a family name. Then talk about your Hero's early childhood. List events that would have occurred before your Hero would even be able to remember them. Some of these events may be influencing your Hero's life without him knowing it.

Also, consider the family's social standing. A Hero from a rich family will certainly have a different outlook than a Hero from a poorer family.

15. How would your Hero's parents describe him?
This question reveals much about both your Hero and his relationship to his parents. Answer this one in the voice of your Hero's mother, then go back and answer it again for your Hero's father. You may come up with two very different answers.

16. Is your Hero a gentleman or gentlewoman?
Being a gentleman or gentlewoman means that your Hero attempts to follow the code of chivalry. Your Hero's word is his bond. Of course, there are those who see you as foolishly old-fashioned, but there's always the possibility of having a moon-eyed damsel or handsome young poet fall in love with you.

17. How religious is your Hero? What sect of the Church does he follow?
Religion is, for many people of Théah, their deepest passion. The Church of the Prophets has been the greatest power on the planet for over a thousand years, and for all the bureaucracy it has a number of redeeming qualities. It fosters learning and education, provides hospitals for the poor and needy, and is a great source of comfort for many people in their hour of need. True and honest men are often attracted to the Church for this reason, and they are more than willing to help it perform its good works.

Of course, there are many who see the Church's actions as evil. They look at the Inquisition and the Crusade as prime examples. They hate the things the Church stands for and would love to see it fall.

Then there are those people in the middle, who either don't worry about the Church since it doesn't affect their daily lives or believe in a religion that is a variant of what the Church preaches (such as Objectionism or the Ussuran Orthodox Church). These men try to live out their lives with as little official contact with the Church as possible, either out of fear, or lack of interest.

18. Is your Hero a member of a guild, gentleman's club, or secret society?
Contacts are important, and they can be made through these organizations. They are a source of adventures and information. From a roleplaying perspective, many tangible benefits come from being a member of these organizations. Perhaps your gentleman's club buys a communal copy of the latest archæology journals, or serves tea and biscuits every morning to members. The clubs your Hero joins also influence the type of people he meets. You find a very

different crowd of people in the Rose and Cross than you do in Madame Josette's Gentlewoman's Society.

19. What does your Hero think of Sorcery?
Not all people with Sorcery like it, and not all people without Sorcery hate it. It sometimes alienates people, and the Church preaches against it; some people will dislike you for no other reason if you possess it. On the other hand, some who lack Sorcery look at the power it brings its bearer and long desperately for magic of their own. They tend to purchase any runic items they can get their hands on, and sift through Syrneth ruins seeking mystic secrets lost to the world.

20. If you could, what advice would you give your Hero?
Take a good, long look at the other questions before you answer this one. Speak to your Hero as if he were sitting right in front of you, and remember to use the proper tone. You'll want to make certain your Hero actually listens to you when you give him this free advice.

Six Steps

When you sit down to create a Hero, you have 100 Hero Points to do it. Traits, Skills, Knacks, Advantages, Backgrounds and nearly everything else on the Hero sheet cost a certain amount of Hero Points. Heroes who spend points in Sorcery will have sorcerous blood and may create magical effects in the game. Those who spend points on a Swordsman's School have special knowledge of swordsmanship. Those who spend points in Traits will have a great deal of innate talent. Heroes who spend points in Skills will have a great deal of training. Heroes who spend points in Advantages, Arcana, and Backgrounds will have a great deal of drama in their past that comes back to help (or haunt) them every once in a while.

So if you spend more Hero Points in Skills than Traits, it could be said that your Hero has more training than innate ability. If most of your points are used to purchase pure sorcerous blood, then you will have to rely on the abilities it gives you in lieu of your inborn or learned abilities, especially if you purchased a high-cost adversary as a Background.



Traits

3

Traits can be found on page 109.

All Traits start at Rank 1. Increasing a Trait's Rank costs 8 Hero Points. Rank 3 is the highest a starting Trait may be, unless it is increased by the Hero's Nationality Bonus, in which case, it can start at 4.

Advantages

4

Advantages can be found on page 130.

All Advantages have their own Hero Point cost. You may purchase as many Points of Advantages as you like.

Personal Information

0

Before you do anything else, decide which nation your Hero calls home.

The Nations can be found on pages 34-48. Membership information for Secret Societies can be found on pages 79-84. It costs 5 Hero Points to join a Secret Society.

Backgrounds

6

Backgrounds can be found on page 157.

A Background costs 1-3 Hero Points. You may only have 4 Hero Points worth of Backgrounds.

Arcana

6

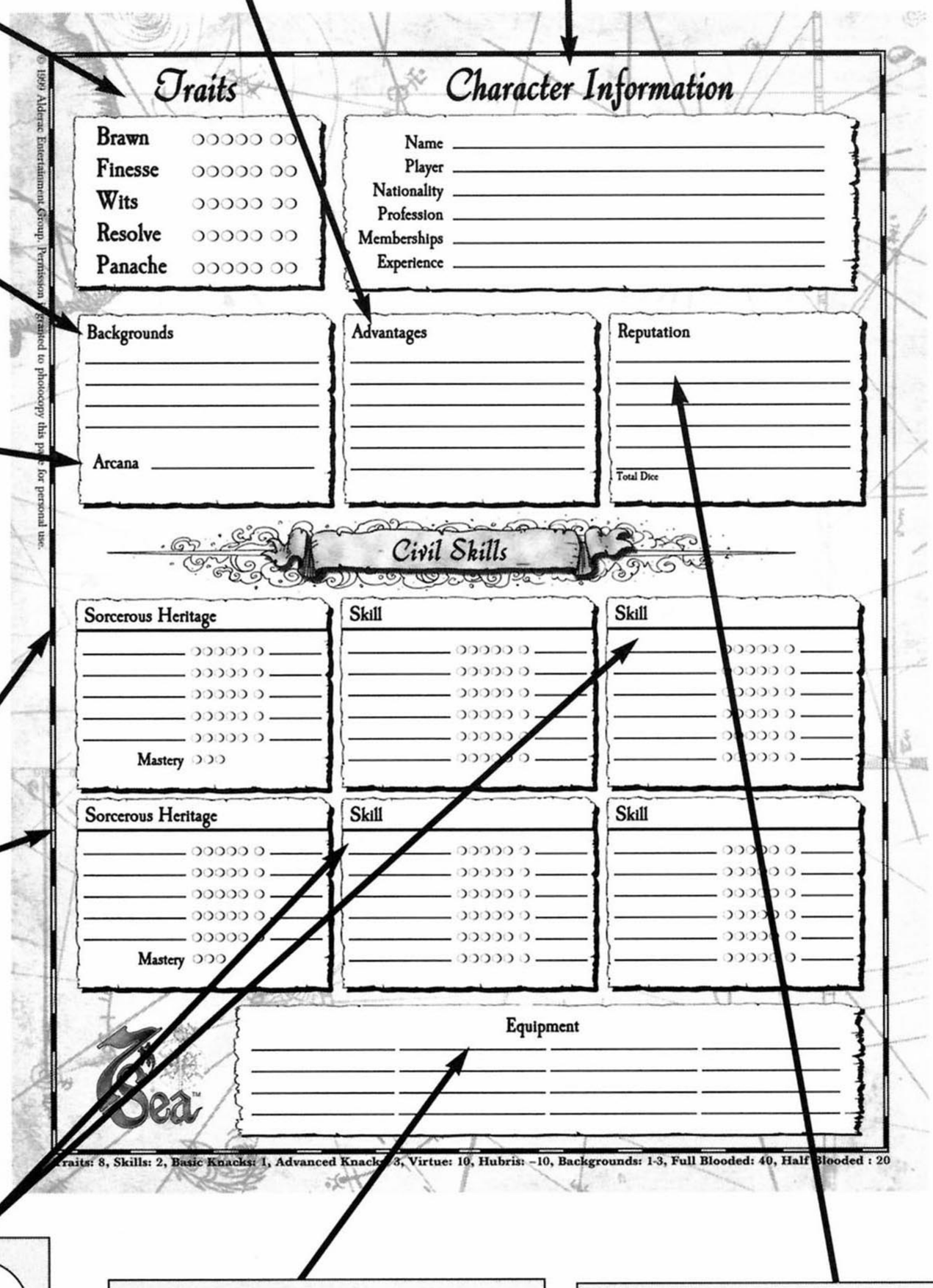
Arcana can be found on page 160.

A Hero may have only one Arcana – a Hubris or a Virtue. A Virtue costs 10 Hero Points. A Hubris gives the Hero 10 more Hero Points to spend.

Sorcery

1

Does your Hero have Sorcery? Half-Blooded costs 20 Hero Points. Full-Blooded and Twice-Blooded cost 40 Hero Points. You can write your Sorcerous Heritage in these two boxes.



Skills and Knacks

5

Skills and Knacks can be found on page 138.

It costs 2 Hero Points to purchase a Skill, which gives you Rank 1 in all the Skill's Basic Knacks. Increasing the Rank of a Basic Knack costs 1 Hero Point. Purchasing an Advanced Knack costs 3 Hero Points. No Knacks can begin above Rank 3.

Equipment

6

The Equipment List can be found on pages 166-167. Figuring your Hero's Starting Wealth can be found on page 122.

Reputation

6

Rules for Reputation can be found on page 119.

Traits

3

Traits can be found on page 109.

All Traits start at Rank 1. Increasing a Trait's Rank costs 8 Hero Points. Rank 3 is the highest a starting Trait may be, unless it is increased by the Hero's Nationality Bonus, in which case, it can start at 4.

Defense Knacks

5

Defense Knacks can be found on page 186.

Passive Defense is 5 + (Hero's Defense Knack x 5).

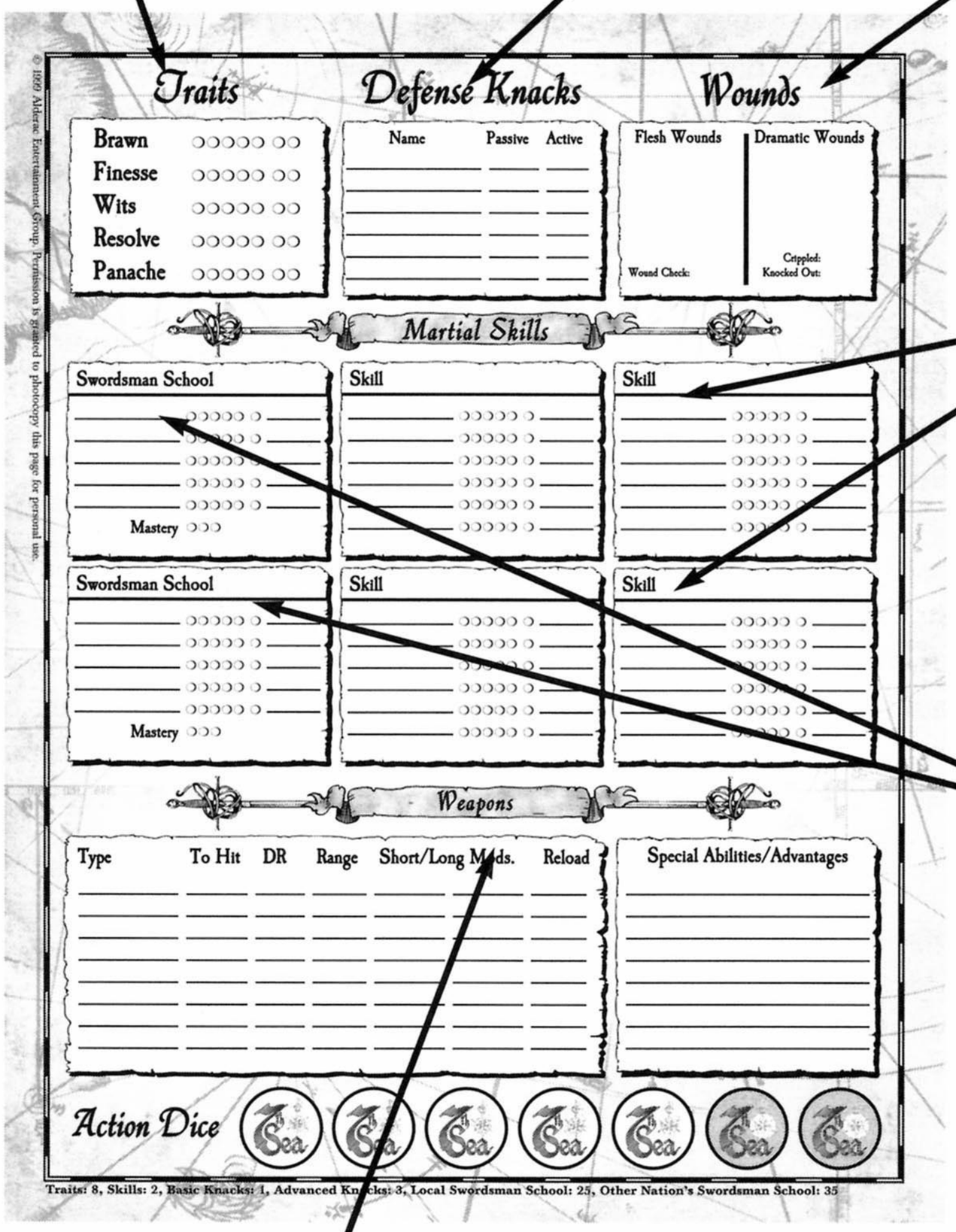
Active Defense is Hero's Wits + Defense Knack.

Wounds

6

Flesh Wounds and Dramatic Wounds can be found on page 189.

A Hero is Crippled when he receives a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to his Resolve. A Hero is Knocked Out when he receives a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to *twice* his Resolve.



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Skills and Knacks

5

Skills and Knacks can be found on page 138.

It costs 2 Hero Points to purchase a Skill, which gives you Rank 1 in all the Skill's Basic Knacks. Increasing the Rank of a Basic Knack costs 1 Hero Point. Purchasing an Advanced Knack costs 3 Hero Points. No Knacks can begin above Rank 3.

Swordsman

2

Did your Hero attend a Swordsman School? If so, it costs your Hero 25 Hero Points to attend a School from his homeland and 35 Hero Points to attend a Swordsman School from another country.

Weapons

6

The Weapons List can be found on page 188.

What's All This?

This two-page spread serves as a map to your Hero sheet. The boxes and arrows show you where each piece of information can be noted. The numbers in the circles indicate which Step in the character creation process that element comes into play.

Character Creation Step-by-Step

Step One: Sorcery

The first step is to decide if your Hero has sorcery. The cost depends on how strong your sorcerous blood is. Full-Blooded sorcery costs 40 Hero Points. Half-blooded sorcery costs 20 Hero points.

Step Two: Swordsman

The second step is to decide if your Hero has attended a Swordsman's School. Training from a Hero's "native" school costs 25 Hero points. Training from a foreign school costs 35 Hero Points.

Step Three: Traits

The third step is to put Hero Points into your Traits. Your Traits start at Rank 1 and it costs 8 Hero Points to increase a Trait by one Rank. Beginning Hero Trait maximum is 3 (except for Nation Bonus; see page 110).

Step Four: Advantages

The fourth step is to purchase Advantages, which give your Hero unique benefits such as heightened senses, an armed forces commission or membership in some of Théah's most exclusive clubs. The costs of Advantages vary, depending on the Advantage.

Step Five: Skills and Knacks

The fifth step is to purchase Skills and Knacks for your Hero. Purchasing a Skill costs 2 Hero Points. Increasing a Basic Knack costs 1 HP, while purchasing or increasing an Advanced Knack costs 3 Hero Points. You may not start with any Knacks higher than Rank 3.

Step Six: Finishing Touches

After Traits and Knacks, you have the opportunity to purchase a number of optional modifiers for your Hero.

Backgrounds provide your Hero with lingering back stories that need to be resolved. Backgrounds can cost anywhere from 1 to 3 Points. You cannot begin with more than 4 points of Backgrounds.

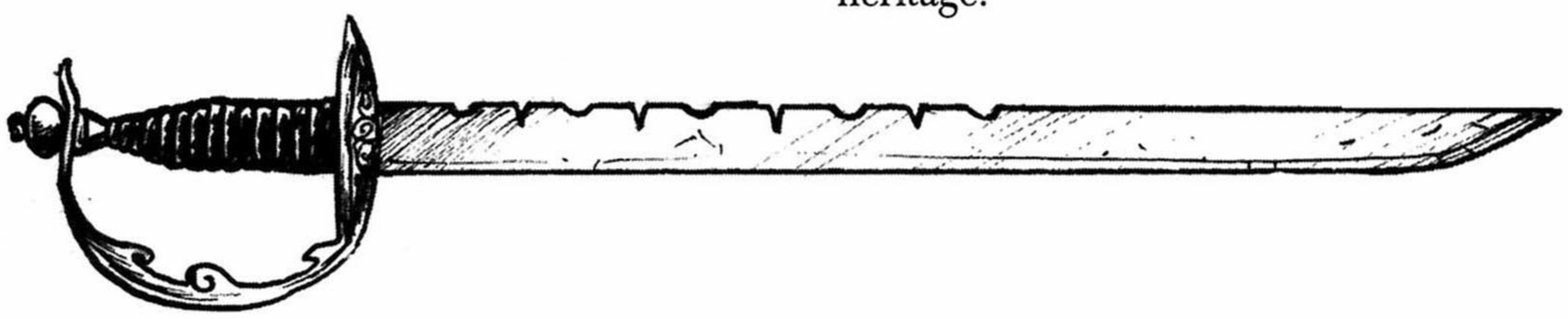
Arcana provide your Hero with a fundamental personality trait that either helps or hinders him. Arcana either cost 10 HPs or give you 10 more HPs to spend, depending on whether your Arcana is proper or inverted, respectively.

Finally, your Hero has three Determined Statistics that you cannot directly spend Hero Points on:

Wounds determines how much damage your Hero can take.

Reputation is a measure of how famous and well-respected your Hero is.

Wealth represents the amount of money you have to spend, and also the amount of money you receive over time – either as paid wages or as inheritance from your noble heritage.



The following sections will explain each one of these options to you, with examples along the way. The most expensive options (Sorcery and Swordsman Schools) are presented first, so that you can consider them before moving on to the smaller stuff.

Making a Hero in *7th Sea* takes six steps.

Step One: Sorcery

1) Sorcery or no Sorcery?

2) If Sorcery, then half-blood or full-blood?

Let's get the tough question out of the way first. Does your Hero practice sorcery?

If the answer is yes, then we have one last question.

Is he full-blooded, half-blooded or twice-blooded?

A full-blooded sorcerer can take full advantage of the Paths of Sorcery described in the section of the same name (see the "Drama" Chapter, page 200). If your Hero is half-blooded, then he can still practice sorcery, but not to the degree that full-blooded sorcerers can. He will reach his potential very quickly and go no further. Ever.

Sorcerous Heritage

Nationality	Sorcerous Heritage
Avalon	**Glamour**
Castille	***None***
Eisen	***None***
Montaigne	**Porté**
Ussura	**Pyeryem**
Vendel	**Lærdom**
Vodacce	**Sorte**

To be half-blooded costs 20 of your 100 Hero Points. Twice-blooded (has half-blooded from two different nations) or Full Blooded costs 40.

You can pick from five possible types of sorcery: Glamour (Legend), Lærdom (Runes), Porté (Doorway), Pyeryem (Shapeshifting) and Sorte (Fate). Each has certain unique powers and drawbacks, which are discussed more fully in the Drama chapter.

Step Two: Swordsman

The second most important question you have to ask yourself is whether you would like to have been trained at a school of swordsmanship prior to the beginning of the game. There are six primary Swordsman's Schools (military academies) in this book (one for each nation except Ussura).

If you would like to purchase membership in one of these academies, you must pay the cost for membership (25 points for a style from your own country, and 35 points for one from another nation).

Swordsman Schools

Nationality	Swordsman School
Avalon	**Donovan**
Castille	**Aldana**
Eisen	**Eisenfaust**
Montaigne	**Valroux**
Ussura	***None***
Vendel	**Leegstra**
Vodacce	**Ambrogia**

Step Three: Traits

Traits define your Hero's inner strength. Each Trait represents a specific part of your Hero's physical, mental or spiritual makeup. They are ranked from 0–5 (although some Heroes may achieve even higher potentials); the higher the

Nationality	*Trait Bonus*
Avalon	+1 Resolve
Castille	+1 Finesse
Eisen	+1 Brawn
Montaigne	+1 Panache
Ussura	+1 Resolve
Vendel/Vestenmannavnjar	+1 Wits
Vodacce	+1 Wits

Rank, the greater the potential of that Trait. All Heroes begin with Rank 1 in each of their Traits; it costs 8 HP to raise a Trait by one Rank. No Hero may begin with a Rank of more than 3 in any Trait, and no Hero may start with a Rank of 0 in any Trait.

Brawn
Brawn is a combination of strength and stamina, physical force and plain old endurance. In general, the higher your Brawn, the tougher and stronger you are.

Finesse
Finesse is a combination of speed, agility, and hand-eye coordination. The higher your Finesse, the more graceful your movements will be, and the more accurate you will be in hand-to-hand combat.

Resolve
Resolve is a measure of a Hero's willpower and determination. Once a Hero with a high Resolve makes a decision, nothing will deter him from his path. Also, the higher your Resolve, the more Dramatic Wounds you can take before falling unconscious.

Wits
A Hero's intelligence and charm are measured by his Wits. It is also sometimes used to measure how quickly he can think and react to unexpected situations. The higher your Wits, the less chance there will be for you to be outsmarted or tricked.

Panache
Finally, Panache is that "certain something" that sets your Hero apart from everybody else. Heroes with high Panache have a certain unique style about them that's hard to define, but easy to see. In game terms, Panache tells you how many Actions you can take during a Round.

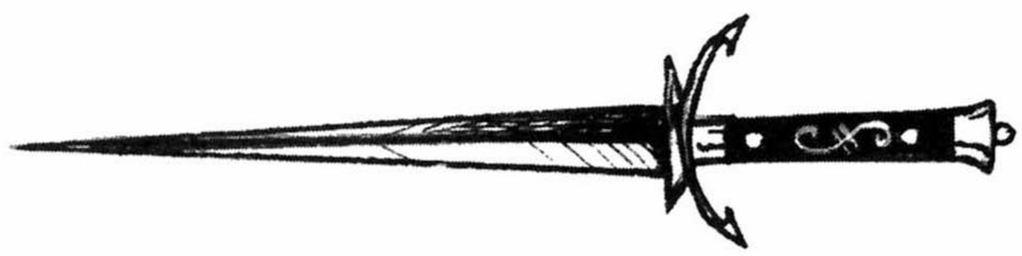
Bonus by Nationality
After you spend points on Traits, add 1 free Rank to one Trait, as determined by your Hero's nationality on the table to the left. This may increase the Trait to 4.

Note that pirates and other "nonpatriots" must still determine their nationality at the start of Hero creation, both to receive their Trait bonus and for the purposes of purchasing nation-specific benefits (such as Advantages).

Step Four: Advantages

There are a number of things that set the Heroes of *7th Sea* apart from the "commoners." Perhaps you are a professional soldier, or you could be particularly good-looking, or larger than average. Advantages are Hero options that customize your Hero concept by giving you a mechanical benefit for a Hero Point cost. Each of them represents an aspect of your Hero that makes him special. Write them down on your Hero sheet after you have paid the listed cost.

The full description of each Advantage can be found on page 130. We've provided a list of them, along with point costs, here for your convenience.



Step Five: Skills

Skills represent the training your Hero has acquired. If Traits define who your Hero is, then Skills define what he knows. Unlike Traits, not everyone has the same Skills. Just as everyone lives a different story, we all learn different lessons, even from similar experiences.

In Théah, there are a lot of different ways to get an education. A Hero can acquire his education at a Church university, at the military academies of the Eisen, in the black caverns of the Vodacce Fate Witches, or just by growing up on an Avalon farm.

Skills are divided into two categories – Martial and Civil. Martial Skills are learned in military academies and boot camps and are generally used in time of war, or at least in duels. Civil Skills, on the other hand, are those learned and used in less combat-oriented situations.

Purchasing Skills and Knacks

When your Hero purchases a Skill, he picks up a wide range of abilities. After all, when he attends a military academy, he learns more than just how to command; he learns to position artillery, to surprise the enemy, and to incite the men to fight more effectively.

These "minor Skills" are called *Knacks*. Skills themselves do not have Ranks like Traits, but Knacks do. In that sense, Heroes who have trained under the same merchant can learn different lessons and come away with completely different abilities. For instance, two Heroes apprenticed under the same blacksmith could have Merchant Skills that look something like this:

First Hero
Merchant
Blacksmith 3
Appraising 2

Second Hero
Merchant
Blacksmith 3
Haggling 2

Advantages

Able Drinker (1 Point)
Academy (4 Points; 2 Points if Eisen)
Appearance (Varies)
Castillian Education (Castillians only, 10 Points)
Citation (4 Points)
Connections (Varies)
Combat Reflexes (3 Points)
Commission (Varies; 2 Points less if Montaigne)
Dangerous Beauty (3 Points)
Dracheneisen (Eisen only, 20 or 40 Points)
Faith (5 Points)
Foul Weather Jack (5 Points)
Indomitable Will (3 Points)
Inheritance (Varies)
Keen Senses (2 Points)
Language (Varies)
Large (5 Points; 3 Points if Vendel or Vestenmannavnjar)
Left-handed (3 Points; 1 Point if Vodacce)
Legendary Trait (3 Points, 1 Point if Avalon)
Linguist (2 Points)
Membership (See Below)

Swordsman's Guild	*(3 Points)*
Merchant Guilds	*(4 Points)*
Musketeers	*(4 Points)*
Secret Societies	*(5 Points)*

Noble (5 or 10 Points)
This Advantage costs 10 Points, unless you have already purchased Sorcery, Dracheneisen, or Castillian Education, in which case it costs only 5 Points.
Ordained (4 Points)
Patron (Varies)
Scoundrel (3 Points)
Servants (3 Points)
Small (2 Points)
Toughness (5 Points; 3 Points if Ussuran)
University (3 Points; 1 Point if Castillian)

Skills have two kinds of Knacks – Basic and Advanced. In the example above (Merchant), Blacksmith is a Basic Knack, while Appraising and Haggling are Advanced Knacks. Basic Knacks are abilities you pick up with rudimentary training. Advanced Knacks are a little more sophisticated and specialized, and sometimes provide you with additional abilities.

It costs 2 Hero Points to purchase a Skill. When you do, you acquire all of its Basic Knacks at Rank 1 (unless otherwise stated). Additional Ranks in Basic Knacks (or the first Rank in a Basic Knack that you didn't receive for free) cost 1 Hero Point each. Ranks in Advanced Knacks (including the first) cost 3 Hero Points each.

Example 2.1: Adrian Quartermaine (an Avalon pugilist) has purchased the Pugilism Skill for 2 Points. He acquires all three of its Basic Knacks – Attack, Footwork, and Jab – at Rank 1. He does not need to invest any points in those Knacks; he gets them for purchasing the Skill. Adrian's player wants to increase his Basic Knacks, so he purchases 2 Ranks in Attack, 2 Ranks in Jab, and 2 Ranks in Footwork, costing him 6 Hero Points.

Adrian's Pugilism Skill (2 Points for the Skill, with the Basic Knacks at Rank 1):
Attack 3 (2 Points)
Footwork 3 (2 Points)
Jab 3 (2 Points)

Adrian's total cost so far: 8 Hero Points (2 for the Skill, 2 for the +2 Attack, 2 for the +2 Jab, and 2 for the +2 Footwork).

Example 2.2: Adrian wants to purchase the Uppercut Knack, which is an Advanced Knack in Pugilism. To do so, he has to spend 3 Hero Points for the first Rank and 3 Hero Points for any additional Ranks. Adrian decides to purchase a total of three Ranks in Uppercut, so he pays a total of 9 Hero Points (3 for each Rank). Now Adrian's Pugilism Skill looks like this:

Adrian's Pugilism (2 Points for the Skill, including Basic Knacks at Rank 1):
Attack 3 (2 Points)
Footwork 3 (2 Points)
Jab 3 (2 Points)
Uppercut 3 (Advanced Knack; 9 Points)

Adrian's total cost so far: 17 Hero Points (2 for the Skill, 2 for the +2 Attack, 2 for the +2 Jab, 2 for the +2 Footwork, and 9 for +3 Uppercut, the Advanced Knack).

Skills

Civil Skills

Artist
Courtier
Criminal
Doctor
Hunter
Merchant
Performer
Sailor
Scholar
Servant
Spy
Streetwise

Martial Skills

Archer
Athlete
Buckler
Commander
Crossbow
Dirty Fighting
Fencing
Firearms
Heavy Weapon
Knife
Panzerhand
Polearm
Pugilism
Rider
Wrestling

Combining Knacks

When purchasing Skills, watch to see if any two Skills give you the same Knacks. Two Knacks are considered the same as long as they have the same name and there isn't a different weapon or fighting style listed in parentheses after each. Thus, Footwork is the same under both Pugilism and Athlete, but Attack (Fencing) and Attack (Knife) are different Knacks.

When you get more than one Rank with the same Knack, add them together to get your total. Thus, if you get a Rank in Footwork from Pugilism and a Rank in Footwork from Athlete, you have a total of two Ranks in Footwork.

Remember that starting Knacks cannot exceed 3. If you have more than three of the same Knack to start with, you lose any additional Ranks.

In the example above, you only need to buy Ranks in one of the Footwork Knacks, since they are really both the same. Attack (Fencing) and Attack (Knife) are two different Knacks, and therefore wouldn't add together. You'd have to buy Ranks in them separately.

Special Knacks

Some Knacks on the Skill List have abilities listed in their descriptions. When you purchase these, you acquire the abilities as well. As most of the abilities include game mechanics that haven't been explained yet, keep them in mind when you get to the "Drama" chapter.

Unskilled Actions

If you try to make an Action and don't have the corresponding Skill (like trying to make a First Aid roll without First Aid), you suffer from two penalties:

1) None of your normal dice explode, though any Drama Dice you spend to improve the roll still explode as usual.

2) The Game Master adds 5 to the TN (this does *not* count as a Raise).

A Short Skill List

The full description of all the Skills (and Swordsman's Schools) can be found on page 137. We've provided a list of all the Skills and their Knacks here for your convenience. That way you can look over the Skills, read over the rest of character creation, and turn to the main Skill descriptions when you're ready.

Civil Skills

Civil Skills encompass everything that you can do that does not involve combat. Very few of the Knacks found in these Skills have any mechanics written into their descriptions.

Artist

Note: When you buy this Skill, you do *not* receive all the Basic Knacks at Rank 1. Instead, you receive only one Basic Knack at Rank 2. You may purchase additional Basic Knacks for 1 Hero Point each.

Basic Knacks: Composer, Drawing, Musician (specify instrument), Sculpting, Singing, Writing
Advanced Knacks: None

Courtier

Basic Knacks: Dancing, Etiquette, Fashion, Oratory
Advanced Knacks: Diplomacy, Gaming, Gossip, Lip Reading, Mooch, Politics, Scheming, Seduction, Sincerity

Criminal

Basic Knacks: Gambling, Quack, Shadowing, Stealth
Advanced Knacks: Ambush, Cheating, Lockpicking, Pickpocket, Prestidigitation, Scrounging

Doctor

Basic Knacks: Diagnosis, First Aid, Quack
Advanced Knacks: Dentist, Examiner, Surgery, Veterinarian

Hunter

Note: You begin with 3 of the following Basic Knacks at Rank 1. You may purchase additional Basic Knacks at Rank 1 for 1 Hero Point each.

Basic Knacks: Fishing, Skinning, Stealth, Survival, Tracking, Trail Signs, Traps
Advanced Knacks: Ambush, Animal Training

Merchant

Notes: You begin with any one Basic Knack at Rank 2. You may purchase additional Basic Knacks at Rank 1 for 1 Hero Point each. Also, most of these Knacks can affect a Hero's income (see Determining Hero Wealth, page 122).

Basic Knacks: Barber, Blacksmith, Butcher, Calligrapher, Ceramics, Chandler, Cooking, Cooper, Dyeing, Embalmer, Fletcher, Furrier, Gardener, Glassblower, Innkeeper, Jenny, Jeweler, Masseur, Miller, Paper Maker, Potter, Sail Maker, Scribe, Seamstress, Spinner, Steward, Tailor, Vintner, Weaver
Advanced Knacks: Accounting, Appraising, Bartending, Haggling

Performer

Basic Knacks: Acting, Dancing, Oratory, Singing
Advanced Knacks: Animal Training, Circus, Cold Read, Disguise, Prestidigitation, Storytelling

Sailor
Basic Knacks: Balance, Climbing, Knotwork, Rigging
Advanced Knacks: Cartography, Leaping, Navigation, Pilot, Sea Lore, Swimming, Weather

Scholar
Basic Knacks: History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Research
Advanced Knacks: Astronomy, Law, Natural Philosophy, Occult, Theology

Servant
Basic Knacks: Etiquette, Fashion, Menial Tasks, Unobtrusive
Advanced Knacks: Accounting, Drive Carriage, Gossip, Haggling, Seneschal, Valet

Spy
Basic Knacks: Shadowing, Stealth
Advanced Knacks: Bribery, Conceal, Cryptography, Disguise, Forgery, Hand Signs, Interrogation, Lip Reading, Poison, Sincerity

Streetwise
Basic Knacks: Socializing, Street Navigation
Advanced Knacks: Scrounging, Shopping, Underworld Lore

Martial Skills

Martial Skills are separated from the Civil Skills because some of them are applied differently.

Some Knacks give you "special effects" instead of more dice to roll. Read each Knack carefully to see what advantage you gain from taking it and mark that advantage on your Hero Sheet.



Archer
Basic Knacks: Attack (Bow), Fletcher
Advanced Knacks: Horse Archery, Snapshot, Trick Shooting

Athlete
Basic Knacks: Climbing, Footwork, Sprinting, Throwing
Advanced Knacks: Break Fall, Leaping, Long Distance Running, Lifting, Rolling, Swimming, Swinging, Side-step

Buckler
Basic Knacks: Parry (Buckler)
Advanced Knacks: Attack (Buckler)

Commander
Basic Knacks: Strategy, Tactics
Advanced Knacks: Ambush, Artillery, Cartography, Diplomacy, Gunnery, Incitation, Leadership, Logistics

Crossbow
Basic Knacks: Attack (Crossbow), Fletcher
Advanced Knacks: Reload (Crossbow)

Dirty Fighting
Basic Knacks: Attack (Dirty Fighting)
Advanced Knacks: Attack (Improvised Weapon), Eye-gouge, Kick, Parry (Improvised Weapon), Throat Strike, Throw (Improvised Weapon)

Fencing
Basic Knacks: Attack (Fencing), Parry (Fencing)
Advanced Knacks: None

Firearms
Basic Knacks: Attack (Firearms)
Advanced Knacks: Reload (Firearms)

Heavy Weapon
Basic Knacks: Attack (Heavy Weapon), Parry (Heavy Weapon)
Advanced Knacks: None

Knife
Basic Knacks: Attack (Knife), Parry (Knife)
Advanced Knacks: Throw (Knife)

Panzerhand
Basic Knacks: Attack (Panzerhand), Parry (Panzerhand)
Advanced Knacks: Uppercut

Polearm
Basic Knacks: Attack (Polearm), Parry (Polearm)
Advanced Knacks: Set Defense

Pugilism
Basic Knacks: Attack (Pugilism), Footwork, Jab
Advanced Knacks: Ear Clap, Uppercut

Rider
Basic Knacks: Ride
Advanced Knacks: Animal Training, Mounting, Trick Riding

Wrestling
Basic Knacks: Grapple
Advanced Knacks: Bear Hug, Break, Escape, Head Butt

Step Six: Finishing Touches

The last part of Hero creation involves a number of modifications. Backgrounds and Arcana all cost Hero Points to purchase, so you have to have some left over from the first four steps in order to purchase them.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds are different from Advantages in that they represent back stories that your Hero hasn't resolved yet. While your Hero may be quick in a fight and a heavy drinker, he's also got an old enemy who shows up from time to time with a long, deep scar along the left side of his face. Of course, you were drunk when you gave him that scar, and it was an accident (you swear!), but that doesn't help. He's coming for you, and he's going to get his revenge one day. One day...

A quick look at the Backgrounds should give you the impression that many of them are none too friendly. And they shouldn't be. Backgrounds are conflicts that are still floating around, waiting for the opportunity to rear their ugly head. However, there is a benefit for having Backgrounds, which we'll get to at the end of this.

Backgrounds

Amnesia
Cursed
Debt
Defeated
Fear
Hunted
Hunting
Lost Love
Mistaken Identity
Nemesis
Obligation
Rivalry
Romance
True Identity
Vendetta
Vow

You and your GM must determine how many points a Background is worth. Talk to him about the Backgrounds you want and how many points you want to invest in each one. Just remember that a 3-point Background is three times as dangerous as a 1-point Background.

Endings...

"Don't let me fall!" she shouted up through the wind and rain at me. "Please, for the love of the Prophets, don't let me fall!"

I looked down at her pleading green eyes as I felt the rain sneak in between our fingers. I knew we would lose our grip in a few moments. "Hold on," I said softly. "Help is on the way."

She shook her head, loosening our already tenuous hold. "No! Please!" She felt our fingers slip and she screamed one last time just before she plummeted from my sight into the storm far below.

As we said above, Backgrounds are unresolved back stories your Hero brings with him to the table. Sooner or later, those stories will be resolved – for better or worse. When this happens, the Background is removed from the Hero's sheet. While there is no "reward" for bringing a Background to conclusion, Gamemasters may reward Heroes for creative and dramatic conclusions.

Buying Backgrounds

A Background costs 1-3 Hero Points. The more points you invest, the more dangerous the Background will be. For example, a 1-point Nemesis is simply not as dangerous as a 3-point Nemesis. Granted, the 1-point Nemesis could be a King whom you offended, but he's not too concerned about you now, and will only seek his revenge if you come into his Kingdom. A 3-point Nemesis, however, could be a lone duelist with a long, deep scar on the left side of his face (remember him?) who will not rest until he sees you in a grave.

...and Beginnings

I raised my bloody hand and pointed it at the Baron.

"Know this, fiend," I said, feeling the venom in my words. "Not today, but one day, you will know what it means to earn the hatred of a d'Ausan!"

He laughed at me, but I saw the fear hidden behind his false bravado, and I knew that someday he would understand the truth of my words.

On the other hand, there may be times when a Hero wishes to purchase a new Background. Perhaps an intriguing villain has captured the interest of one of the players, and he wishes to make that villain a Nemesis. Théah is full of beautiful young women looking for Romance. And of course, the death of a fellow Hero can always inspire a Vendetta.

Purchasing a new Background costs 3, 6 or 9 Experience Points, which buys 1-, 2- or 3-point Backgrounds, respectively. See the rules on Experience Points (page 191) for further details.

The Benefit of Backgrounds

Every time a Background shows up as the main focus of a story, you get a number of Experience Points equal to double its cost. If that scarred Nemesis of yours shows up, for example, and you spend the majority of the story trying to get away from him, you earn six extra Experience Points at the end of that story.

Two last notes for you to consider. First, a Background must involve conflict. If the Background does not involve some kind of conflict – physical, mental or spiritual – then it isn't a Background and you don't get any points for it. Lastly, you can only have up to four points worth of Backgrounds at the start of the game. After all, too many Backgrounds start to cramp one's style...

The full description of each Background can be found on page 157, but we've provided a list of them here for your convenience.

Arcana

Very recently, the courts have been swept with a new fad: the Vodacce Sorte decks. Originally used as a training tool for Fate Witches, the Montaigne Empereur caught glimpse of a deck at one of his many parties. He immediately demanded one of his own. Since then, every fashionable noble has one and every party has a young Vodacce maiden telling fortunes and teaching the partygoers all the newest card games.

What very few know (though some may suspect) is that the Sorte decks are powerful tools. Almost any man or woman destined for greatness has an Arcana aura shining around his or her head, an aura easily identified by any Fate Witch. Your Hero may have an Arcana aura... for a price.



Each Arcana has two aspects: proper and inverted. If your Hero has the proper Arcana, it gives him a benefit called a *Virtue*. If your Hero has an inverted Arcana, it gives him a drawback called a *Hubris*.

Virtues cost 10 Hero Points to buy.

A Hubris gives you 10 Hero Points back to spend on other things.

You can have a Virtue, a Hubris, or neither. Having an Arcana at all is incredibly rare, and having two is unheard of.

Using Virtues

There is nothing a virtuous man cannot accomplish.
– Rebecca d'Utaigne, famed Montaigne Musketeer

A Virtue is a great strength or ability found deep within a Hero that he can summon up in times of need. Some Heroes can call upon vast reserves of courage, others are so single-minded that nothing turn them away from their goals, and a few are just plain lucky.

You can activate your Virtue by spending a Drama die. Unlike Hubrises, the activation of a Virtue cannot be prevented in any way. You paid your points for it, so the benefit is yours, fair and square.

Example 2.3: Louis has the Victorious Virtue. After his attack is successful, but before he rolls for damage, he can simply spend a Drama die to inflict one Dramatic Wound automatically instead of rolling for damage.

Using Hubrises

"Hero though he may be, every man has a weakness that can bring him down."
– Roland O'Toole, Avalon Sailor

A Hubris is a fatal flaw in a Hero's character. When a Hero fails and the tale ends in tragedy, it is usually hubris that brought him low. Whether it was pride, jealousy, or simply

the inability to change his ways, the most tragic ends are the hero's own fault.

When you create a Hero in other games, you are often presented with the opportunity to take disadvantages or flaws in order to get a few more points for that advantage you want. The difference between a Hubris and a disadvantage is that a hubris is a *heroic* flaw. *7th Sea* is designed with the intent that the players play Heroes, no matter how roguish they may be. Thus, while your Hero may be lecherous or cowardly, it's a bit unreasonable to expect the rest of the players to adventure with an albino megalomaniac who kills all little children on sight. The GM has Hubrises for Villains in his book, and if your gaming group really wants to, you can talk the GM into allowing the group to play Villains using those.

The way a Hubris affects gameplay is simple. The GM has a pool of Drama dice that he can spend in order to increase the tension in the game, help a villain get away, or ensure that major plot points go as planned. Another thing the GM can do with his Drama dice is spend one die in order to 'activate' one Hero's Hubris. If the GM activates your Hubris and you really don't want it happening at that time, you can spend a Drama die to counteract the GM's Drama die. Be warned, however, that the GM may start a bidding war with you, and he probably has more Drama dice than you do.

Example 2.4: Rodriguez Montello's Hubris is Lecherous, and he's sneaking through a castle in order to steal some important papers. The GM has four Drama dice, and Rodriguez has two. The GM tells Rodriguez that he sees a lovely woman's hand beckoning to him from a nearby doorway, and spends a Drama die to activate his lechery. Rodriguez is compelled to go investigate this intriguing hand, as he has a weakness for the ladies. Rodriguez could spend a Drama die to counteract the GM's die, but since the GM has more dice than he, if the GM wanted to he could force the issue anyway. Rodriguez decides to save his Drama dice, since he'll probably need them any minute now.

Arcana for Heroes

Arcana	Hubris	Virtue
0 Fool	Rash	Propitious
1 Magician	Ambitious	Willful
2 High Priestess	Hedonistic	Intuitive
3 Empress	Lecherous	Comforting
4 Imperator	Hot-headed	Commanding
5 Hierophant	Trusting	Creative
6 Lovers	Star-crossed	Passionate
7 Chariot	Overconfident	Victorious
8 Strength	Cowardly	Courageous
9 Hermit	Overzealous	Focused
10 Fortune	Misfortunate	Fortunate
11 Justice	Judgmental	Exemplary
12 Hanged Man	Indecisive	Altruistic
13 Death	Reckless	Adaptable
14 Temperance	Envious	Self-controlled
15 Legion*	Loyal	Perspicacious
16 Tower	Arrogant	Uncanny
17 Star	Stubborn	Inspirational
18 Moon	Inattentive	Perceptive
19 Sun	Proud	Friendly
20 Judgment	Righteous	Insightful
21 Terra	Greedy	Worldly

**The Legion card is unique in that its Hubris is based upon its proper form, not its inverted form.*

Villain Arcana

Villains have Wiles and Flaws, which are similar, respectively, to Heroes' Virtues and Hubrises. The GM can spend Drama dice in order to activate a Villain's Wile, which will help the Villain out in some way. You, on the other hand, may spend Drama dice in an attempt to activate a Villain's Flaw, if he has one. Simply tell the GM that you are attempting to activate the Villain's Flaw. If he has one, the GM will nod, and you spend your Drama die. At that point, the Villain might start telling you about his evil plans, or put you in a death trap instead of killing you outright, or he may be betrayed by one of his Henchmen. If the Villain doesn't have a Flaw, the GM will shake his head, and you

get to keep your Drama die. Unless you have a Fate Witch with you, or some other way to perceive Arcana, you won't have any idea which Flaw the Villain has until you activate it. Unlike Hubrises, the GM can't spend Drama dice to try to avoid the activation of a Villain's Flaw. That's the advantage of being a Hero – you have a bit more self-control.

The facing page contains a list of the proper and inverted Arcana for Heroes. A description of each Arcana can be found on page 160.

Final Details

Finally, after you've spent all of your Hero Points, you have a few more blanks to fill in on your Hero sheet: *Wounds*, *Reputation*, and *Wealth*.

Wounds

When your Hero gets cut by a sword or hit with a bullet from a musket, he gets wounded. Once you've been damaged, you have to see if something bad happens to you, or if you shrug off the hit for now. This is referred to as a *Wound Check*. You roll your Brawn with a TN equal to the Wounds you've taken so far in the combat (including the damage you just got hit with). If you fail the roll, you suffer a *Dramatic Wound*; otherwise nothing happens, but the damage – Flesh Wounds – stays with you.

At the end of each battle erase all your Flesh Wounds, but not Dramatic Wounds. You get to keep them for a while.

Example 2.5: A Hero gets hit twice in one Round. The first hit causes 10 Flesh Wounds. He has a Brawn of 3, so he rolls and keeps three dice. He rolls a 15, succeeding at the roll. He marks down the Wounds on his Hero sheet, so he'll remember how many Flesh Wounds he's taken so far this combat. At the end of the Round he gets hit again, taking another 10 Flesh Wounds, for a total of 20 Flesh Wounds (10 from the first hit and 10 from this one). He rolls 15, missing his TN of 20. Now he erases all the Wounds he has taken so far and writes a Dramatic Wound on his Hero Sheet.

Dramatic Wounds

When you suffer a Dramatic Wound, the first thing to do is erase all the Flesh Wounds you've suffered so far. Don't get too excited; you still have to deal with their effects.

First, if this Dramatic Wound brings your total number of Dramatic Wounds equal to your Rank in Resolve, then all of your dice rolls from now on until you manage to get some of your Dramatic Wounds healed are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice. If you take a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to twice your Rank in Resolve, you become Knocked Out and you're out of the combat. You'll probably wake up in a dungeon or tied to a chair, assuming no one kills you.

Reputation

As you become more famous, new opportunities become available to you. Patrons approach you, servants offer to join your employ, and you can command higher wages.

Of course, this has its attendant problems as well. Villains take a dislike to anyone they see as a rising threat, obligations begin to tie up your free time, and if you become famous and powerful enough, your own ruler might see you as a threat and begin to plot your downfall.

This is represented through your Reputation Points. Starting characters normally begin with no Reputation Points. You may obtain up to 130 Reputation Points.

You gain Reputation Points either when you perform heroic acts in front of witnesses, or an artist dramatizes your actions in some public form. The important thing here is that *word of your exploits spreads.* Without recognition, acts that would affect your Reputation Points grant you no mechanical benefit.

Example 2.6: Rodriguez Montello might get Reputation Points for defeating a group of bandits that were terrorizing an area, as long as someone saw him do it. If a poet then wrote an epic poem about his accomplishment, he would gain more Reputation Points, as long as the poem saw decent circulation.

Reputation Actions

Action	TN	Effect
Aid (Major)	30	Gain major aid from one neutral or allied NPC for one scene.
Aid (Minor)	20	Gain minor aid from one neutral or allied NPC for one scene.
Impress	None	Your reputation dice (rolled and kept) may be added to any social checks.
Intimidate	None	Your reputation dice (rolled and kept) may be added to any social checks.
Martyr	40	Gain one ally (a formerly neutral or allied NPC) that will risk their life for your cause if need be.
Recognition	15	You are recognized by a stranger you have chosen.
Rescue	25	NPCs work for your freedom or escape from imprisonment.
Seduce	None	Your reputation dice (rolled and kept) may be added to any social checks.

You lose Reputation Points either when you perform dastardly deeds in front of witnesses, or an artist ridicules or belittles your achievements in some form that is seen by others.

Example 2.7: If Rodriguez were witnessed killing town guards in an alley, he would lose Reputation Points. Likewise, if a playwright wrote a play about him that depicted him as a bumbling fool, he would also lose Reputation Points.

Every 10 Reputation Points grants you one Reputation die, which can be used to perform Reputation Actions. These can include such things as contacting important people, gaining critical resources, or impressing people.

Just as Heroes can become famous, so can Scoundrels. If you lose enough Reputation Points (dropping below 0), you will find yourself gaining a certain notoriety. If you slip too far into the depths of depravity, however (–30 or more), your GM is within his rights to take your character away and make him an NPC, unless you've been the victim of negative publicity and haven't actually been murdering guards and razing villages.

Negative Reputation Points work the same way that positive ones do, but the dice gained through them are used by Villains and Scoundrels to perform evil or corrupt actions (like bribing people, getting accepted into various malevolent Secret Societies, or intimidating others).

Using Reputation Dice

So what do you do with Reputation dice, anyway?

Your Reputation dice represent a number of Actions you can perform in any given Scene. You may use these dice together on a single Action, or split them apart into several Actions, as you wish.

For any Action you wish to attempt in a given Scene (see the list), you may devote any or all of your Reputation dice to it. The GM determines the Target Number for the Action, and you roll and keep the Reputation dice you have committed to the Action toward that TN. Success garners you the benefits of the Action, while failure gets you nothing.

You regain any Reputation dice you have spent at the beginning of each new Act.

Automatic Reputation Effects (Optional)

The following effects are an optional layer to the Reputation System, intended to add flavor. Your GM will tell you whether or not you may use them.

Citation: You are awarded a citation of some sort, defined by your in-game circumstances and the GM. The citation could be knighthood, a medal of honor, land, or a work of art in your image or about your adventures.

Hangers-on: You acquire a following of fans, who begin approaching you for aid, money, one-night stands, and other favors that they have no reason to expect from you.

Higher Wages: For every Reputation Point, increase your monthly income by one percent.

Membership: At long last, you have been offered a position in a group or organization (probably a Secret Society) that (at least roughly) matches your goals and ideology. The GM will work this into the game at his convenience.

Menace: You attract attention from the wrong crowd, who start looking for you and devoting resources to your capture or death. For Heroes, this can be any number of villainous societies, while for a Scoundrel it would likely be the King's Men or magistrates.

Patron: You acquire a patron (or an additional patron if you already have one), which may add to your existing income.

More on Reputation Actions (how to govern them and how to handle new ones) is located within the *GMs' Guide.* Future product releases will contain additional Reputation Actions.

Effects of Reputation Points

Reputation Points	Effect
Constant	Higher Wages
Every 25 Points	Patron
At 50 Points	Hangers-On
Every 75 Points	Citation
At 100 Points	Menace
At 125 Points	Membership

Wealth

Wealth is very important in *7th Sea.* For nobility, it is a measure of their status. They require a constant flow of wealth, as their peers judge them by the amount that they spend, as opposed to the amount they have. Nobles of Théah wear the most intricate clothes (often hand-tailored just for them), own the most lavish estates and possessions, and attend (or even fund) the most elaborate functions. They are the face of the social elite, but they are all still held in check by their net worth; should this ever fail, so will they.

Merchants, soldiers, explorers and other professionals of the world have a more pragmatic view of money. They earn it by their craft and spend it to put food in their mouths, buy clothes and supplies for their trades, and provide shelter. They are by no means a "middle class," though their constant hand-to-mouth lifestyle rarely allows for substantial savings.

Peasants and the lower classes are those for whom money is an alien thing. They toil in fields, upon farms, or as servants (sometimes remaining homeless) without much chance of ever getting ahead. They are commonly indentured to others (perhaps wealthy nobles) and have little opportunity to make life better for their young in future years. They are the lowest social class in Théah.

Consequently, the level of income your Hero has is very important to his concept. Several Knacks and Advantages exist that allow for additional wealth for beginning Heroes. In the following paragraphs, we'll show you how to calculate your starting money.

The Basics

First and foremost, it is important to note that, barring unusual circumstances (like being shipwrecked on a remote island or being stranded in far Ussura), all of your daily needs are accounted for. No Hero Points must be spent to cover basic food, shelter, and maintenance of holdings, such as homes and noble estates. Any additional money garnered through profession, patrons, and such is excess that can be spent however you like.

Determining Hero Wealth

All Heroes are assumed to start out with a set of clothes and a single weapon of their choice. If they wish to purchase more, they must use their starting money. Your starting money is equal to your monthly income multiplied by three. You can find things to buy with all this money on pages 166–167.

You may only buy into initial wealth through one of the following avenues:

Wealth

Profession	Type of Wealth
Those with the Noble advantage (not Sorcery)	Nobility
Artists, Performers, and Scholars	Patron
Merchants, Tradesmen, and Specialists	Profits
Servants, Priests, and Soldiers	Salary
Everyone Else	1 die of Guilders

Your GM has additional information about administering wealth and governing the monetary aspect of *7th Sea* campaigns in his Guide.

Note also that the Inheritance Advantage can be purchased *in addition* to any moneys gained through a Hero's profession.

Nobility (Nobles)

Heroes who purchase the Noble Advantage (see page 136) are members of a royal family of their nation with good standing. This is different than simply purchasing Sorcery. Heroes who purchase Sorcery but not the Noble Advantage have lost their good standing in the family, or their family has lost its good standing in society, or perhaps the Hero was a bastard child.

Noble Heroes have access to a great deal of resources. For the initial points they spend on the Noble Advantage, they are considered to have a single manor house, complete with staff and a small population of serfs who work the land. The Hero is responsible for the protection and welfare of the peasants who work his land and is also responsible for taxing them. If you wish to go into greater detail about the management of your land, ask the GM for guidelines. Otherwise, the manor house is considered to make 500 Guilders a month for the noble (above and beyond the cost of its maintenance), which he may spend however he likes.

Patrons (Artists, Performers, and Scholars)

When you're talented and don't have any money, what do you do? You find a patron! In *7th Sea,* you buy the Patron Advantage to do that. Patrons are wealthy individuals who sponsor struggling artists, poets, playwrights, swordsmen and rogues. How many points you spend on the Patron Advantage determines how wealthy your patron is, and how willing he is to spend some of that wealth on you. Determine your Patron's Wealth and Generosity (according to the number of HP invested) below:

Wealth
1 Point: 10 Guilders
2 Points: 20 Guilders
4 Points: 40 Guilders

Generosity
1 Point: Once per month
2 Points: Twice per month
4 Points: Once a week

Remember, your patron's money isn't your money. And so many patrons are actually rich, snotty nobles who are so easy to offend...

Profits (Merchants, Tradesmen, and Other Specialists)

Every professional (including merchants and craftsmen) acquires profits from his or her labors, which can take the form of commissions, proceeds from craft sales, or other business practices. You must buy the Membership: Merchant Guilds Advantage (found on page 136) in order to draw income from this source.

At the end of each month, the Guildsman rolls a number of dice equal to his Rank in his chosen professional Knack (Blacksmith, Cooper, Carpenter, etc.), keeping two of them. The total generated by this roll is his income for the month in Guilders. More detailed rules for Merchants will be found in the forthcoming *Vendel* nation sourcebook.

Salaries (Servants, Priests, and Soldiers)

Then there are the people who live month to month, relying upon their regular wages to survive. These Théans receive regular compensation for services rendered, rarely creating anything in the process. There are three basic salaried careers in Théah:

Soldiers: Both land- and sea-based soldiers receive monthly salaries according to their military rank. In order to draw income from this source, you must buy the Commission Advantage (see page 132).

Priests: Heroes with the Ordained Advantage receive 30 Guilders per month.

Servants: For every Rank in their *highest* Servant Basic Knack, they receive one Guilder per month. They receive ten times their monthly income instead of the usual three times monthly income, since they have less to spend their money on.

Rank/Commission

Military Rank	Branch	Salary
Corporal (2 HP)	Army	8 Guilders/Month
Sergeant (4 HP)	Army	20 Guilders/Month
Lieutenant (6 HP)	Army	50 Guilders/Month
Captain (8 HP)	Army	75 Guilders/Month
Sailor (2 HP)	Navy	10 Guilders/Month
Mate (4 HP)	Navy	25 Guilders/Month
Petty Officer (6 HP)	Navy	60 Guilders/Month
Lieutenant (8 HP)	Navy	90 Guilders/Month

Swordsman Schools

If you decided to make your Hero a Swordsman, then you need to look up his style below.

Every Hero who pays for a Swordsman School gets the following benefits:

- *The Skills listed under the School.*
- *One free Rank in all four Swordsman Knacks.*
- *The* Membership: Swordsman's Guild *Advantage for free.*

Every School is listed with the same format, as follows:

School Name

This is the name of the school.

Country of Origin

The nation the school is located in. If it is not found in your Hero's native country, then you must pay 35 HP instead of 25 in order to attend the school.

Description

A brief description, telling you a little bit about the history and character of the school, as well as the style's strengths and weaknesses.

Basic Curriculum

These are the Skills a Swordsman gets for attending this school.

Swordsman Knacks

Attending a Swordsman School is the only way to gain Swordsman Knacks. Swordsmen are very proud of their

Schools and do not just give away their most valuable secrets. Swordsman Knacks are considered Martial Advanced Knacks, and you must purchase them just as you would purchase any other Advanced Knacks: at 3 Hero Points per Rank.

All of the Schools have one Advanced Knack in common: the Exploit Weakness Knack. Once you have attended a School, you have not only learned its strengths, but its weaknesses as well. Whenever you duel someone who is using a School whose weakness you are familiar with, *even if you aren't currently using that style of fighting yourself,* you gain a number of unkept dice equal to your Rank in your Exploit Weakness Knack to all your Attack and Active Defense rolls. A Swordsman who attends more than one School obviously knows more than one weakness...

Apprentice, Journeyman and Master Techniques
Lastly, each School has three Techniques. Your Swordsman starts with the Apprentice Technique. He gains the Journeyman Technique when all of his Swordsman Knacks reach Rank 4. He gains the Master Technique when all of his Swordsman Knacks reach Rank 5.

Mastery Level
When mastery level is referred to, the following conversion to dice should be used:

Apprentice = 1
Journeyman = 2
Master = 3

Aldana

Country of Origin: Castille

Description: Aldana is the fighting style of choice for Castillians. It is one of the few fighting styles on Théah that forgoes the use of the off-hand. Instead, the off-hand is tucked behind the duelist's back and he presents his side to his opponent, narrowing the choice of targets that can be struck at. Aldana is designed for use with fencing weapons.

Aldana combines sword fighting with dancing to produce an elusive, unpredictable series of movements. The duelist silently counts time inside his head, mentally playing the song that he is "dancing" to. This allows him to make unpredictable moves along with the rhythm of the song, which is unknown to his opponent. These movements make him harder to hit and disorient his opponent, causing deadly hesitations. Most impressive of all, Masters of Aldana can work themselves into a trance in which their entire being is focused entirely on the fight at hand. In this way, they surpass the skills of most fencers.

The one problem with the Aldana style of fighting is the song's chorus. A duelist familiar with Aldana knows how to watch for the chorus, and strikes while the student of Aldana is briefly predictable.

Basic Curriculum: Courtier, Fencing
Swordsman Knacks: Feint (Fencing), Riposte (Fencing), Tagging (Fencing), Exploit Weakness (Aldana)

Apprentice: The Apprentice is renowned for his lightning-fast reflexes and aggressive fighting style. You may roll one unkept die for Initiative for each Mastery level you have in Aldana.

Journeyman: The Journeyman's weaving, disorienting style of movement makes him difficult to hit. Add +5 to your TN to be hit.

Master: Masters of Aldana enter a trance where they are focused entirely on the duel at hand. At the start of each Round, you receive a number of "Focus dice" equal to your Wits. These are unkept dice that may be added to any Attack Rolls or Active Defense during the Round, but their use must be declared before the roll is made and they are gone once used, for the remainder of the Round.

Ambrogia

Country of Origin: Vodacce

Description: Ambrogia has caught on like wildfire in recent years. It is remarkable for two chief reasons. The first is that it teaches its students to fight with their sword in their



left hand and their main gauche in their right. The second is that its creator, Veronica Ambrogia, also happens to be one of Vodacce's most famous courtesans.

While Ambrogia does focus on the left hand (a factor that many Swordsman find difficult to deal with), it emphasizes practicality over style. The students learn to use whatever they find in their hands to win the duel. "After all," teaches Madame Ambrogia, "it's the winner that tells the tale."

While other Swordsmen refer to Ambrogia Swordsman as "Veronica's Boys", there is no denying the style's very practical and deadly effectiveness.

The main weakness of Ambrogia is that it relies a little too heavily on forcing the opponent to react to the student's moves and tricks. If the opponent ignores them, the student is in serious trouble.

Basic Curriculum: Fencing, Dirty Fighting

Swordsman Knacks: Feint (Fencing), Pommel Strike (Fencing), Riposte (Fencing), Exploit Weakness (Ambrogia)

Apprentice: Learning the Ambrogia style of fighting negates the off-hand penalty when using a dagger or main gauche, and gives the character the Left-Handed Advantage for free (but only while using this style of fighting). Apprentices among Veronica's Boys are also trained to think quickly and take advantage of every opportunity they get. You may twist you dagger or fencing weapon slightly when you hit, which automatically adds 2 to the damage you inflict (increasing a Damage Roll of 18 to 20 for example).

Journeyman: When you inflict a Dramatic Wound on your opponent, you may choose to suffer one Dramatic Wound to inflict an additional Dramatic Wound on your opponent.

Master: If your opponent attacks you and fails to hit you because of Passive or Active Defense, the TN to hit him with your next attack is 5. If you do not attack before the end of the round, this bonus is lost.

Donovan

Country of Origin: Avalon

Description: The most popular fighting style taught in Avalon is Donovan. This style is somewhat old-fashioned, using a buckler and smallsword instead of the more modern

rapier and main gauche. The smallsword has a thicker blade and possesses a sharp edge, unlike most rapiers.

This style teaches a wide variety of slashes and thrusts, which tends to confuse those trained to fight against thrusts almost exclusively. Donovan also teaches his best students how to use their blade's edge to its best advantage, and how to perform a lightning-fast thrust.

The primary weakness in the Donovan style is that the more elaborate slashes require a moment of tensing and leave a brief hole in the defenses that another student of Donovan can predict and exploit.

Basic Curriculum: Fencing, Buckler

Swordsman Knacks: Bind (Buckler), Disarm (Fencing), Riposte (Fencing), Exploit Weakness (Donovan)



Apprentice: Learning the Donovan style negates the off-hand penalty when using a buckler, and grants one free Raise when using the buckler.

Journeyman: Donovan teaches its students to take the offensive even when defending themselves. There is a particular move known as Donovan's Twist that allows a Journeyman to rake the edge of his smallsword's blade across his opponent's hand while performing a parry. In game terms, when you successfully use Parry (Fencing) as an Active Defense, you deal 1k1 damage to your opponent, plus one additional unkept die for every 5 points you exceeded your opponent's Attack Roll by. Thus, if your Active Defense roll was 17 higher than your opponent's Attack Roll, you would inflict 4k1 damage on your opponent. Your Brawn does not add to this damage.

Master: Edwards' Thrust was taught to Donovan by his master, the late Jacob Edwards. The technique is performed by first acclimating an opponent to parrying slashes over and over again, and then suddenly rushing in with a deceptively quick thrust. When using this technique, you may use an Interrupt Action to attack once per Round.

Eisenfaust

Country of Origin: Eisen

Description: The Eisenfaust style is taught at several academies in Eisen. It teaches the use of a broadsword in conjunction with an off-hand panzerhand, or iron glove. The student is trained to deflect or grab incoming attacks with his glove and exploit the openings left in his opponent's stance with his broadsword (which is considered a Heavy Weapon). This school of fighting is very defensive, teaching its students to wait for their opponent to make a mistake before attacking: "Whether or not you ever take the offensive is of little consequence if in so doing you leave an opening through which your opponent kills you."

Eisenfaust is very good at exploiting mistakes made by an opponent. Gradually, the opponent grows impatient or angry and makes a mistake. As soon as he slips up, the

student of Eisenfaust is on top of him, raining down fearsome broadsword blows.

The flaw in the Eisenfaust style is the rigidity instilled in the training. While there are over 70 individual moves that students learn, there are certain rules they learn to follow when changing from one move to the next. They learn not to use certain moves in succession because of the awkwardness involved. This leaves a small but predictable gap that a knowledgeable opponent can force his way through.

Basic Curriculum: Heavy Weapon, Panzerhand

Swordsman Knacks: Beat (Heavy Weapon), Bind (Panzerhand), Disarm (Panzerhand), Exploit Weakness (Eisenfaust)

Apprentice: Learning the Eisenfaust style allows you to use a broadsword (Heavy Weapon) in one hand and negates the off-hand penalty when using a panzerhand. When your opponent fails to hit your Passive Defense, you gain a free Raise to your next attack against them for every 5 points they missed you by, rounding down. These Raises must be used against that opponent by the end of the Round, or they are lost. In addition, if that same opponent attacks you again before you use the Raises, they are lost as the window of opportunity closes.

Journeyman: Eisenfaust Journeymen have learned how to break their opponents' weapons with their panzerhand. Whenever you make a successful Active Defense using Parry (Panzerhand), you may spend a Drama die in order to attempt to break your opponent's weapon. You must make a successful Brawn test against a TN based on the type of weapon you are attempting to break.

Fencing – 30
Heavy Weapon – 35
Others – As GM allows, but TN is at least 40.

The following modifiers can adjust these TN and are cumulative.

+5 is added to the TN for a quality weapon.
-5 is subtracted from the TN for an inferior weapon.
+10 is added to the TN for a dracheneisen weapon.

Master: Eisenfaust Masters have learned the art of patience. You may Hold an Action in order to wait for an opening. Each Phase you Hold the Action grants one additional unkept die of damage if and when that Action is used to attack (remembering the rules for rolling more than 10 dice; see page 180). You may not gain more unkept dice of damage through this technique than your Rank in Resolve. You may only hold one Action die in this manner per Round, and while it is being held you may only Hold or Actively Defend with your other Action dice.

Leegstra

Country of Origin: Vendel/Vestenmannavnjar

Description: Leegstra isn't as much a fighting style as a philosophy or an act of willpower. It is designed to be used with a Heavy Weapon, such as a broadsword or an axe, and shows very little regard for the student's own safety.

A warrior using the Leegstra style has been compared to a glacier: slow-moving, uncaring of any assault on itself and, ultimately, unstoppable. It teaches the student to absorb blows that would kill a lesser man and to focus incredible strength into a single killing blow. There are many tales of warriors using the Leegstra style to cleave off an opponent's head with a flick of their wrist.

The major flaw to the Leegstra style, as any student intimate with its ins and outs can tell you, is its slow deliberation. Most fencers continue to fight against students of Leegstra as they do against anyone else, first testing here and there with experimental lunges. They are usually tragically surprised when the Leegstra Master utterly ignores them, sending a fatal blow crashing down. The key is to be quick and final. The wise opponent stabs for the heart, or the head, and then gets out of the way in a hurry.

Basic Curriculum: Heavy Weapon, Wrestling

Swordsman Knacks: Beat (Heavy Weapon), Corps-á-corps, Lunge (Heavy Weapon), Exploit Weakness (Leegstra)

Apprentice: When learning the Leegstra style, you learn how to focus blows from a Heavy Weapon. You may choose to give up Action dice in order to deal extra Kept Damage dice, should the blow cause damage. You may give up as many Action dice as you desire, on a one-for-one basis. This must be declared before the Attack Roll is made, and if you miss, the sacrificed Actions are wasted.

Journeyman: Journeymen have learned to ignore wounds that would kill lesser men. You may choose to give up Action dice for kept Brawn dice during a Wound Check. You may give up as many Action dice as you desire, on a one-for-one basis. This must be declared before the Wound Check is rolled, and if you fail the Check anyway, the sacrificed Actions are wasted.

Master: Masters have learned to cause grievous wounds using their Heavy Weapons. When your opponents fail a Wound Check after being struck by your Attack (Heavy Weapon) Knack, they take one Dramatic Wound plus an additional Dramatic Wound for every 10 points they missed the roll by, much as if they'd been hurt by a firearm.

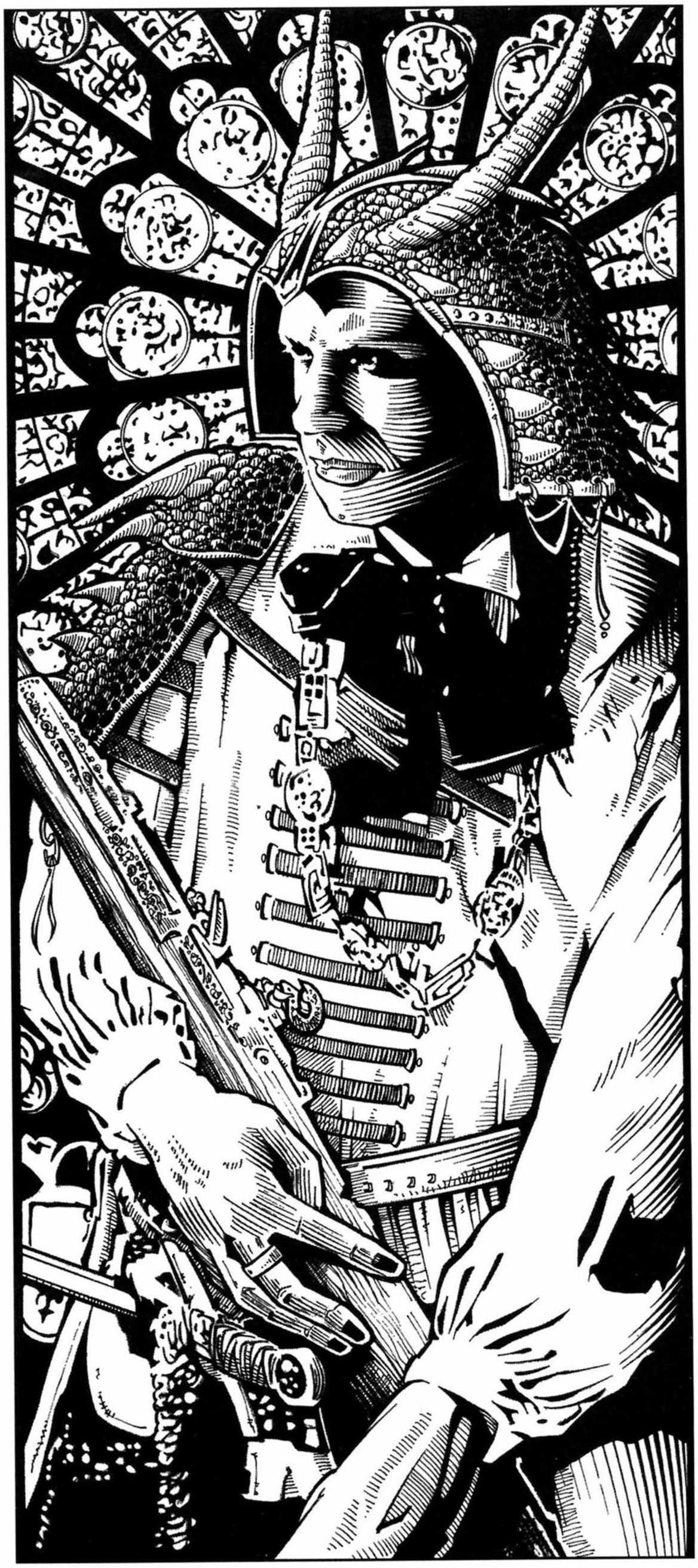
Valroux

Country of Origin: Montaigne

Description: The Valroux style of fighting is one of several that uses a fencing weapon in the primary hand and a main gauche in the off-hand. The fighting style is technically defensive, with the main gauche used only to parry. Students of this style are prone to teasing their opponents. They call attention to openings they could have exploited, generally humiliate their opponents and then finish them off whenever the duel grows wearisome.

One of the main strengths of this style is its speed. Masters of Valroux strike more quickly and more often than anyone else. They keep the duel moving around in a dizzying circle, striking faster and faster, all the while hurling insults that infuriate their opponent. To win against a student of the Valroux style requires an iron will and long patience.

The main flaw in the Valroux style of fencing is its arrogance. A swordsman familiar with it knows how to fake



an opening that his opponent could exploit. When the student of Valroux mockingly calls attention to the opening, there is a slight lowering of his guard, and the swordsman can strike.

Basic Curriculum: Fencing, Knife

Swordsman Knacks: Double-parry (Fencing/Knife), Feint (Fencing), Tagging (Fencing), Exploit Weakness (Valroux)

Apprentice: Learning the Valroux style of fighting negates the off-hand penalty when using a dagger or main gauche, and grants a free Raise when parrying with one of those weapons in your off-hand.

Journeyman: Journeymen have learned how to "raise the stakes" in a fight. Whenever you call for at least one Raise when attacking an opponent and you succeed, that opponent must, on his next Attack against you, Raise at least as many times as you did.

Master: Masters of Valroux are the fastest swordsmen in the world. When you reach this Rank, you gain a +1 bonus to your Panache for free. This also raises the maximum Rank your Panache can be raised to by 1. Thus, a Master of Valroux can raise his Panache to 6 (or even 7, with the Legendary Trait Advantage).

Swordsman Knacks

Beat: When attacking an enemy, you can declare a Beat. You roll Finesse + Beat, and must roll a number of Raises equal to your enemy's Brawn in order for your Beat to be successful. If you are successful, he cannot avoid the attack using any Active Defense.

Bind: A Bind is only usable against an opponent's fencing weapon. It locks your sword (or buckler, or panzerhand) and his sword together. To use this attack, you declare that you are attempting to Bind your opponent's weapon, and then roll to attack using this Knack. If successful, you have momentarily bound his sword. While the two of you are in the Bind, neither of you can use your bound item. To try to break your hold, your opponent spends 1 Action die (remembering the rules on Interrupt and Held Actions) and then rolls a Contested Roll of his Brawn + Parry (in the weapon you have bound) versus your Brawn + Bind. If he wins, the hold is broken; otherwise, it holds fast. You, on the other hand, may spend Action dice (remembering the rules on Interrupt and Held Actions) to improve your hold. Each Action die you spend gives you one free Raise from now on when your opponent tries to break your hold. If your opponent wishes, he may simply release his weapon, but that would leave it in your hands.

Corps-á-corps: Corps-á-corps is the art of close, or body against body, fencing. You declare that you are using this Knack instead of the Attack Knack. If your attack gets through, you inflict a 0k1 bare-handed attack, and your opponent then falls down and becomes prone.

Disarm: You can only use this Knack after an opponent has just missed your Passive Defense. Spend an Action die to make a Contested Roll of your Brawn + Disarm versus his Brawn + Attack (in the weapon he is wielding). If you win, the weapon is knocked out of his hand. If you perform this move with two Raises, you can wind up holding the weapon if you choose.

Double-parry: A double-parry is parrying with two blades (usually a fencing weapon and a main gauche) crossed before you. You may declare that you are using this Knack instead of an ordinary Parry as an Active Defense. Success grants one free Drama die, which can be used for a number of Phases equal to your Rank with this maneuver. In any event, if you do not use the Drama die by the end of the Round, you lose it.

Feint: When attacking an enemy, you can declare a Feint. Roll Finesse + Feint; you must roll a number of Raises equal to your enemy's Wits. If you manage this, he cannot avoid the attack using any Active Defense.

Lunge: A Lunge is an aggressive attack that leaves you open for a moment. When you declare a Lunge, use this Knack to attack with. You roll two extra unkept dice for damage if your attack is successful. However, your TN to be hit drops

to 5 *for this Phase only,* and you may not use any Active Defenses for the rest of this phase.

Pommel Strike: A pommel strike is when you smash the hilt of your sword into your target's face. You declare that you are using this Knack instead of the Attack Knack. If your attack gets through, you inflict a 0k2 attack, and your opponent's TN to be hit is reduced to 5 until the end of the next Phase.

Riposte: A riposte is a parry followed up immediately with a counterattack. You first attempt an Active Defense against the incoming Attack, and then, *if the Active Defense is successful,* make an Attack of your own on the person who just attacked you. When performing a Riposte, you receive ½ the dice from your Parry Knack (rounded down) for your Active Defense, and ½ the dice from your Attack Knack (rounded down) for your counterattack. For every Rank in Riposte, you may add one die to either the Active Defense attempt *or* the counterattack. These dice are added *after* you've halved the appropriate Knacks.

Example 2.10: If Giuseppe has an Attack (Fencing) of 4, a Parry (Fencing) of 3, and a Riposte of 3, then he would round his Attack Knack down to 2 and his Parry Knack down to 1, and then he would have 3 dice to add to either of them. Thus, he might add 2 to Parry and 1 to Attack for a total of 3 in each.

Tagging: Tagging is a particularly flashy piece of showing off with your weapon, designed to temporarily dishearten your enemy. This could be anything from cutting off a lock of his hair to carving your initials in his shirt. You must use this Knack instead of your Attack Knack for your Attack Roll. If you successfully hit, the attack causes no damage, but you can cause one of two things to happen. Either your target loses 1 Drama die until the end of the battle (at which point it returns), or you can gain 1 Drama die yourself until the end of the battle (at which point it disappears if still unspent.) These Drama dice never become Experience Points, even if the battle was the last thing to happen in the Story.

Advantage List

You cannot take the same Advantage multiple times unless otherwise stated. The mechanical benefits of each Advantage have been italicized.

Able Drinker (1 Point)

You can really put the liquor away. This could be due to a naturally high constitution, or maybe just a lot of experience. *However much you drink, liquor never affects any of your rolls.*

Academy (4 Points; 2 Points for Eisen Heroes)

There are institutions across Théah devoted to the broader topics of martial training, including tactics and strategy, leadership and command, and a wide variety of athletic techniques. These are much different from a Swordsman School, and do not teach you the secret moves you would learn at such a school. *You have attended one of Théah's military academies, and can buy Martial Skills for 1 Point instead of 2 at the beginning of the game.*

Appearance (Varies)

Physically, you are more appealing to others. This can take the form of something blatant (like a perfectly sculpted face), or something more subtle (like a pair of radiant eyes).

Regardless of the cause, however, the game modifiers are the same.

Above Average: 5 Points (+1 unkept die for all social rolls)
Stunning: 10 Points (+2 unkept dice for all social rolls)

Castillian Education (Castillian only, 10 Points)

Perhaps as a result of their lost sorcery, the Castillians have devoted a great deal of effort toward furthering their minds. When purchasing this Advantage, you are devoting a fair number of Hero Points to your heritage. In this way, the Advantage works similarly to sorcery in other nations – *it qualifies for the reduced cost of the Noble Advantage,* and signifies a connection of some kind to the royalty of the nation (to be worked out between you and the GM).

Only Castillian Heroes may purchase this Advantage, but those who do may buy all their initial Civil Advanced Knacks at a cost of 1 Hero Point per Rank. Note that this only applies during Hero creation; Advanced Knacks bought during gameplay with Experience Points must be paid for according to the normal costs. In addition, the Hero can speak, read, and write the Théan language for free.

Citation (4 Points)

There are many citations a Hero may receive in *7th Sea*, including medals, awards, letters of marque, ribbons, titles, and other recognitions. Most will be gained during gameplay through inventive or successful roleplaying; however, you have the opportunity now to purchase one (and only one) citation as part of your pre-game history. Both you and the GM should agree upon a good story for how you came to acquire the honor, so be prepared to do a little work for this one. *Your starting Reputation is increased to 10, which is worth one Reputation die (see Reputation on page 119 for more information on this). You may not take the Scoundrel Advantage.*

Connections (Varies)

A Connection is someone willing to assist you when you need help. They are usually no more powerful or influential than you, but your GM may let you take a powerful Connection if you ask nicely. When you purchase one, you should consider how you made the acquaintance in the first place, how he or she feels toward you now, and any other details you feel are relevant.

You may have up to as many Connections as you have Ranks in Panache. Also, for an additional cost of 2 HP, any Connection may have an obligation of some form to you (worked out to the GM's satisfaction before play).

Guidelines for each type of Connection follow:

Allies (3 Points each): In general, allies are close friends who would walk through fire for you. They should never be more powerful than you at the start of the game, though their power level can change quickly (and unpredictably) over the course of a campaign.

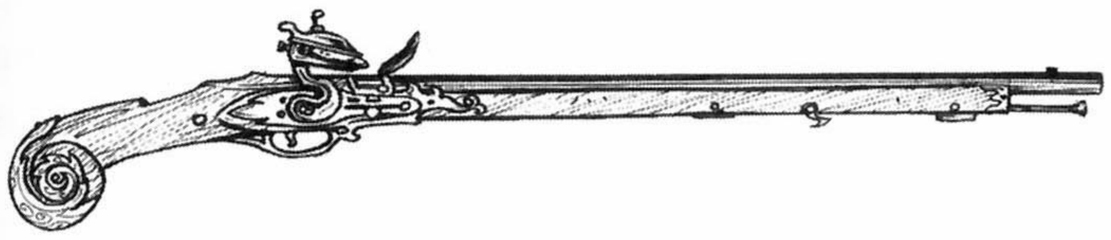
Confidants (2 Points each): Confidants are people you trust, but are not "friends." If they were forced to choose between you and their own hide, they'd more than likely choose the latter. Confidants will never have more influence than you at the start of a game.

Informants (1 Point each): Informants are only interested in one thing – money. Pay them what they want, and they'll get you what you need. They never start out with more influence than you.

Combat Reflexes (3 Points)

You have honed your martial acumen to a fine point, and can react to (often unexpected) developments in combat without hesitation.

After initiative is rolled for any Combat Round, you may re-roll one of your Action dice, but you are forced to keep the new roll.



Commission (Varies; 2 Points less for Montaigne Heroes)

Your family has a long history of military service, and the duty of carrying on the family tradition has fallen on your shoulders. The Commission Advantage is more than just a purchased position. It represents your family's long and respected history with the service – one which you have inherited. Anyone can buy a place in the military, but you've earned it. The men in your command know and respect you, and will follow your orders with precision and passion.

Your rank in the military branch you wish to join costs as follows:

HP Spent	*Army Rank*	*Navy Rank*
2	*Corporal*	*Sailor*
4	*Sergeant*	*Mate*
6	*Lieutenant*	*Petty Officer*
8	*Captain*	*Lieutenant*

The Army

Corporals are enlisted men, and are generally under direct command of sergeants.

Sergeants are noncommissioned officers, generally in charge of 10–50 men.

Lieutenants are officers who have several sergeants at their disposal. Their command commonly includes about one hundred men.

Captains are officers who have a lieutenant or two in their personal staff. Their command commonly includes up to five hundred men.

The Navy

Sailors are the most experienced and well-trained sailors of the navy. Their rank is considered about equal to Corporals of the Army.

Mates are sailors with specialized skills. They are usually under direct command of First Mates.

Dracheneisen Armor Modifiers

Armor Points	TN Modifiers	Damage Reduction
1 – 6	None	–1 of the attackers kept dice (min. 0)
7 – 12	+5	–1 of the attackers kept dice (min. 0)
13 – 18	+5	–2 of the attackers kept dice (min. 0)
19 – 24	+10	–2 of the attackers kept dice (min. 0)

Petty officers are the men in charge of specific duties. The First Gunners' Mate is in charge of firing the cannons, for instance.

Lieutenants make up the high officers of the ship. Each lieutenant is in charge of a specific group of men. The two ship lieutenants are Ship's Master and Boatswain.

Heroes in the Army or Navy can expect many advantages. First, they always have a retinue of allies, all wearing the same uniform. Second, they are always well-equipped. Lastly, Heroes in the military can command a great deal of influence and respect from their respective countries. They cannot, however, expect to be bailed out of every situation by their fellow soldiers, and adventuring parties never get a military company to use as cannon fodder. Montaigne Heroes get this Advantage for 2 HP less than usual (minimum cost of 1 HP).

Dangerous Beauty (3 Points)

You have a certain something about you that attracts members of the opposite sex. *You always roll 2 extra unkept dice for any seduction attempts.*

Dracheneisen (Eisen only, 20 or 40 Points)

The Eisen have never had sorcery, but their land is riddled with veins of ore they call *Dracheneisen* (or "Dragon Iron"). It is a superior grade of iron-bearing ore unseen anywhere else in Théah, and an entire group of Eisen's smiths have devoted their lives to crafting items from it. The process is long and difficult, but the end results are impressive.

When purchasing this Advantage, you devote a large number of Hero Points to your heritage. In this way, the Advantage works similarly to sorcery in other nations – *it qualifies for the reduced cost of the Noble Advantage*, and signifies a connection of some kind to the royalty of the nation (to be worked out between you are the GM). *You may choose from either "Full Nobility" (40 HP) or "Minor Nobility" (20 HP). They provide Dracheneisen as follows:*

Full Nobility (40 HP): 16 points to spend on the Dracheneisen Equipment table.

Minor Nobility (20 HP): 6 points to spend on the Dracheneisen Equipment table.

After the number of Armor Points is determined (by adding the total benefit of all pieces you have purchased with your Dracheneisen points), the bonus to your TN to be Hit and Damage rolls made against you can be found on the table on the facing page.

These benefits are total, *not cumulative.* Bonuses to TN gained from Dracheneisen cannot be negated normally, so a surprised or prone Eisen with +5 to his TN would still have a TN 10 to be hit.

Faith (5 Points)

It doesn't matter if you are Vaticine, Objectionist or Orthodox, you are a devout believer in the message of the Prophets. You believe that life is a riddle, that it can be sorted out and those who do so come closer to the Creator.

You aren't really sure what this Advantage does. In fact, it may not do anything at all. We've given the GM a few suggestions, but in the end, it's up to him. Is it worth it? You'll just have to exercise some faith and find out.

Foul Weather Jack (5 Points)

Whether you like it or not, excitement has a way of finding you. Princesses come to you seeking a rescuer, and old girlfriends turn up after years, only to be involved in plans to take over the world with your best friend. Never let it be said that you lead a boring life. *You receive one free 4 Point Background at the start of the game. This is the only way you*

Dracheneisen Equipment

Name*	Cost	Effect
Helmet (1)	3	Armor**
Gauntlet (1)	2	Armor
Panzerhand (1)	6	+1 unkept die when using Panzerhand Knacks, Armor (3 Armor Points)
Arm Guard (2)	2	Armor
Leg Guard (2)	2	Armor
Boot (2)	1	Armor
Breastplate (1)	6	Armor
Sword (1)	4	3k2 Heavy Weapon, +1 unkept die when using Heavy Weapon Knacks
Pistol (1)	5	–5 to opponent's TN to be hit, Range is increased by 20 feet
Musket (1)	7	–5 to opponent's TN to be hit, Range is increased by 20 feet

**Numbers in parentheses are the number of this type that may be purchased.*
***Armor grants Armor Points equal to the cost listed above, except for the Panzerhand, which grants only 3 Armor Points (24 total possible).*

Inheritance

Point Cost	Monetary Value	Example Item
1	500 Guilders	One well-made arquebus
2	1000 Guilders	One well-trained riding horse
3	1500 Guilders	One indentured servant (for life)
4	2000 Guilders	One small Swivel-gun, or one ship's cannon
5	2500 Guilders	One small Library
6	3000 Guilders	One obligation from a supernatural creature
7	3500 Guilders	Minor position on your nation's ruling council
8	4000 Guilders	One large cannon, or one Syrneth artifact
9	4500 Guilders	One well-trained racing or war horse, or a very small parcel of well-irrigated land
10	5000 Guilders	One fancy coach, a very small (and likely remote) island, or a small business

can invest more than 3 Points in a single Background. You cannot take any other Backgrounds besides this one, but should you ever resolve it, you receive a new 4 Point Background for free.

Indomitable Will (3 Points)

You are a stout soul, set in your ways and hard to convince; you can stand in a room of bickering nobles and never feel the need to side with any of them. *Roll two additional unkept dice when resisting Contested social rolls.*

Inheritance (Varies)

You have been gifted with something of value. Perhaps it was left to you by a late relative, or perhaps you have recently grown into a trust fund. Or maybe – if you're willing to risk having a dependent – it was even a dowry or gift from your spouse's parents. It could be a cherished heirloom, handed down through your family for generations, or simply a large sum of money. Regardless, it belongs to you now, free and clear.

The above table is set up to give you an idea of the approximate worth of your inheritance, so that you might work out the specifics with your GM. Note that "common" valuables – like jewelry and art – are not included, as their HP cost should be easily derived from the Monetary Value column. You cannot spend more than 10 HP on the Inheritance Advantage.

Keen Senses (2 Points)

You have very acute senses, making you more likely to spot a small mark on the floor or detect the faint taste of almonds in your tea. *You receive one extra unkept die for any Skill checks that involve one of your senses, as well as any checks for Surprise.*

Language (Varies)

You can speak more than one language.

The point cost for different languages can be found on the chart on the facing page. Find your native country across the top, then find the language you want to speak in the left column and look where they meet in order to determine the cost. Note that literacy (the ability to read and write, rather than just speak) increases the cost of a language by 1.

Large (5 Points; 3 Points for Vendel/Vestenmannavnjar Heroes)

You are a big person (about six inches to one foot taller than average).

All of your Damage and Intimidation rolls have one extra unkept die. You cannot take the Small Advantage.

Left-handed (3 Points; 1 Point for Vodacce Heroes)

Not so much the inability to wield a weapon with your right hand as proficiency with your left, this means that you have - either by birth or training – managed to overcome the natural handicap of working with your left hand. Since other fighters (even other left-handers) are trained to fight right-handed swordsmen, they have a bit more trouble dealing with you. *All Attack Rolls you attempt with your left hand are made with one additional unkept die. Your right hand is considered your off-hand (see Off-hand Penalty, page 186).*

Legendary Trait (3 Points; 1 Point for Avalon Heroes)

Somehow, your potential with one of the five basic Traits has been boosted. You might just be special, or you might have devoted your entire life to one particular characteristic. *When you purchase this Advantage, nominate a single Trait. You may – when you have the Experience Points – purchase that Trait to Rank 6. This does not change your starting limit of 3 (or 4 for Nationality Bonus).*

Languages

	Avalon	Castille	Eisen	Montaigne	Ussura	Vendel	Vodacce
Avalon	0	2	1	2	2	1	2
Castille	2	0	2	1	3	2	1
Crescent	3	2	3	4	2	3	4
High Eisen*	2	3	1	3	3	2	3
Eisen	1	2	0	2	2	1	2
Montaigne	2	1	2	0	3	2	1
Théan**	3	2	3	2	4	3	2
Teodoran***	3	4	3	4	1	3	4
Ussura	2	3	2	3	0	2	3
Vendel	1	2	1	2	2	0	2
Vodacce	2	1	2	1	3	2	0

**High Eisen was developed in order to speak privately in front of dignitaries from other countries.*

***Théan was the official language of the Old Republic (1 AUC to 340 AV). Mass and most scripture of the Church of the Prophets, as well as some less mainstream scholarly texts, use this language today.*

****Teodoran is the language from which modern Ussuran is descended. Today it has become an obscure language spoken only among scholars, and occasionally used to conceal messages.*

Linguist (2 Points)

You have a natural ability with languages; you look at foreign words and can work out the common denominator between them. This makes you an invaluable commodity across Théah, as an interpreter if nothing else.

All languages cost one point less to purchase (minimum 1 point, unless it starts at a cost of 0). See the Language Chart below.

Membership (Varies)

You have gained membership in one of the powerful organizations that control Théah. Ultimately, each provides you significant benefits for being a member, while asking for either dues, services, or both in return. Some can be adventurous (like the Swordsman's Guild), while others can be dangerous (like the Invisible College), but all represent a philosophy that you must adhere to during your membership.

Each of the following has one or more sections devoted to it within this book and the GMs' Guide *(see the index and the GM for more information).*

Swordsman's Guild (3 Points)

You have the exclusive right to initiate duels. The wording of the previous sentence is very important; a member of the Swordsman's Guild has the right to *initiate* duels, but *any man* has the right to defend himself. Members of the Swordsman's Guild generally consider dueling with pistols vulgar, ungentlemanly and cowardly. *Any character who has attended a Swordsman School is considered to get this Advantage for free.*

Merchant Guilds (4 Points per Guild)

You are a member in one of the Merchant Guilds. You can practice its trade legally (to do so without membership – your "license" – is a high crime, punishable by hanging), and generally have a steady income as a result. When you purchase this Advantage, you must choose a Knack with which you make your living, such as Cooking or Veterinarian. When determining monthly income, that will be the Knack you use.

It costs 4 Hero Points to become a member of any one Guild. The Hero is considered a Journeyman (just above an apprentice), with his own shop and monthly revenue (according to the Determining Hero Wealth section, page 122). Heroes may join more than one Guild, but receive income from only one Guild in any given month.

Musketeers (Montaigne only, 4 Points)

Montaigne's musketeers are known throughout Théah for their courage and devotion. As a member, you mete out the Empereur's justice.

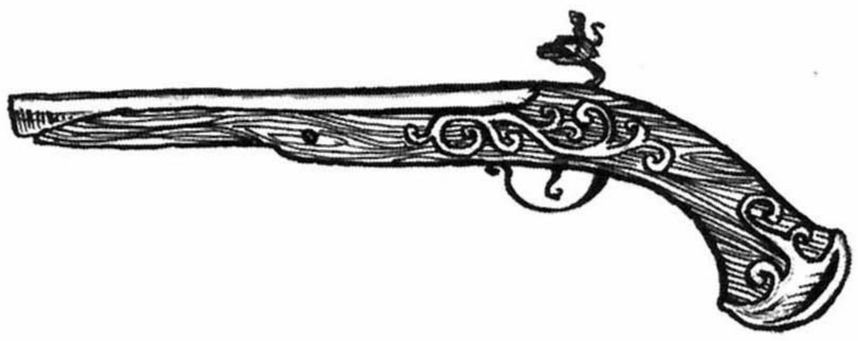
All of your needs are provided for by the Empereur. Your clothes, weapons and lodgings are all provided for. You also have a bond with the other Musketeers and can count on them for assistance. However, they also count on you...

Secret Societies (5 Points)

There are many groups within Théah that can claim to be "secret." You belong to one. These organizations may not be hidden away in some tower plotting a coup of the throne (in fact, they may not be hiding at all), but by being a member in one, you are taking on a sizable responsibility. It is not only part of the game to maintain the profile of your secret society – you must fulfill their goals as well. And as some of the groups show, this is not always as easy as it sounds.

You may purchase membership in only *one* Secret Society.

Explorer's Society
Invisible College
Knightly Order of the Rose and Cross
Die Kreuzritter
Los Vagos
Rilasciare (Free Thinkers)
Sophia's Daughters



Noble (5 or 10 Points)

You are a member of a royal family with good standing. This is different from simply purchasing Sorcery. Heroes who purchase Sorcery and not the Noble Advantage have lost their good standing in the family, or their family has lost its good standing in noble society.

You have a single manor house, complete with one seneschal (a "grounds administrator"), ten general staff (butlers, maids, stableboys, etc.) and a small population of serfs who work the land. You will be held accountable for the protection and welfare of these peasants, as well as the land you govern.

While this may sound like a lot to deal with, we have made it simple for you. The "Determining Hero Wealth" section (page 122) contains all the information you need (*i.e.*, how much money the estate provides you above its maintenance cost to spend each month). If you desire to play the more complex noble's game, in which you are more "hands on" with the land and people you control, ask the GM to consult the advanced landholding rules located in his Guide.

This Advantage costs 10 Points, unless you have already purchased Sorcery, Dracheneisen, or Church Education, in which case it costs only 5 Points.

Ordained (4 Points)

You've obtained a position in the Church of the Prophets, a position that brings you a great deal of influence and advantage (most likely that of a priest, though we leave that detail up to you and your GM). *You receive the Scholar Skill for free (as if you had purchased it for 2 HP). You also gain a Free Raise in all social situations with NPCs and Heroes who are adherents to your faith (with the GM's discretion, of course).*

In addition, being a member of the Church means you get three square meals a day, a stipend of 30 Guilders per month, and all of your basic needs taken care of.

Patron (Varies)

When you're talented and don't have any money, what do you do? You find a patron.

Patrons are wealthy individuals who sponsor struggling artists, poets, playwrights, swordsmen, and rogues. The number of points you spend determines how wealthy your patron is, and how willing he is to spend some of that wealth on you. But remember, your patron's money isn't *your* money, and many patrons are little more than rich, snotty nobles that are *so* easily offended...

Talk with your GM about purchasing a Patron and who your Patron might be.

Determine your Patron's Wealth and Generosity below, and add the HP together for your final cost.

Wealth
1 Point: 10 Guilders
2 Points: 20 Guilders
4 Points: 40 Guilders

Generosity
1 Point: Once per month
2 Points: Twice per month
4 Points: Once a week

Scoundrel (3 Points)

You have a reputation for being bad, for consorting with the "criminal element", and for knowing and doing things that only the bold or forsaken care to. It may be true (if you'd like), or you might just have been in the wrong place at the wrong time once too often. But, as some say, "Having a bad reputation is better than having no reputation at all." *You gain the Streetwise Skill as part of this Advantage (worth 2 HP, that do not need to be paid in addition to the 3 above), and your Reputation begins at –10 (or 1 Reputation die to roll when making Reputation Actions – see page 119). You may not take the Citation Advantage.*

Servants (3 Points)

You have one or more servants in your employ at the start of the game. They are not particularly loyal (beyond the desire to be paid), but they can be a help if you need something (or someone) finished. *Servants are classified in two groups – Henchmen and Brutes – following the standard*

NPC rules of creation and combat. The 3 HP invested in this Advantage buy either one Henchman (designed by the GM) or six Brutes (all Threat Rating 1). This Advantage may be bought multiple times.

Small (2 Points)

You are six inches to one foot shorter than average. *You gain one unkept die to all Stealth or Shadowing rolls. You must also drop one additional die from your first Damage roll each combat. You cannot take the Large Advantage.*

Specialty (Varies)

You have trained yourself to be skilled in one very narrow area of expertise, bypassing the schooling you would ordinarily need. *You gain one Rank in a Knack that is not found inside a skill you already possess. This Advantage costs 1 HP for a Basic Knack, and 3 HP for an Advanced Knack. You may purchase this Advantage up to three times, and increase the Rank of these Knacks during character creation. Knacks purchased in this manner may be increased normally after Hero creation and must obey normal limitations.*

Toughness (5 Points; 3 Points for Ussuran Heroes)

Whether it's due to a thick skin (or a thick skull) you've always had a high pain threshold.

All of your Wound Checks have one extra Kept die.

University (4 Points; 2 Points for Castillian Heroes)

Like many martial Academies sprouting up across Théah, universities – mostly funded and organized by the Vaticine Church of the Prophets, and offering a wide variety of scholarly training – are coming into fashion. *You have attended one of these schools. As a result, any Civil Skill costs you 1 Point rather than 2 to purchase at the start of the game.*

Skill List

All Skills, Martial and Civil, cost 2 HPs to purchase at first. You cannot buy any Knacks without first buying the Skill they are listed within. All Basic Knacks cost 1 HP per Rank. All Advanced Knacks cost 3 HPs per Rank.

Civil Skills

Civil Skills encompass everything that you can do that does not involve combat. Very few of these Skills, or their associated Knacks, have any mechanics written into their descriptions. You cannot buy any Civil Skill Knacks higher than Rank 3 during Hero creation.

Artist

You specialize in one of the fine arts, perhaps composing love sonnets for your beloved or painting portraits for the nobility. Artists are a special breed and can make a living with their work, which has the potential to elicit emotion and manipulate the masses, or focus upon one individual and change his heart forever.

Note: When you buy this Skill, you do not receive all the Basic Knacks at Rank 1. Instead, you receive only one Basic Knack at Rank 2. You may purchase additional Basic Knacks for 1 Hero Point each.

Basic Knacks

Composer: Within your mind flow endless streams of melody, a gift from Theus few can master. This training is the first step toward that goal, including knowledge of tempo, harmony, instrumentation, and a host of other elements.

Drawing: A piece of chalk or charcoal can become the tool that you use to bring your imagination to life. Ancient runes or carvings can be copied with accuracy or a delicate flower can be sketched for a lady friend.

Musician (specify instrument): When playing the selected instrument, you can transport your audience to other worlds, or evoke a range of sentiment from sheer ecstasy to bitter tragedy. No dinner party is ever closed to those skilled at an instrument.

Sculpting: Your hands can mold soft clay or hard marble into sculptures capable of conveying not only the image of a person or an object, but its presence and bearing as well. In the hands of a talented sculptor, a statue can entice the eye like no simple, two-dimensional portrait. Skilled sculptors are approached with work not only by the nobility, but frequently by the Church as well.

Singing: A voice as clear as crystal is only part of your secret. Breath control and enunciation count for just as much. This Knack gives you the training to use your voice to the fullest.

Writing: Your quill flies across the page with the gift of prose, setting down words that can entertain the reader, outrage the nobility, or call the people to arms. Your words can make beggars into kings or topple the most entrenched tyrants. This Knack encompasses poetry, plays, and other written works.

Advanced Knacks

None.

Courtier

Courtiers are skilled in the diplomatic arts. As a member of this esteemed profession you can dine with kings, chat pleasantly with Cardinals or, when required, pull state secrets from your own lovers' lips.

Basic Knacks

Dancing: You ease your way around the dance floor with grace and poise. Ballroom dancers with great skill are in high demand at noble balls, while ballet dancers can earn a decent living performing at stage shows and paid recitals.

Etiquette: While it might be acceptable to throw the bones of your meal upon the floor in some regions, it is certain that other nobility would faint upon seeing some ruffian throw a greasy bone on their new rug. You have learned the niceties of events sponsored by the nobility and can avoid such social *faux pas*. When you are using this Knack in a place whose customs you are unfamiliar with, you are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice.

Fashion: When appearing before nobility, it is an affront to their gentle senses to be ill-attired. The conscientious courtier keeps careful tabs on the latest trends in fashion, no matter how ridiculous. With enough knowledge, you can quickly throw together a presentable outfit, even if the materials at hand are less than satisfactory.

Oratory: Sweet words of praise flow as easily from your lips as whispered words of poison. Oratory allows you to persuade your listeners more easily of any argument.

Advanced Knacks

Diplomacy: The art of diplomacy is the art of peace; words have prevented more wars than guns ever caused. Your soothing reassurances can calm all but the most enraged duelist, and keep your blood where it belongs – in your veins.

Gaming: Nobles dabble with intricate, time-consuming amusements, from verbal jousts to inane, overcomplicated games of chance. You must have studied these games in order to understand their subtle interplay and the almost invisible insight they provide into the minds of the players.

Gossip: A rumor flies faster than the swiftest arrow and bites twice as deep. Gossips are always near the rumor mill and get the latest news before anyone else, but with this Knack, you also have the ability to determine which are true and which are important.

Lip Reading: A whispered secret hides nothing when betrayed by the visible motion of your mouth. With this Knack you can discern plots and schemes from across the room. Of course, cautious or experienced courtiers often carry fans or veils to prevent just such an eventuality.

Mooch: With a combination of entertaining conversation, hollow promises, and sheer audacity, you can convince others to provide for your needs. Care must be taken not to do this in one place too long, however, as even the most flattering guest must eventually wear out his welcome.

Politics: Politics is power, and the truly clever courtier understands this. You can sense the ebb and flow of a noble's influence and determine whose coattails represent the quickest ride to the top.

Scheming: Great minds think alike. So do devious ones. When you consider the complex world of political machinations, you can see the strings attached to each of its participants with a special clarity and, with enough practice, the puppet masters behind the scenes.

Seduction: The breathy whisper of a sultry woman has thrown more than one empire into chaos. Armed with this Knack, you have the potential to be more dangerous to the stability of a nation than a hundred soldiers.

Sincerity: Even the most adept lie is useless if the listener detects a tremor of fear or a pair of downcast, nervous eyes. While Oratory allows you to utter glib words for entertainment or impact, Sincerity puts the ring of truth behind them, concealing even the most bold-faced lie behind a veneer of honesty.

Criminal

Criminals operate outside the law. They rob others, scam them out of their money and occasionally even set someone else up to take the fall. In short, they'll do anything it takes to get what they want.

Basic Knacks

Gambling: The odds always favor the house. You know how to play those odds, placing careful wagers and studying the faces of your opponents. This Knack isn't the same as cheating; you never actually break the rules of the game, you simply play the odds as closely as possible. Rules for gambling can be found in the *GMs' Guide*.

Shadowing: You have been trained to blend in with crowds and unobtrusively follow your targets in a city or other urban setting. Done properly, the target will never even notice your presence. This Knack is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Stealth: Stealth is the art of going unnoticed. You can use it to go places you're not allowed, hide from your pursuers, or avoid being caught in a compromising situation. This Knack is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Advanced Knacks

Ambush: You have learned to spot likely places for an ambush to occur and watch for signs that people have concealed themselves there. Naturally, this Knack cuts both ways, allowing you to set up an ambush of your own. Rules for the use of this Knack are located in the Drama Chapter (page 190).

Cheating: Dim alleys with crowds of men throwing dice are your haunt. Using weighted dice, marked cards, or simple diversions and sleight of hand, you unfairly turn the odds in your favor. Your GM will have rules for gambling (and cheating), located in the *GMs' Guide*.

Lockpicking: Doors wouldn't have locks if there weren't valuable things to protect. Armed with this Knack and some wire or a set of lockpicks, you can bypass locked doors that present an obstacle to you. Your GM has rules on locks and lockpicking in his Guide.

Pickpocket: Armed with a feather-light touch and an arsenal of distractions and tricks, you are skilled at divesting passersby of their possessions without their knowledge. Your training could just as easily be used to plant evidence on an unsuspecting target or to quietly palm an item off a table. This Knack is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Prestidigitation: Small magic tricks such as making coins disappear and reappear, stacking decks of cards, and producing flowers out of thin air are all examples of prestidigitation. You can earn a living by giving shows, or simply impress the ladies at a noble ball. This Knack is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Quack: Specializing in "invisible" cures (such as sugar pills and colored water) that do more for the patient's ego than his body, you know how to make people feel like they're getting better. If they get some benefit from this, wonderful. If not, you will likely have moved on already.



Scrounging: You know where potentially useful trash is thrown. While it is unlikely for you to scrounge up a diamond, you would certainly know where best to find food, a change of clothes, or a makeshift weapon. Successful rolls with this Knack will grant you items or resources found within the city, as determined by the GM.

Doctor

Doctors are trained in the professional art of healing (and sometimes the not-so-professional arts of mangling for the "betterment" of the patient). They use just about anything to cure their charges, including medicines, bandages, cauterization, or even obscure folk remedies.

Basic Knacks

Diagnosis: Feeling for broken bones and listening for punctured lungs is a doctor's most elementary Knack. Without making a diagnosis, how can you possibly hope to treat your patients? The TN for using Diagnosis is 5 + 5 times the number of Dramatic Wounds the patient has suffered. Success with this Knack will reduce the TN for Surgery (see below). Diagnosis requires one Action to use, and can only be used once per patient, per Act.

First Aid: Even without formal training, you can administer simple treatment if the ailment allows for it. This includes sewing and cauterizing a wound, or mixing a chest balm for respiratory problems. The TN for First Aid is the number of Flesh Wounds the patient has suffered. Success eliminates all current Flesh Wounds. First Aid requires one Action to use and may not be used more than once per patient, per Scene. Heroes with First Aid may use it on themselves, with the same restrictions, but they will need to make one Raise because of the difficulty of bandaging themselves.

Advanced Knacks

Dentist: It's hard to win a duel or counsel a king with a toothache. When skilled in dentistry, you can clean decay and make use of metal fillings or

artificial dentures. This is more a professional Knack than a healing one, and serves to improve your income (see Determining Hero Wealth, page 122).

Examiner: Traces of blood or evidence left behind after a fight can be an unexpected source of information. Also, the remains of the old races (*i.e.*, bone fragments and such) can be loosely classified (mostly by their known qualities and probable area of origin). Other uses must be cleared with the Game Master.

Quack: Specializing in "invisible" cures (such as sugar pills and colored water) that do more for the patient's ego than his body, you know how to make people feel like they're getting better. If they get some benefit from this, wonderful. If not, you will likely have moved on already.

Surgery: While a doctor's surgical skills are limited at best in the world of *7th Sea*, they can make the difference between life and death. You can amputate infected limbs, remove bullets from wounds, and properly sew up a patient. Heroes with Surgery may heal a Hero's Dramatic Wounds with a successful Wits + Surgery roll. The TN is 10 times the total number of Dramatic Wounds the Hero has acquired (a successful Diagnosis roll reduces this TN to 5 times the total number of Dramatic Wounds). Success heals one Dramatic Wound, plus one for every two Raises the Hero succeeds with. You may only perform Surgery on a patient once per Act.

Veterinarian: An animal, especially a horse or cow, is often a family's most valuable possession. If the animal becomes sick or hurt, it's a family emergency. With the ability to diagnose and treat these poor creatures, you are a valued member of any community you choose to live in.

Hunter

The hunter makes his home in the forest. He knows its paths and ponds as well as any cutpurse knows the alleys of his city. He has learned to make a living off the land, feeding himself and using the excess to trade for other essential supplies.

Note: You begin with three of the following Basic Knacks at Rank 1. You may purchase additional Basic Knacks for 1 Hero Point each.

Basic Knacks

Fishing: Knowing where to cast a net or how to thrust a spear has saved the life of more than one starving hunter or sailor. It allows you to supplement your diet with fish and sell any excess, or dry it for later use.

Skinning: Using this Knack you can skin and tan the hide of an animal in preparation for use or sale. This keeps the skin from rotting and increases its value.

Stealth: Stealth is the art of going unnoticed. You can use it to go places you're not allowed, hide from your pursuers, or avoid being caught in a compromising situation. This Knack is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Survival: Foraging for berries and nuts isn't exciting, but it's often necessary during the winter or in unfamiliar territory. With the Survival Knack you can always find enough food to survive on, although it may include such delicacies as mice, grubs, and termites. Your GM has rules for the use of this Knack, located in his Guide.

Tracking: You know the signs that animals and people leave behind as they move through the woods: a broken twig, a crushed leaf, or a muddy footprint. More difficult, but much more impressive, is determining how long ago the signs were made. This Knack will commonly be used against a TN generated with the target's Stealth Knack when he last passed through the area.

Trail Signs: Hunters have a private language all their own, in the form of carefully bent twigs, stacked rocks, and notched limbs. You can leave a trail for others to find and follow later, warn of danger, or indicate a good fishing hole. Your GM will have a list of basic TNs for using this Knack; success means that the person you are signaling automatically sees the trail signs when he passes by it (possible trail signs are listed in the *GMs' Guide*).

Traps: Small snares and deadfalls can be constructed by a hunter trained in their use. These are not typically capable of harming a person, but animals may find escape impossible. In areas of plentiful game, you can easily make a living selling hides from trapped animals.

Advanced Knacks

Ambush: You have learned to spot likely places for an ambush to occur and to watch for signs that people have concealed themselves there. Naturally, this Knack cuts both ways, allowing you to set up an ambush of your own. Rules for the use of this Knack are located in the "Drama" section (page 190).

Animal Training: This Knack allows you to domesticate animals and train them to perform tricks, or to attack on command. Suggested rules for Animal Training can be found in the GM's Guide.

Merchant

As long as something can be sold, even if it's a service, there will be merchants. In *7th Sea*, they are a powerful collective, guided to some degree by the Vendel League and/or the Vodacce Merchant Princes.

Notes: You begin with any one Basic Knack at Rank 2. You may purchase additional Basic Knacks for 1 Hero Point each, and Advanced Knacks for 3 Hero Points each. Also, most of these Knacks affect a Hero's income (see Determining Hero Wealth, page 122).

Basic Knacks

Barber: You are skilled at cutting and styling hair to suit the patron's tastes.

Blacksmith: You can forge simple metal utensils and tools for sale. This includes nails, hinges, horseshoes, and axe-heads, among other things. While a smithy requires a large outlay for tools in the beginning, it brings in a comfortable income.

Butcher: You are adept at preparing meats for consumption.

Calligrapher: You can write in a very formal, decorative hand, and illuminate the pages of a book. This Knack is only useful for those languages that you can read and write, or those which share a common alphabet with those you do (See Language, page 134).

Ceramics: You have knowledge of how to sculpt and fire objects made of clay or other similar materials.

Chandler: You are skilled in the dipping of beeswax and tallow candles. Often the candles are scented or carved. You may also supplement your income by selling honey from your beehives.

Cooking: No servant is as beloved as a fine chef. Employers will bend over backwards to avoid losing such a person, while others will try to steal one away if he is truly skilled. In short, a skilled cook is guaranteed a steady income.

Cooper: You can make casks and barrels.

Dyeing: You can prepare dyes and are proficient in their use.

Embalmer: You can preserve a corpse, whether animal or human.

Fletcher: You know how to make and repair arrows. This includes the shaft and the fletching on the back, but not the arrowheads. Often, a blacksmith forges the heads for you. This Knack is very useful to archers, and stretches out their very limited supply of arrows. After each battle in which you fire your bow, make a Wits + Fletcher check. For every 10 points you roll, you retrieve one arrow fired during the battle in usable condition.

Furrier: You make, repair, and clean furs and fur garments.

Gardener: You are capable of laying out, planting, and maintaining a decorative landscape.

Glassblower: You make items out of glass.

Innkeeper: You can manage the day-to-day chores for running an inn.

Jenny: The courtly art of escort and the less refined variants thereof.

Jeweler: You are skilled in cutting, polishing, and setting gems.

Masseur: You can give expert massages, a skill often in demand among nobility.

Miller: You are capable of operating and repairing a mill.

Paper Maker: You can make sturdy paper on which to write.

Potter: You are capable of creating fine pots with the aid of a wheel and a kiln.

Sail Maker: You are able to sew sails to meet the needs of sailors.

Scribe: You can carefully and neatly write, either copying from a book or taking dictation. This Knack is only useful for languages that you can read and write (see Languages, page 135).

Seamstress: You can mend clothes and other fabrics, and weave various materials into clothing, throw rugs, and other useful items.

Spinner: You can spin carded wool or other materials into cloth.

Steward: You are able to manage a household: buying food, directing servants, etc.

Tailor: You are able to make, repair, or alter clothing to fit your customers.

Vintner: You are able to produce wines.

Weaver: You can take thread and weave it into cloth. A more skilled weaver is capable of tapestries and similar creations.

Advanced Knacks

Accounting: Use of this Knack allows you to track the income and expenditures of a large household or business with accuracy. It can detect fraud, or be used to "cook the books."

Appraising: Judging the approximate worth of an item is an important part of a merchant's occupation. Unless you buy low and sell high, you'll soon be out of business. TNs will be given to you by your GM (guidelines are located in his Guide).



Bartending: As a tavern-master, you have the ability to serve drinks, not only to satisfy your customers' orders, but to do so with style. An underrated Knack, this allows not only the running of a drinking establishment, but the flair with which to gain a reputation in the process.

Haggling: Being able to barter is only the beginning for a person who wishes to become a successful procurer of valuable goods. You must also know how to haggle – remain aware of all the elements of a bargaining discussion at any time, and be able to use them to your advantage. Of course, you must be better at it than your opponent, for he is reading the same signs you are...

Performer

Performers earn their living by making crowds of people laugh, cry, and cheer. Whatever comes back when they pass the hat is often all they have to eat with that night. Because the take is so small (or maybe just because they can), some performers turn their talents to other (less honest) purposes.

Basic Knacks

Acting: Slipping in and out of character is your forte. You can pretend to be a member of a different social class, exhibiting the humility of a beggar or the arrogance of a king. Of course, this is much more effective when combined with the proper costume.

Dancing: You can ease your way around the dance floor with grace and poise. Ballroom dancers with great skill are in high demand at noble balls, while ballet dancers can earn a decent living performing at stage shows and paid recitals.

Oratory: Sweet words of praise flow as easily from your lips as whispered words of poison. Oratory allows you to convince your listeners more easily of the truth of any argument.

Singing: A voice as clear as crystal is only part of your secret. Breath control and enunciation count for just as much. This Knack gives you the training to use your voice to the fullest.

Advanced Knacks

Animal Training: This Knack allows you to domesticate animals and train them to perform tricks, or to attack on command. Suggested rules for Animal Training can be found in the *GMs' Guide.*

Circus: You have some training in several of the traditional circus acts: perhaps fire eating, sword swallowing, fortune telling or juggling. Of course, their use has been carefully rehearsed beforehand, and is much less effective on the spur of the moment. Thus, you might be able to juggle to impress a crowd using this Knack, but could not snatch a knife thrown by an assassin out of the air.

Cold Read: This is the art of deducing things about a person from his or her appearance and mannerisms. Handedness might be determined from a callus upon a knuckle, while a nervous twitch could reveal much to an observant eye. With this Knack you can always enter a conversation with at least a little information about the other person. More often than not, this Knack will be used in Contested Rolls against the Resolve of another, or against one of his other Knacks.

Disguise: Cloaked figures can draw more attention than they intend. A dab of soot in your hair, a stooped walk, some ratty clothes, and this Knack can help you become just another innocent bystander in a crowded room. To use this Knack you must make a Simple Roll with it, and the total generated becomes the TN for anyone nearby to see through the disguise.

Prestidigitation: Small magic tricks such as making coins disappear and reappear, stacking decks of cards, and producing flowers out of thin air are all examples of prestidigitation. You can earn a living by giving shows, or simply impress the ladies at a noble ball. This Knack is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Storytelling: Seated around a flickering fire, all attention is on you. Your voice and mannerisms are calculated to enthrall your audience completely. Storytellers can, in addition, sometimes collect small sums of money for telling their tales.

Sailor

Sailors work on ships. More specifically, they understand the wind and how it affects the rigging; they learn how to sail by the stars and how to plot a course; they know how to fire a cannon at an enemy ship. In short, they learn a lot of things that, when taken together, allow them to crew a ship.

Basic Knacks

Balance: When the ship tosses in stormy seas and the Captain tells you to climb the rigging and secure a mast, the Balance Knack will save your life. Quite simply, it's the Knack of not falling down, even under adverse conditions. This is used as the Defense Knack for those fighting aboard a ship at sea, or in situations where the footing is uncertain. The GM will give you the TNs for performing certain actions on board a sailing vessel, or with other special circumstances.

Climbing: You understand how to find hand- and footholds, how to use climbing gear, and how to seek out the easiest path to climb in the first place. If you are attacked while climbing, you use this Knack as your Defense Knack.

Knotwork: With this Knack you can tie all the essential knots a sailor needs to know, and you can tell the difference between a sheepshank and a two-half-hitches knot.

Rigging: You understand the intricacies of a ship's rigging. You know what a jib is, where the mainsail can be found, and how to batten down the hatches and trim the sails. Moreover, you can help to repair a shattered mast or a torn sail.

Advanced Knacks

Cartography: You can make reasonably accurate maps using a set of cartographer's tools. Reliable maps can fetch a high price if sold to the right buyer. Success with this Knack yields legible, accurate maps. Failure might send the ship using them hurtling mercilessly into the Seventh Sea...

Leaping: You can jump higher and farther than most people. This can often come in handy when exploring dusty tombs or fleeing across rooftops. In addition, you use this Knack as your Defense Knack while leaping.

Navigation: Using nautical charts and a set of navigator's tools, you can plot courses that will take a ship out of sight of land without getting hopelessly lost, and communicate that information to the pilot of the ship. Success with this Knack steers a vessel onto the correct course. Failure could result in your being keel-hauled for getting everyone lost. Your GM has rules for sailing sea vessels in his Guide.

Pilot: Using a compass, the setting sun, or the stars, you are able to steer a ship on a specific course given to you by the navigator, and are capable of spotting submerged hazards and shallow waters. You are also familiar with the tricks of keeping a ship afloat during a storm. Your GM has rules for sailing sea vessels in his Guide.

Sea Lore: You know the legends and stories that sailors tell among themselves. If a particular island is reputed to be haunted, you might know the tale connected with it.

Swimming: Provided you aren't too heavily weighed down, you do a nice job of not sinking (stormy seas and sharks notwithstanding). Your GM has rules for swimming (and drowning) in his Guide.

Weather: Whether it's because your corns start to hurt, your joints begin to ache, or you've learned to identify the signs, you know when a storm is coming, and you can quickly get an idea just how bad the storm is going to be. Rules for weather can be found in the *GMs' Guide.*

Scholar

Théah's scholars are responsible for her current social and technological level. Some of them are bookish types, locked away in libraries and laboratories, while others brave the deadly Syrneth ruins in search of lost truths.

Basic Knacks

History: More than just knowing what has come before, history has a great many lessons for those willing to listen. Tragic military defeats have been transformed into glorious victories by a schooled historian, and more than a few of

them have learned from failed political maneuvers as well. You know the ways of the past and how to learn from them today.

Mathematics: "Numbers define the world," they say, and you are sure that they are right. Measurements, navigation, troop placement, and even trade negotiations require calculation. Isn't it fortunate that you paid attention in class?

Philosophy: Beyond facts there are ideas, and those ideas can change the world. Theoretical debates are a hobby of yours, and with this Knack you might well win them.

Research: What is unknown can prove to be the most valuable part of any endeavor, and you know how to ferret out vital information. You have studied the ways that knowledge is gained – where to look and who to ask.

Advanced Knacks

Astronomy: Knowing the names and locations of the stars can provide entertaining banter over dinner, or it can save a ship lost at sea. You can read the heavens like a book, using them to understand the passage of time, or the distance between locations, or to impress a lady friend.

Law: Laws differ from country to country, sometimes from day to day as well. Even the most clearly written can be twisted against you unless you understand them. With this Knack, not only are the current laws of a country known to you, but you also know how to manipulate them to your favor in order to extricate yourself from sticky situations.

Natural Philosophy: Natural philosophy is the study of both chemistry and physics. You have an understanding of the (mostly) immutable laws that govern the physical world such as gravity and inertia, and you may be able to make things such as weak acid or steel, if you can just remember the formulas.

Occult: With the occult, there is precious little hard knowledge to be learned. You have acquired some of it and know how to use it, be it a trivial fact about a certain brand of sorcery or the solution to an ancient puzzle.

Theology: Divine will is a difficult subject – everyone feels that he's right. You, however, have studied all the faiths dispassionately, looking for correlations and unseen connections, regardless of your own beliefs. You know who they all pray to, how they worship, and how their daily lives have changed because of it.

Servant

Nobles and merchants are demanding employers. A servant must tread softly and work diligently to meet their standards.

Basic Knacks

Etiquette: While it might be acceptable to throw the bones of your meal upon the floor in some regions, it is certain that another lady would faint upon seeing some ruffian throw a greasy bone on her new rug. You have learned the niceties of events sponsored by the nobility in a certain country and can avoid such social *faux pas*. When you are using this Knack in a place whose customs you are unfamiliar with, you are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice.

Fashion: When appearing before nobility, it is an affront to their gentle senses to be ill-attired. The conscientious courtier keeps careful tabs on the latest trends in fashion, no matter how ridiculous. With enough knowledge, you can quickly throw together a presentable outfit, even if the materials at hand are less than satisfactory.

Menial Tasks: This Knack allows you to perform all the common labors that any servant must perform in service to his lord (*e.g.,* cleaning and taking care of his estate, doing laundry, answering doors, etc.) Failure with this Knack will likely result in unemployment, or worse...

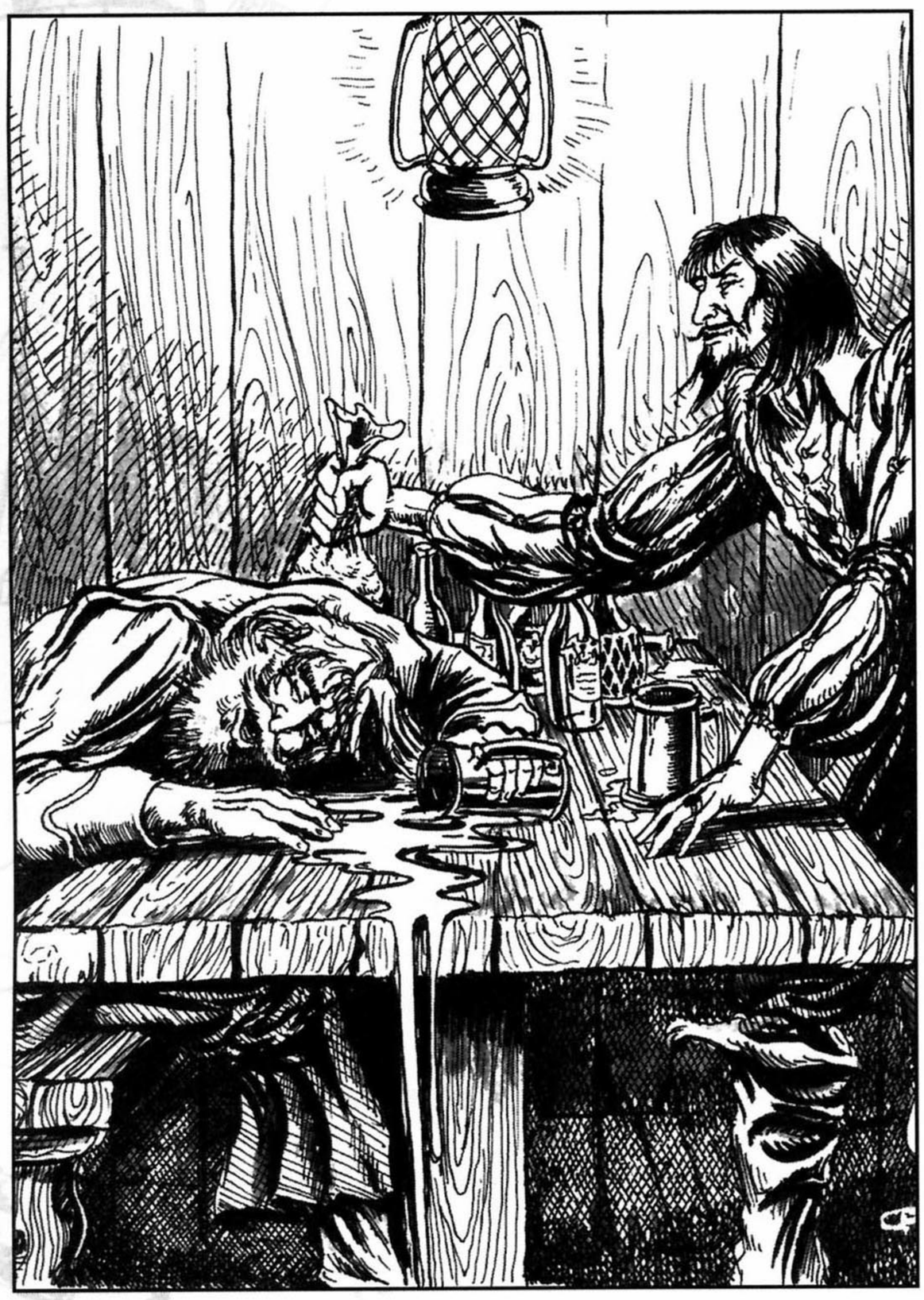
Unobtrusive: Sometimes a servant's best Knack is remaining unnoticed while his employer works off a fit of rage. This is not actually hiding, but rather blending in with the background. It plays upon a noble's tendency to ignore servants, and so works best on them. Like the Stealth Knack, Unobtrusive is used to generate a TN that those about the Servant must make a Contested Wits Roll against to notice him.

Advanced Knacks

Accounting: Use of this Knack allows you to track the income and expenditures of a large household or business with accuracy. It can detect fraud, or can be used to "cook the books."

Drive Carriage: Driving a carriage is different from riding a horse. The animals must be hitched up, prevented from scraping the carriage along a wall, and kept calm in a dizzying swirl of people, dogs, and other animals. Worse still, the carriage is bulky and difficult to stop, so it presents a hazard to pedestrians who are not quick on their feet. You have learned to deal with all these things.

Gossip: A rumor flies faster than the swiftest arrow and bites twice as deep. Gossips always have an ear to the rumor mill and get the latest news before anyone else, but with this Knack you also have the ability to determine which are true and which are important. This is generally used to acquire information, as a Lore Check.



Haggling: Being able to barter is only the beginning for a person who wishes to become a successful procurer of valuable goods. You must also know how to haggle – remain aware of all the elements of a bargaining discussion at any time, and be able to use them to your advantage. Of course, you must be better at it than your opponent, for he is reading the same signs you are...

Seneschal: You are privileged – for a servant, anyway. You have shown acumen with organization and an attention to detail. You are, or have had experience as, a noble's administrator, someone who collects his taxes, oversees the other servants in his household, and generally handles all the minor details he feels are too minute to bother with.

Valet: Your goal is your lord's presentation to others. You buy his clothes, carry his possessions when he tours other regions, and carry messages to others in his name. You are, or were, a hand servant, and this Knack encompasses all the various trivialities that accompany that position.

Spy

Spies eat away at the stability of a nation from the inside, like a worm in an apple. They skulk about, bribe underlings, steal secrets, and assassinate leaders. The outcome of an entire war can rest on their shoulders.

Basic Knacks

Shadowing: You have been trained to blend in with crowds and unobtrusively follow your targets in a city or other urban setting. Done properly, the target will never even notice your presence. This Knack is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Stealth: Stealth is the art of going unnoticed. You can use it to go places you're not allowed, hide from your pursuers, or avoid being caught in a compromising situation. This Knack

is commonly used as a Contested Roll against the victim's Wits.

Advanced Knacks

Bribery: Money, applied properly, can grease the wheels of bureaucracy, open doors, or cause guards to shift their loyalties. You know where, when, and how much to apply.

Conceal: A woman with a dagger in her bodice has a means of defense, even though she may appear helpless. If you wish to get a pistol into a well-guarded ballroom, or a lockpick into a jail cell, you need this Knack. To use this Knack you must make a Simple Roll with it, and the total generated becomes the TN for anyone nearby to see through the concealment. Anyone searching you receives a Free Raise, and anyone thoroughly searching you receives two Free Raises.

Cryptography: When messages must be sent in the most discreet manner possible, ciphers are often used to prevent them from being read by those who aren't in the know. This Knack puts you "in the know."

Disguise: Cloaked figures can draw more attention than they intend. A dab of soot in your hair, a stooped walk, some ratty clothes, and this Knack can help you become just another innocent bystander in a crowded room. To use this Knack you must make a Simple Roll with it, and the total generated becomes the TN for anyone nearby to see through the disguise.

Forgery: Signatures and wax seals are the only assurance that a statesman has of the authenticity of a letter. As a forger, you have learned to fake these things. Rules for Forgery can be found in the *GMs' Guide.*

Hand Signs: Words can be overheard and lips can be read, but a system of extremely subtle gestures and finger twitches (developed by the Vodacce) has cut down on such activity. With this Knack you can communicate information to a contact without ever saying or writing a word.

Interrogation: Psychological warfare and brutality can draw a man's attention as well as any woman's gentle touch. You are trained to interrogate, knowing every man's limit, and how to spot their lies.

Lip Reading: A whispered secret hides nothing from those who have eyes. With this Knack you can discern plots and schemes from across the room. Of course, cautious or experienced courtiers often carry fans or veils to prevent just such an eventuality.

Poison: When diplomacy fails and a military victory is impossible, an ounce of arsenic will sometimes suffice. This Knack lets you know what poison to use and how much to administer, as well as how to handle it safely. Your GM will have rules for using this Knack in the *GMs' Guide.*

Sincerity: Even the most adept lie is useless if the listener detects a tremor of fear or a pair of downcast, nervous eyes. While Oratory allows you to utter glib words for entertainment or impact, Sincerity puts the ring of truth behind them, shrouding even the most bold-faced lie behind a veneer of honesty.

Streetwise

The streetwise man is well acquainted with a particular city. He may know where to shop for the best deals, where to make contact with criminals or mercenaries, or what path to take when fleeing from the city guard in the middle of the night.

Basic Knacks

Socializing: Knowing where to meet the right kind of people can be vitally important. You seem to know where every diplomat goes for beer, and what taverns to go to when you need to hire a ship's crew. Note that Underworld Lore covers the less reputable inhabitants of the city. Successful rolls with this Knack will grant you contacts within the locale, as determined by the GM. You are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice when using this Knack in a city that you are unfamiliar with.

Street Navigation: Racing through the streets at night is no time for you to acquaint yourself with the layout of the city. Without this Knack you may quickly find yourself lost or cornered in a dead end alley. Successful rolls with this

Knack will grant you information about the locale, as determined by the GM. You are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice when using this Knack in a city that you are unfamiliar with.

Advanced Knacks

Scrounging: You know where potentially useful trash is thrown. While it is unlikely for you to scrounge up a diamond, you would certainly know where best to find food, a change of clothes, or a makeshift weapon. Successful rolls with this Knack will grant you items or resources found within the city, as determined by the GM. You are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice when using this Knack in a city that you are unfamiliar with.

Shopping: You have dealt with many of the local merchants in the past and know who will give you the best bargains. When combined with bartering, you can get some truly good deals. You are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice when using this Knack in a city that you are unfamiliar with.

Underworld Lore: In every city there's at least one place the city guard fears to tread. Muggers, assassins, and bandits make their homes there, and you can contact them. Successful rolls with this Knack will grant you contacts within the locale, as determined by the GM. You are at a penalty of –2 unkept dice when using this Knack in a city that you are unfamiliar with.

Martial Skills

Martial Skills are separated from the Civil Skills because they follow a slightly different buying pattern and because some of them are applied differently. You cannot buy any Martial Skill Knacks higher than Rank 3 during Hero creation.

Archer

An archer has spent many years honing his marksmanship with the bow. His skill is welcome in any army, and he can almost always provide meat for his table. Archers from Avalon, in particular, are famed for their skill with the bow.

Basic Knacks

Attack (Bow): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy. Attacks with all bows normally require one Action to load (or "nock") the arrow, and one to fire.

Fletcher: You know how to make and repair arrows. This includes the shaft and the fletching on the back, but not the arrowheads. Often, you will have a blacksmith forge the heads for you. This Knack is very useful to archers, and it stretches out their often very limited supply of arrows. After each battle in which you fire your bow, make a Wits + Fletcher check. For every 10 points you roll, you retrieve one arrow fired during the battle in usable condition.

Advanced Knacks

Horse Archery: This replaces the Attack (Bow) Knack when firing a bow from horseback.

Snapshot: When skilled enough, some marksmen focus on speed as much as (or more than) accuracy. With this Knack, you require only one action to reload and fire, but you must make two Raises in order to do so. When firing and reloading as one Action, this replaces the Attack Knack. This Knack cannot be used from horseback.

Trick Shooting: For each Rank of Trick Shooting, you subtract 5 from any penalties to your shot (range, cover, etc.). Trick Shooting cannot lower your TN below the base Target Number to be hit. For example, if a target has a TN to be hit of 15, plus 15 for modifiers, an archer with Rank 5 Trick Shooting would negate all 15 points of modifiers, but he would not lower the base TN to be hit (15).

Athlete

Athletes put in long hours making themselves faster, stronger, or more agile than most people. Their skills are often needed in Syrneth trap-riddled tombs.



Basic Knacks

Climbing: You understand how to find hand and footholds, how to use climbing gear, and how to seek out the easiest path to climb in the first place. If you are attacked while climbing, you use this Knack as your Defense Knack.

Footwork: Footwork is the art of putting yourself where your enemy's weapons aren't. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack even if you don't have a weapon.

Sprinting: When danger rears its head, you are capable of putting on an incredible turn of speed. You can't maintain it very long, but for that short period few can keep up with you. When running, you use this Knack as your Defense Knack.

Throwing: You can throw things farther and with greater accuracy than an untrained person. This can come in handy when you need to toss a gun to someone else, or place a grappling hook where you want it. This Knack may not be used to attack.

Advanced Knacks

Break Fall: Adventurers tend to do a lot of falling, but you've learned how to do it *right.* You know how to absorb impact with your shoulders and how to roll with the fall (of course, that won't help you if you fall into a spiked pit). With every Rank in this Knack, one fewer die of damage is taken when a fall is incurred (minimum 0).

Leaping: You can jump higher and farther than most people. This can often come in handy when exploring dusty tombs or fleeing across rooftops. In addition, you use this Knack as your Defense Knack while leaping.

Long Distance Running: You have learned to run great distances without collapsing. You know how to pace yourself, and how to breathe properly when running.

Lifting: There's a right way and a wrong way to lift heavy weights. Do it the wrong way, and you're liable to hurt yourself quite badly. This Knack allows you to lift great weights with less risk to yourself.

Rolling: Whether sliding or rolling across the floor, this is the Knack you use. This can be handy to use tables momentarily as cover, or slip under a descending wall. While sliding or rolling, you use this Knack as your Defense Knack.

Swimming: Provided you aren't too heavily weighed down, you do a nice job of not sinking (stormy seas and sharks notwithstanding). Your GM has rules for swimming (and drowning) in his *Guide*.

Swinging: You have learned to swing adroitly from ropes, chandeliers, etc. If someone attacks you while you are in midswing, you must use this Knack as your Defense Knack.

Side-step: Fighters who are very skilled often move into a better attack position even as they get out of the way of their enemy's sword. Whenever you use an Active Defense successfully, you may lower your next upcoming Action die by your Rank in this Knack. You may not make the Action die lower than the current Phase.

Buckler

Anyone can hold up a buckler, but a soldier trained in its use can turn it into an offensive weapon as well.

Basic Knacks

Parry (Buckler): Parrying is the act of putting your buckler between yourself and your enemies' strikes. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack while you are wearing a buckler.

Advanced Knacks

Attack (Buckler): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy. A buckler's Damage rating is 1k1 when used as a weapon.

Commander

Wise rulers know just how important capable commanders are to the survival of their country. A general is the glue that binds an army together; without his diplomatic and strategic skills, it all falls apart.

Basic Knacks

Strategy: Strategy lets you formulate battle plans and movements on a large scale. You know when to have your cavalry charge downhill at the enemy's flank, and what ground is easiest to hold. This Knack is used (mostly) with the mass-combat rules, which your GM has access to in his *Guide.*

Tactics: Tactics lets you command a group of men in battle, following the orders of your superior (who, you hope, has the Strategy Knack). You can get the men to change formation, inspire them to charge the enemy or lead them through firing drills. This Knack is used (mostly) with the mass-combat rules, which your GM has access to in his *Guide.*

Advanced Knacks

Ambush: You have learned to spot likely places for an ambush to occur and to watch for signs that people have concealed themselves there. Naturally, this Knack cuts both ways, allowing you to set up an ambush of your own. Rules for the use of this Knack are located in the "Drama" section (page 190).

Artillery: When a crew fires a cannon, the crew commander's Artillery Knack is used for the Attack roll. If the cannon is on board a ship, the commander's Gunnery Knack (see below) should be used instead.

Cartography: You are capable of making reasonably accurate maps using a set of cartographer's tools. Reliable maps can fetch a high price if sold to the right buyer. Success with this Knack grants legible, accurate maps. Failure might send the ship using them hurtling into the Seventh Sea...

Diplomacy: The art of diplomacy is the art of peace; words have prevented more wars than guns ever caused. Your soothing reassurances can calm all but the most enraged duelist, and keep your blood where it belongs – in your veins.

Gunnery: The pitch and roll of a ship takes a lot of getting used to, especially when trying to fire a cannon on board. Sailors using this Knack have worked out the tricks and timing involved. When a cannon fires from on board a ship, the crew commander's Gunnery Knack is used for the Attack Roll.

Incitation: You can inspire men to victory. They listen to your words before and during the battle, and they know that they cannot be defeated. They know that you will make the right decisions, and that they won't lay down their lives for nothing. This Knack is used (mostly) with the mass-combat rules, which your GM has access to in his Guide.

Leadership: Once you've used the Incitation Knack to make the men believe in you, this Knack will help you live up to their expectations. You can determine what tasks each man

is best capable of, and give them advice on how better to do their job without getting in the way. This Knack is used (mostly) with the mass-combat rules, which your GM has access to in his *Guide*.

Logistics: Wars often come down to who has the best fed and most rested troops. The Logistics Knack lets you determine how much supplies will be consumed, and how best to get them where they're needed. This Knack is used (mostly) with the mass-combat rules, which your GM has access to in his *Guide*.

Crossbow

Crossbows, while rapidly falling out of style, still hold some attraction for soldiers and assassins alike. Their quiet operation and ease of use are their main advantages.

Basic Knacks

Attack (Crossbow): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy. Crossbows take 6 Actions to reload.

Fletcher: You know how to make and repair arrows. This includes the shaft and the fletching on the back, but not the arrowheads. Often, a blacksmith forges the heads for you. This Knack is very useful to archers, and it stretches their limited supply of arrows. After each battle in which you fire your bow, make a Wits + Fletcher check. For every 10 points you roll, you retrieve one arrow fired during the battle in usable condition.

Advanced Knacks

Reload (Crossbow): For every Rank you have in this Knack, your reloading time for crossbows is reduced by 1 Action. Essentially, someone with a Rank 5 in this Knack has mastered the art of cocking the crossbow with a single motion.

Dirty Fighting

The niceties of pugilism are not for everyone. Some folks think that fair play is a good way to get killed.

Basic Knacks

Attack (Dirty Fighting): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy, and should be used in all Skill uses not covered by any other mechanic. Remember, a bare-handed attack's Damage Rating is 0k1.

Advanced Knacks

Attack (Improvised Weapon): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy. This Knack is used when wielding a weapon that does not conform to any established Knack (like a table, a chest, or another human). Rules for Improvised Weapons can be found on page 188.

Eye-gouge: This attack is designed to blind your opponent temporarily. In order to use it, you must have at least one empty hand. You declare that you are using an Eye-gouge, and then roll using this Knack instead of your normal Attack Knack. If the attack is successful, it inflicts the normal 0k1 Wounds (a bare-handed attack) and forces your target to increase his next Action die by 1, plus 1 for every Raise you make. If this increases that Action die higher than 10, the Action die is discarded.

Kick: A Kick inflicts 0k2 damage, but raises the TN that you are trying to hit by 10. You must declare a Kick before rolling the attack, and use this Knack instead of your normal Attack Knack.

Parry (Improvised Weapon): Parrying is the act of putting the improvised weapon between yourself and your enemies' strikes. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack while you are using any weapon that does not conform to any other Knack (like a table, a chest, or another human).

Throat Strike: Using this Knack, you strike your opponent squarely across the throat. You declare that you are making a Throat Strike, and roll to attack using this Knack. The TN to hit your opponent is raised by 15 when using this Knack, but if it's successful (and not avoided with Active Defense) you inflict an automatic Dramatic Wound to your target, rather than rolling for damage.

Throw (Improvised Weapon): When you throw an improvised weapon (any weapon not conforming to any other Knack), you must use this Knack instead of your Attack Knack. The

Range on an Improvised Weapon will vary with its weight, but will usually (for an object the size of a wine bottle or smaller) be 5, plus two times your Brawn.

Fencing

Heroes trained in Fencing have a basic understanding of the theories and techniques of modern swordplay. This skill trains the Hero in the use of fencing weapons such as the rapier, foil, smallsword, and epée. It is the foundation for most of the training presented in Théah's Swordsman Schools.

Basic Knacks

Attack (Fencing): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy.

Parry (Fencing): Parrying is the act of putting your sword between yourself and your enemies' strikes. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack while you are wielding a sword.

Advanced Knacks

None.

Firearms

While the pistol and musket are new weapons, they are rapidly becoming the most popular in the world. They are still fairly inaccurate, which is perhaps their greatest flaw.

Basic Knacks

Attack (Firearms): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy. It takes 20 Actions to reload a pistol, and 30 to reload a musket (in other words, don't bother in the middle of a fight; the combat will be over long before you can reload). In addition, this Knack is used to fire a grappling gun. The TN to hook the grapple successfully is equal to 5 + any range modifiers.



Advanced Knacks
Reload (Firearms): For every Rank you have in this Knack, your reloading time for muskets and pistols is reduced by 2 Actions.

Heavy Weapon

Not everyone has switched over to the more modern and analytical style of swordsmanship. This skill trains the Hero in the use of heavy swords (any swords not listed under the Fencing Skill), axes, and clubs. Just because it's no longer in vogue doesn't mean it's ineffectual. A Heavy Weapon requires both hands to use.

Basic Knacks
Attack (Heavy Weapon): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy. Note that all Heavy Weapons inflict 3k2 damage.

Parry (Heavy Weapon): Parrying is the act of putting your weapon between yourself and your enemies' strikes. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack while you are wielding a heavy weapon.

Advanced Knacks
None.

Knife

Knives are more easily concealed than swords, but are commonly perceived as less of a threat. Sailors are often very proficient with knives, since they use them frequently in their daily tasks.

Basic Knacks
Attack (Knife): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy.

Parry (Knife): Parrying is the act of putting your weapon between yourself and your enemies' strikes. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack while you are wielding a knife.

Advanced Knacks
Throw (Knife): When you throw this weapon as an attack, you must use this Knack instead of your Attack Knack. The Range on a Knife is 5, plus two times your Brawn.

Panzerhand

The Eisen frequently fight with heavy iron gloves on their left hand, using them to grab weapons away from their opponents. This Skill trains the Hero in that art.

Basic Knacks
Attack (Panzerhand): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy.

Parry (Panzerhand): Parrying is the act of putting your glove between yourself and your enemies' strikes. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack while you are wielding a panzerhand.

Advanced Knacks
Uppercut: An Uppercut is an aggressive bare-handed attack that leaves you open for a moment. When you declare a Uppercut, use this Knack to attack with. You roll two extra unkept dice for damage if your attack is successful. However, your TN to be hit drops to 5 *for this Phase only,* and you may not use any Active Defenses for the rest of this Phase.

Polearm

On the battlefields of Théah, polearms such as pikes see frequent use alongside muskets. They allow the soldiers to keep their enemies at bay while the musketeers reload.

Basic Knacks
Attack (Polearm): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy.

Parry (Polearm): Parrying is the act of putting your weapon between yourself and your enemies' strikes. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack while you are wielding a polearm.

Advanced Knacks

Set Defense: When using your polearm against charging cavalry or infantry, you may choose to Set Defense instead of attacking normally. You declare that you are using Set Defense and roll your attack using this Knack. If the attack is successful, you add the target's current Initiative Total to the damage.

Pugilism

Pugilism is the gentleman's art of unarmed self-defense. A gentleman often needs to defend himself from scoundrels who would do him harm, and this Skill goes a long way towards that.

Basic Knacks

Attack (Pugilism): Attack is simply the ability to hit your enemy, and should be used in all Skill uses not covered by any other mechanic. A bare-handed attack's Damage Rating is 0k1.

Footwork: Footwork is the art of putting yourself where your enemy's weapons aren't. This Knack can be used as your Defense Knack even if you don't have a weapon.

Jab: When you use this Knack, you are making two quick bare-handed attacks against your opponent, one right after the other. You must declare that you are Jabbing before you attack, and then roll the two attacks using this Knack. The TN to hit your opponent is raised by 10 when you are using Jab.

Advanced Knacks

Ear Clap: Using this Knack, you clap your hands on your opponent's ears, causing him to become disoriented and lose his balance temporarily. You declare that you are making an Ear Clap and roll to attack using this Knack. The TN to hit your opponent is raised by 15 when using this Knack, but if it's successful (and not avoided with Active Defense) you inflict an automatic Dramatic Wound to your target rather than rolling for damage.

Uppercut: An uppercut is an aggressive bare-handed attack that leaves you open for a moment. When you declare a Uppercut, use this Knack to attack with. You roll two extra unkept dice for damage if your attack is successful. However, your TN to be hit drops to 5 *for this Phase only,* and you may not use any Active Defenses for the rest of this Phase.

Rider

A Hero with this Skill can climb on nearly any trained horse and ride with minimal effort. However, advanced training teaches some spectacular skills.

Basic Knacks

Ride: This Knack is what you use for ordinary horseback riding. Your GM may call for checks when you do unusual things such as gallop the horse (TN 10), stay seated on a rearing mount (TN 15), or jump the horse over a hurdle (TN 20). A well-trained mount may reduce such Target Numbers by 5.

Advanced Knacks

Animal Training: This Knack allows you to domesticate animals and train them to perform tricks, or to attack on command. Suggested rules for Animal Training can be found in the *GMs' Guide.*

Mounting: There are certain times when it is necessary to mount your horse and ride away in a hurry. This Knack allows you to mount your horse both while running (TN 15) and while leaping off a one-story building (TN 20).

Trick Riding: Trick Riding lets you stand while riding (TN 15), do handstands on horseback (TN 20), hang off one side of the horse for cover (TN 20), and other flashy tricks. A well-trained mount may reduce such Target Numbers by 5.

Wrestling

Often seen as entertainment for commoners, wrestling has more practical uses as well. A wrestler, if he can get past an opponent's weapon, has a natural advantage over an untrained fighter.

Basic Knacks

Grapple: A grapple is the basic move used by all wrestlers. They get in close and grab hold of their opponent, preventing him from acting. To use this attack, you declare that you are attempting to Grapple your opponent, and then roll to attack using Finesse + Grapple against your opponent's TN to be Hit. If successful, you have momentarily Grappled him. While grappled, your opponent can only attempt to break your hold, Head Butt you, or perform an Action that requires very little motion, such as pulling the trigger on a pistol.

To try to break your hold, your opponent must spend one Action (remember the rules for Interrupt and Held Actions), and then make a Contested Roll with his Brawn + Wrestling versus your Brawn + Wrestling. If he wins, the hold is broken; otherwise, it holds fast. You, on the other hand, may spend Action dice (again, remember the rules on Interrupt and Held Actions) to improve your hold. Each Action die you spend gives you one free Raise from now on when your opponent tries to break your hold.

Advanced Knacks

Bear Hug: Whenever your opponent attempts to break a hold you have placed him in and fails, or a Round ends, roll a number of dice equal to this Knack, keeping only one. Your opponent takes that much damage, which he must immediately test against.

Break: Using this Knack, you can cause injury to an opponent's arm or leg. First, you must first have your target in a successful Grapple. You declare what limb you are attempting to injure and then roll to attack using this Knack. The TN to hit your opponent is raised by 10 when using this Knack, but if it's successful, you inflict an automatic Dramatic Wound, rather than rolling for damage. The current Grapple hold is broken if this attempt is successful.

Escape: When you are attempting to break a Grapple that you have been placed in, each Rank in this Knack negates one Free Raise your opponent has gained from improving his hold.

Head Butt: This is an unarmed attack that causes a great deal of damage to your opponent, at the expense of hurting yourself as well. This attack can be used only when you are in a Grapple with your target. It doesn't matter if you are being grappled or if you are grappling him. If the attack is successful, it inflicts a bare-handed 3k1 attack on your opponent, and a bare-handed 1k1 attack on yourself (remember to add your Brawn to both). If your opponent takes a Dramatic Wound as a result of the Head Butt, and is grappling you, his hold is broken.

Background List

Amnesia

You aren't quite sure who you are or why you happen to be here, but you are pretty sure that somebody does. After all, they wouldn't be trying to kill you if they didn't, right? The Amnesia Background doesn't limit any of your Traits, Skills or Knacks, but it does prevent you from remembering anything from your past. All the people you left behind are still out there, waiting for you to return... someday. The number of points you invest in Amnesia determines how many dangers linger in that smoky past of yours, just waiting for the moment for you to let your guard down, so they can put a bullet in that cloudy brain of yours.

Cursed

It could be something as simple as the inability to sustain serious relationships or something as complex as being

doomed to live forever, until you fall in love. The victim may know every detail of the curse, or just that the same weird things happen to him over and over again. He may believe in the curse and think his fate unavoidable, or strive each time to prevent the inevitable from happening. Regardless, with the purchase of this Background, *your* curse is real, tangible, and inescapable (for now, anyway).

The Vodacce Fate Witches are a common origin for curses in *7th Sea*, but there are a slew of other options, from angry mistresses to vengeful lords, or even one-eyed vagrants. With every curse, three things need to be decided. First and second: what causes the effect (the *trigger*), and what, exactly, that *effect* is. The third is what can be done to end the curse – its *penance* (which may or may not be chosen exclusively by the GM, as both he and the player agree upon; some find it more intriguing to roleplay the discovery of a penance instead of simply working toward it). Curses are almost always specific, and tailored as mentioned above.

The number of points spent in this Background determine the regularity of the curse's trigger, and how severe its effect is. One point could result in simple social curses (*e.g.*, "You will never be *entirely* happy in love" or "You will always be second-best at everything"), or forecasts of minor events. Two points is a little worse (*e.g.*, "You will betray the one you love the most"), and three points is life-threatening or extremely severe (*e.g.*, "Everyone you touch will die a painful death"). Penance rarely figures into the point value of a Curse.

Debt

Being poor isn't good enough for you? How about indebting yourself to someone who has a lot of power and very little patience? The Debt Background puts you in liability with someone who'd have just as much fun breaking your legs as collecting his money. The number of points you spend can influence how much money you owe, the power of the person (or persons) you are indebted to, and how diligent he is about collecting his money.

Defeated

At some point in the past, you were defeated, decisively and ignominiously, and you have lived with the shame of that moment ever since. Now you long to excel beyond that haunting memory, placing yourself in similar positions every day, hoping that your improved skill will prevail this time. Of course, this unfortunately places you in hazardous situations in which you must fight both history and your own inner demons. The point investment in Defeated determines the level of the ongoing challenge and your need to see it outlived.

Fear

Deep down where you live and breathe, you are terrified of something – the dark, open spaces, people, even magic. Whatever the cause, the result is always the same – every Round you are in its presence, either 1) lose a number of Actions that Round equal to the points invested, or 2) retain all your Actions, but all of them must be used toward escaping the cause or defending yourself (*i.e.*, no other efforts, including attacks, are possible with them).

Hunted

For some reason or another, someone wants you. They don't want your wealth or influence or anything like that, they just want *you*. Maybe you're an outlaw on the run from the law, or perhaps you skipped out on an extravagant wedding your parents set up for you. You're running from something, which wouldn't be so bad, if only they weren't so diligent about finding you and bringing you back. The number of points you invest in Hunted indicates just how diligently they're hunting you and what sort of resources they are willing to put toward bringing you back.

Hunting

You've lost something. Something very important. Perhaps it's a Syrneth artifact, passed down through the generations, that you've let slip through your hands. Maybe it's a bride who skipped out on your wedding. Maybe it's a man running from justice whom you've sworn you will hunt to

the ends of the world. The number of points you invest in this Background determines how important it is you reach your objective, or just how dangerous (or determined) the person or thing you're hunting may be.

Lost Love

She used to be the light of your life... and now she's with your family's nemesis, wearing his ring on her left hand. He used to be the one you'd walk through the Abyss for... and now he's with *her*, that plotting and scheming shrew who ruined your family's name and reputation.

Lost Love is a dangerous Background, for it strikes at the heart of a Hero. You were once in love – perhaps you even thought it was true – and now it's gone. But that's not the worst of it. Your one true love is now your enemy, a situation that would be easy to rectify if only you weren't still in love with him. The number of points you put into Lost Love determines just how influential your new enemy is, and how much of that influence he's willing to devote to your ruin.

Mistaken Identity

No matter how many times you try to tell them, they just don't listen to you. They're convinced you're the man they want, and you don't know how to convince them they're wrong. They think you know things you don't. They think you've got something you don't. Or maybe they want something, and they won't tell you what it is. Maybe they'll only be convinced when they've tortured you to death.

Nemesis

There's someone out there who's got a name on the top of a list, and that name is yours. You crossed him, and from that day forward, he's made it a point to thwart your efforts, to meddle in your affairs. Killing you isn't his objective; he only wants to make your life a mess. Of course, maintaining his own life takes precedence over meddling with yours, but whenever he gets the opportunity, he'll make sure you're squirming on the end of a hook. The number of points you put into Nemesis determines how often your enemy shows his hand or how much power he has to devote to your discomfort.

Obligation

You owe someone something. Perhaps he saved your life or helped you out in the past. Now you must repay the favor. Or maybe, in a moment of drunken weakness, you blurted out your devotion to his cause. Regardless, you must fulfill your promise or suffer the consequences (in this case, the Background either becomes a Nemesis or you lose Reputation, per your GM). Points spent on an Obligation determine both how difficult it will be to fulfill, and how powerful or influential the person trying to collect is.

Rivalry

He isn't your enemy. In fact, he could be your best friend. Whoever he is, he's in direct competition for something that's very important to you. He could be a rival suitor for your true love's hand, he could be competing with you to get that position in the Lightning Guard, or he could just be a fellow duelist who's a touch better than you. He doesn't have to be your enemy, but after this many years of competition, how many rivalries stay friendly?

Romance

After many months of flirting, poetry and moonlit walks through the park, you've finally won the affections of a beautiful maiden or a handsome young man. Or so you think. It takes a great deal of effort to keep the fires of romance burning. If you neglect the hearth for even a short while, the fire can die. And neglecting your lover may cost you this Background and give you another...

The Romance Background is more than just wooing pretty maidens and handsome pirates. It also involves protecting your love from scheming rivals, defending her honor, and coming to her aid when her own skills aren't enough to keep her out of trouble. The number of points you invest in Romance determines how often your lover needs your assistance, how demanding he or she is, and how many rivals you have for your love's affections.

True Identity

Whether you know it or not, you are actually someone else. You have left your true identity behind for the image you have created as a Hero. Who you were and why you left can be anything – you might have been the son of a murdered noble, now hiding among the masses from assassins, or you might have been a tortured Church scholar who devised something that you feel is too dangerous to ever see creation. You can never return to your former life – you have *become* the Hero – and you must always strive to keep your true identity a secret from the world at large. Good luck. Points spent in True Identity determine how important your *former life* was, if anyone seeks you as that person, and if so how powerful they are.

Vendetta

Don't call it revenge. Revenge is for suckers. Don't call it justice, because that's too forgiving. This is something altogether different. You owe somebody big time, and killing isn't enough. No, killing is *merciful* compared to what you have in mind. You have to hurt him, and hurt him, and hurt him. When you're done, Legion may be waiting for you, but you don't care. When they see what you've done to *him*, they'll welcome you with open arms. The number of points you put into Vendetta determines the power and influence of your target, and perhaps even how aware he is that you're coming for him... or how prepared.

Vow

A man's word is his honor, and his honor is his life. At least, that's what they taught you at the military academy. You believe in keeping your word, and you've made a promise to someone (perhaps even yourself) that you will not break... even if it costs you your life. The number of points invested in this Background determines how difficult the Vow is to keep, or the magnitude of the obstacles deterring you.



Hubrises

Ambitious
You crave power. Money is nice, but being in charge of other people is your favorite thing. You are likely to be brought down by attempting a risky grab for power and failing. *The GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to chase after power, even if the deal you're getting is risky.*

Arrogant
You firmly believe that you are better than anyone else. Your ideas are the best, your clothes are the most stylish, and you have to let everyone else know how much better you are. *The GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to show contempt or disdain for someone else.*

Cowardly
You have a strong sense of self-preservation. You often hesitate to put yourself at risk, even if there's a good reason to do so. *Whenever you're about to do something dangerous, such as swing across a spiked pit on a fraying rope, your GM can activate your Hubris in order to talk you out of putting yourself in danger.*

Envious
Everyone else seems to have it better than you. They have more money, better toys, and prettier wives. You tend to get envious over the smallest things. *Your GM can activate your*

Hubris in order to get you to covet something belonging to someone else. You should attempt to get it for yourself.

Greedy
Money makes your eyes light up with joy. The more, the merrier, as long as it spends. *Whenever you're divvying up shares of the loot, being offered a hefty bribe, or catching wind of some fabulous treasure, your GM can activate your Hubris to convince you to grub for as much money as possible.*

Hedonistic
You love a good time. You party too much, drink too much, and eat too much. You have trouble resisting an invitation to join someone in a drink and sometimes shirk your duty if offered a more enjoyable time elsewhere. *The GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to relax your guard and have a good time.*

Hot-headed
You have a chip on your shoulder. A big one. Your fuse is short, and you're ready to get in a scuffle at the slightest hint of an insult. *Your GM can activate your Hubris to get you to fly off the handle and lose your temper.*

Inattentive
Your mind has a habit of drifting off at inopportune moments. It flits from one thought to the next so fast that you have trouble getting it to concentrate on the here and now. *Your GM can activate your Hubris to cause you to fail a Perception Check automatically, or to give you a –2 dice penalty to any Surprise Check.*

Indecisive
You have been known to hesitate when faced with difficult choices or split-second decisions. If forced to choose between letting a Villain escape and rescuing a loved one from being lowered into a snake pit, you're likely to agonize over the situation until something – perhaps a cry for help from your sweetheart – forces your hand. *Your GM may activate your Hubris during time-sensitive moments in the game to force you to discard one Action die from your Initiative Pool.*

Judgmental
You form opinions quickly and change them very slowly. You also have a tendency to judge people on their appearance. A man dressed as a pirate, no matter how gentlemanly, is a scoundrel and a dog as far as you're concerned. A man covered in mud is a peasant, and a woman wearing revealing clothing is a prostitute. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to jump to conclusions and form an unsubstantiated opinion of someone you've just met.*

Lecherous
You have a lusty nature and a tendency to pursue the pleasures of the flesh. A pretty woman or a handsome man (however your tastes run) is an almost irresistible temptation to you. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to convince you to give in to temptation.*

Loyal
You find it very, very difficult to abandon a friend, even if it's only to run and get help for them. As for leaving a fallen comrade behind to die – forget it. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to go back for (or stay with) a fallen comrade, or to prevent you from betraying an employer.*

Misfortunate
Lucky breaks are something that happen to other people. Your luck isn't terrible; you wouldn't have survived as long as you have if it were. It just isn't very good. Look at it this way: if you need some blind luck to get you out of a sticky situation, expect to be sticking around for a while. *Your GM can activate your Hubris to cause you to reroll a successful test whose TN was 25 or higher. Your GM can only do this once to any given test.*

Overconfident
Nothing is beyond your capabilities. If you wanted, you could defeat the best swordsmen in all of Théah; you just haven't had any reason to do so yet. And surely that chasm isn't too wide for *you* to leap across. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to squash any doubts you may have had about your own capabilities.*

Overzealous
You are incapable of having a weak opinion. Everything you believe, you believe as if your life depended on it. Everything you don't believe in, you hate with a passion. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to strongly defend one of your opinions, no matter how inappropriate the time and place.*

Proud
You don't like accepting help from others. If a gift or offer of aid smacks of charity or pity even the slightest bit, you grow indignant and refuse it. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to refuse an offer of aid.*

Rash
You have the urge to go and look when you hear a strange noise downstairs in the middle of the night. It's not that you're stupid, it's just that sometimes that little voice that says, "What would happen if I..." gets too loud to ignore. *Your GM may activate your Hubris to force you to investigate something unusual, even if it looks like it might be dangerous.*

Reckless
You lack the emotion of fear. Unfortunately, it is often an important cue that keeps men from doing foolhardy things. Sure, you don't flinch at the sight of even the most hideous monster, but neither do you feel the need to run away when outclassed. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to get you to ignore any nagging feelings of worry or hesitation you may have when confronted with a potentially dangerous environment.*

Righteous
The end justifies the means. You are willing to perform morally repugnant actions in order to achieve noble goals. Unfortunately, this can alienate those people who might support your cause if you didn't use such heavy-handed methods. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to dispel any doubts you might have about the moral justifiability of your actions.*

Star-crossed
You keep falling in love with the wrong people. You're the common soldier who falls in love with the king's daughter at first sight, or the Hero who falls for the Villain's daughter without knowing who she is. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to shoot you with Cupid's arrow yet again.*

Stubborn
You don't change your mind very often, if at all. Once you've decided on a course of action, you follow through no matter what. Attempts to convince you that you're wrong roll off your back with no effect. *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to prevent you from changing your mind.*

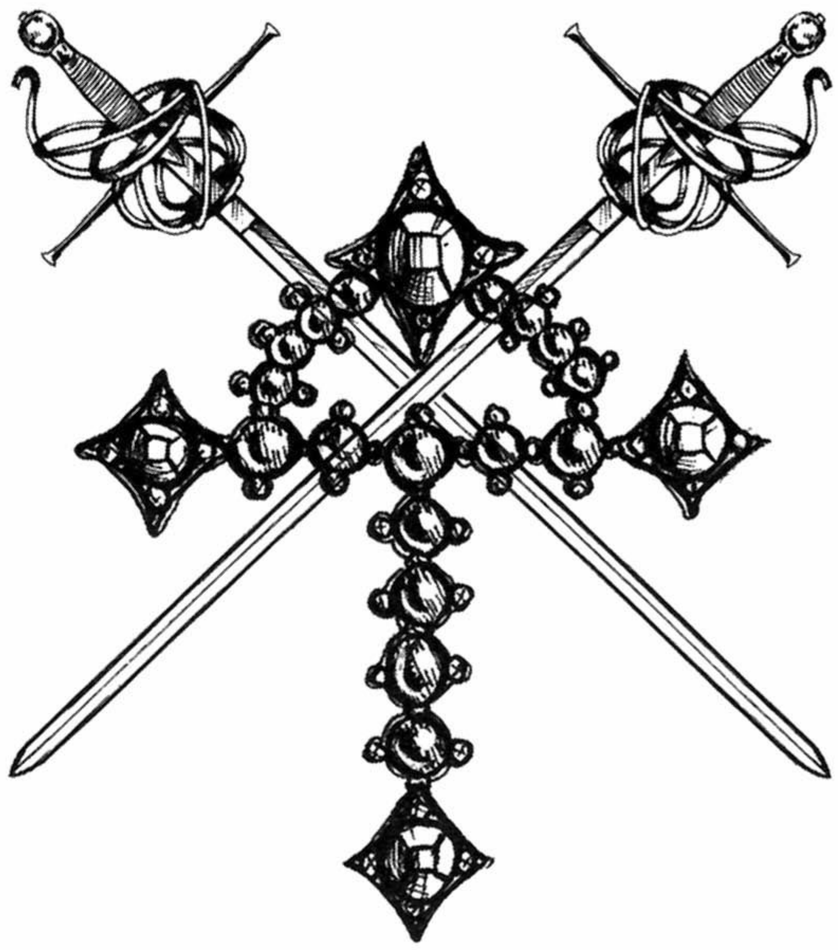
Trusting
You don't like to believe that other people are capable of misleading and lying to you. After all, people are basically good, right? *Your GM can activate your Hubris in order to quell any doubts you may have about another person.*

Virtues

Adaptable
You react to changing situations with lightning-quick mental reflexes. When someone leaps off of a balcony at you, you calmly step aside. When scything blades whip out of the floor and attempt to cleave you in two, you retain the presence of mind to dive out of the way. *You may activate your Virtue in order to cancel the effects of Surprise. This Virtue applies only to you; no others can benefit from it.*

Altruistic
You are always willing to help other people. In fact, you're more comfortable lending aid to someone else than working towards your own ends. *You may activate your Virtue in order to reroll a failed test that you attempted in order to help someone else. You may do this only once for any particular test.*

Comforting
Other people are comfortable near you. You have a way of making them feel safe. Even though there's a hideous monster barreling down on the group, as long as you stay



calm, your example will set the tone for the rest of the group. *You may activate your Virtue to cancel the effects of one level of Fear on your party, including yourself, until the end of the Scene. You may do this as many times as you like.*

Commanding

You exude confidence and composure. This has a tendency to unnerve your opponents, since they feel that you must know something they don't. *You may activate your Virtue to gain a Fear Rating of 1 for one Scene. Your GM has rules for Fear in his Guide.*

Courageous

Although there are some beasts on Théah that rouse supernatural horror in the hearts of men, you are immune to their powers, which makes you particularly dangerous to them. When a monster becomes used to people fleeing in terror from its presence, a hero who stands and fights makes it unsure of its power, wondering if it might be the prey instead of the predator this time around. *You may activate your Virtue in order to reflect the effects of Fear back on one of your opponents. That is to say, the creature's Fear level affects itself instead of you. The rest of your party is still affected by the creature's Fear level.*

Creative

You are prone to sudden flashes of inspiration. You might notice that there are the same number of wall frescoes as there are knobs on a mysterious artifact, which could well cause you to deduce that each of the frescoes contains a clue as to what each knob should be set to. *You may activate your Virtue in order to get an idea from the GM. You tell the GM – in general terms – what it is that has you stumped, and he must give you an idea to help you solve the problem. This may take the form of a hint or further (though commonly easier) puzzle.*

Exemplary

You lead by example. You are very good at showing others how to imitate your movements and at getting them to coordinate their efforts with you. *You may activate your Virtue to allow the rest of your group to use one of your Knack Ranks during a shared activity, such as sneaking through the forest. This is good for only one test.*

Focused

You can concentrate all of your energy on a single task. Your world narrows until only the thing you are working on remains. This allows you to accomplish a great deal, using limited resources. *You may activate your Virtue to transfer one Rank in any of your Traits to any other of your Traits for the duration of the Scene (for example, a Resolve 4 and Brawn 2 could become a Resolve 3 and Brawn 3). You may exceed your normal maximum Trait Rank with this Virtue. This transfer expires at the end of the Scene, and cannot be canceled prematurely. This Virtue may be used only once per Scene.*

Fortunate

Those little annoying quirks of misfortune that haunt other people seem to always overlook you. Horses don't run underneath low branches when you're riding them, and you never fall into the water when making an easy leap aboard ship. *You may activate your Virtue to reroll any failed test whose TN is 20 or less. However, you may do this only once for any given test: your luck is good, but sometimes even the luckiest people have a bad day.*



Friendly
You make friends easily and have an easygoing personality that endears you to most people. As a result, friends are constantly popping up just when you need help out of a tricky situation. *This Virtue costs two Drama dice to activate, and grants you a Connection at some point within this Scene. The GM determines whether the Connection is an Ally, Informant, or Confidant, under what circumstances the Connection is met, and whether or not the Connection lasts after the Story ends.*

Insightful
You understand human nature. You can quickly determine the defining characteristic of another person's personality. This is often useful in ferreting out weaknesses or gaining forewarning of an enemy's strengths. *You may activate your Virtue in order to determine which Arcana (if any) another Hero or NPC possesses. In addition, if you determine that a Villain has a Wile (as opposed to a Flaw), then you can spend dice to try to cancel that Wile, much as you might to prevent your Hubris from being activated.*

Inspirational
Being around you spurs other people to greater achievements. You are always encouraging others and helping them to find that little bit of potential within themselves that they've always overlooked. *You may activate your Virtue in order to add one kept die to any other Hero's Action. He can still spend Drama dice in addition, if he so wishes.*

Intuitive
Somehow, you seem to know things that you shouldn't. Random bits of information mesh inside your mind, leading you to conclusions others would never have guessed. This gut feeling doesn't always give you the answer you're looking for, but it seems consistently to lead you in the right direction. *This Virtue costs nothing to activate, but may only be activated by your GM. Whenever he does so, he will give you a hint or piece of information that leads the party back on track. At the end of the gaming session, you will receive 2 extra Experience Points, minus one for each time your GM had to activate your Virtue for you. Any time your GM wants to activate your Virtue, you may veto him in order to save the XP. If your Virtue is activated more than twice over the course of an evening, you can lose XP from the total amount you receive for the adventure.*

Passionate
You are at your best when swinging down to rescue a loved one from a grisly death on the rocks below. At those moments everything comes into focus for you and you surpass your normal limitations, pulling off amazing feats of skill and heroism. *You may activate your Virtue in order to double the number of kept dice you get for any one Action with which you are directly saving the life of a loved one or friend.*

Perceptive
Your eyes are drawn to details. You notice the slight guttering of torches next to secret passages, and the hostile stares that ladies direct at the man you're talking with. These observations are second nature to you, and you rarely overlook important clues. *You may activate your Virtue in order to succeed automatically at any Perception check.*

Perspicacious
In order to fight evil, you have to understand it, and you do. You may not like it, but you can put yourself in the Villain's shoes and understand him. *You may activate your Virtue in order to predict what a Villain or Henchman's very next Action is going to be. Once the GM has told you what the Action is, he cannot change his mind based on your actions.*

Propitious
Things come together for you just as the right moment. You get thrown into prison on the eve of the big breakout, aging timbers in the floor decide to give out right before the villain can finish you off, and every deathtrap you get thrown into has a convenient method of escape built into it. *You may activate your Virtue in order to call for a lucky escape from the current Scene. This will extract you and your entire party from your current predicament. Every time you use this Virtue, you gain one fewer Drama die at the beginning of every future Story, so use it only as a last resort.*

Self-controlled
The verbal slings and arrows hurled by others roll off your back. You see through seduction attempts and laugh them away. And of course, nobody ever intimidates you. *You may activate your Virtue to cause any use of the Repartee system against you automatically to fail.*

Uncanny
Some people think that you have a little bit of sorcery in your blood, while others just think that you have sharp eyes and keen ears. The truth is, you've always had feelings that you don't quite understand. You just know that they mean trouble is coming, and coming quick. *At any time, you can spend a Drama die to activate your Virtue. The next time your GM is about to spring an awful surprise on you, he has to give you some warning just before he does so. Once you've received one warning, you have to spend another die if you want to reactivate this Virtue.*

Victorious
You are the darling of the gods of War. Somehow, when it seems like you are doomed to fall in battle, you can summon up incredible reserves of strength to strike your opponent down, if only you can get through his defenses. *You may activate your Virtue after you hit your opponent, but before you roll for Damage. Do not roll for Damage; you automatically score a Dramatic Wound.*

Willful
Simply put, there is nothing in this world that can keep you from your goals. Nothing.

You may activate your Virtue in order to prevent NPCs from using Drama dice when they are facing you in direct combat until the end of the Scene.

Worldly
You've been around, you've seen things, and you've got more than your share of know-how.

Spend a Drama Die to activate your Virtue. When you do, until the end of the Scene, you have one Rank in any Knack that you do not currently have a Rank in.



Equipment List

Prices are listed in Guilders and Cents (1/100 of a Guilder.)

Clothing

Apron, cloth	8c
Apron, leather	80c
Boots, fine	5g+
Boots, plain	2g
Boots, riding	3g
Cape	1g
Cloak, fine	3g+
Cloak, plain	1g
Coat, digger's	4g
Coat, gentleman's	5g+
Coat, plain	1g
Dress, fancy	5g+
Dress, plain	2g
Gloves, cotton	10c
Gloves, leather	20c
Gloves, silk	2g+
Gown, exotic	7g+
Hat, wide-brimmed	1g
Hat, tricorn	1g
Jacket, plain	1g
Jacket, fancy	3g+
Mask	30c+
Moneybelt	40c
Shoes, fancy	2g+
Shoes, plain	50c
Shoes, snow	2g
Spectacles	5g+
Suit, plain	1g
Suit, silk	4g+
Undergarment	1g+
Tabard	80c
Veil	5c
Vest	40c
Wig	1g

Transportation

Cart (1 horse)	40g
Cart (1 pony)	25g
Coach (2 horses)	200g
Coach (4 horses)	400g
Coach (6 horses)	800g
Overland passage	3g/100 mi.
Ship passage	5g/100 mi.
Sled, dog (7 dogs)	70g
Sleigh	50g
Wagon (2 horses)	60g
Wagon (4 horses)	80g
Donkey	35g
Horse, draft	50g
Horse, pony	45g
Horse, race	1000g+
Horse, riding	60g
Horse, war	750g
Mule	40g
Ox	90g

Tack and Harness

Bit and bridle	5g
Bird cage	1g+
Falcon hood	1g
Falconer's glove	1g
Harness	75g
Hobbles	1g
Horse blanket	50c
Saddle bags	5g
Saddle blanket	50c
Saddle, pack	10g
Saddle, riding	15g
Saddle, side	15g
Saddle, war	30g
Yoke	1g

Weapons and Armor

Standard bow	8g
Avalon longbow	10g
Standard Buckler	4g
Standard Crossbow	12g
Standard fencing sword	15g
Smallsword	18g
Flintlock musket	20g
Flintlock pistol	20g
Standard heavy weapon	8g
Broadsword	10g
Standard knife	6g
Main-gauche	8g
Standard Panzerhand	5g
Standard pole-arm	14g

Weapon Accessories

Arrows, normal (20)	40c
Arrows, grappling (5)	2g
Bayonet, plug	3g
Belt scabbard	2g, 50c
Bolts, normal (20)	40c
Bolts, grappling (5)	2g
Bullet mold	90c
Extra flint	10c
Gunpowder (for 10 shots)	1g
Lead (for 10 shots)	50c
Powder flask (holds 10 shots)	50c
Powder measure	1g, 20c
Quiver (holds 20 arrows)	1g
Sheath, ornamented	4g+
Sheath, plain	1g

Miscellaneous

10′ pole 1c
Backpack 7c
Bandages (3) 1g
Bedroll 1g, 25c
Blanket 1g
Chisel 50c
Climbing gloves 2g
Climbing pick 2g
Coat, digger's 4g
Compass . . . . . 1g+
Crowbar 1g
Dice (wooden) 25c
Grappling Hook 2g
Hammer 75c
Hatchet 1g
Lamp oil 10c/hour
Lantern 2g
Litter 25c
Lock (TN 10) 5g
+5 to lock TN (max 30) 2g
Lockpicks 10g
Mallet 50c
Mattocks 2g
Map or scroll tube 1g
Messkit 2g
Pavilion (10-man) 40g
Pick 75c
Pillow 50c
Rope (50′) 1g
Salted provisions (1 week) 1g
Shovel 1g, 50c
Soap 3g
Splint set 20c
Spike, iron (5) 1g
Spike, wooden (12) 1g
Tent (2-man) 10g
Torch (6) 50c
Whistle 1g

Food & Lodging

Ale (quart) 3c
Banquet (feeds 4-10) . . . . . 5+g
Beer (1 round) 5c
Beer (small keg) 20c
Brandy (bottle) 2g
Cider (jar) 3c
Dinner (feeds 4) 1g
Fruit (5) 10c
Fruit, citrus (5) 50c
Jerky (for 1 week) 1g
Liquor (jigger) 10c
Lodging, good (weekly) . . . . . 1g+
Mead (bottle) 15c
Meal, good (feeds 1) 5c
Pork (1 lb) 15c
Rum (bottle) 10c
Tea (1 lb) 5g
Wine, average (bottle) 10c
Wine, fine (bottle) 1g
Wine, excellent (bottle) . . . . . 5g+

Tools

Anvil 20g
Bellows 20c
Block and Tackle 8g
Chain 1g/ft
File 15c
Grindstone 30g
Knife Blades (5) 6g
Ladder 2g
Loom 120g
Nails (10 lbs worth) 5g
Needle, sewing 30c
Pliers 3g
Razor 2g
Saw 3g
Scissors 4g
Sextant . . . . . 5g+
Shovel 1g, 50c
String/Twine (50 ft) 25c
Telescope . . . . . 5g+
Thread (10′) 10c
Tongs 2g
Whetstone 1g
Wire, iron 3c/ft

Scholarly Items

Alembic 3g
Balance and Weights 14g
Basket, Wicker 2g
Beaker (4) 3g
Bellows 150c
Book, blank, 100 pages 1g
Book, scholarly 1-10g
Brazier 25g
Candle, sealing wax (5 seals) . . . 50c
Chalk (12 pieces) 1g
Clock, Pendulum 200g
Clock, Water 40g
Crucible 5g
Dipper 1g
Flask 40c
Funnel 1g
Hourglass 5g
Ink (5 bottles) 3g
Lens (concave and convex) 13g
Logarithmic table 1g
Measuring Tools 3g
Microscope (50x) 75g
Mirror, full length . . . . . 25g+
Mirror, small 10g
Mortar and Pestle 3g
Pen 5-15g
Prism 15g
Retort . . . . .
Surgical kit 100g
Tongs 1g
Tripod 5g
Tubing, Glass, per foot 20c
Tweezers 25c
Vial 10c



Sample Archæologists

Eisen Shield Man

Brawn 3, Finesse 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Panache 2
Arcana: Passionate
Advantages: Academy (2), Explorer's Society (5), Patron (2)
Criminal: Gambling 1, Quack 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Ambush 1, Lockpicking 1
Doctor: Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Quack 2, Surgery 1
Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1
Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3
Heavy Weapon: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 3, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 3
Panzerhand: Attack (Panzerhand) 3, Parry (Panzerhand) 3
Rider: Ride 3
Income: 30G starting, 10G per month

Vendel Archaeologist

Brawn 2, Finesse 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Panache 2
Arcana: Envious
Backgrounds: Rivalry (2), Fear (1)
Advantages: Explorer's Society (5), Merchant's Guild (4), Connection (Harbor Master) (1), Connection (Smuggler) (1), University, Linguist, Eisen (1), High Eisen (1), Théan (R/W) (3), Avalon (1), Montaigne (1)
Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Oratory 2, Diplomacy 2, Politics 2
Merchant: Ceramics 1, Scribe 2, Haggling 1
Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 1, Research 3, Occult 2
Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 1
Athletics: Footwork 2, Climbing 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1
Income: 2k2 x 3G starting, 2k2G per month

Vodacce Digger

Brawn 2, Finesse 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2, Panache 2
Arcana: Proud
Backgrounds: Nemesis (Explorer Society Member) (1)
Advantages: Scoundrel (3), Patron (6)
Criminal: Gambling 1, Quack 1, Shadowing 1, Stealth 2, Lockpicking 2
Merchant: Scribe 2, Appraising 1
Streetwise: Socializing 1, Street Navigation 2, Underworld Lore 1
Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 3, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1, Break-Fall 1, Rolling 2
Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Eye-Gouge 1
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3
Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3
Income: 240G starting, 20G per week
Note: Reputation starts at –10 Points.

Sample Courtiers

Castillian Dancer

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

Arcana: Uncanny

Backgrounds: Hunted (2)

Advantages: Montaigne (1), Vodacce (1), Able Drinker (1), Patron (2)

Merchant: Jeweler 2, Appraising 1

Performer: Acting 1, Dancing 3, Oratory 1, Singing 1

Sailor: Balance 3, Climbing 1, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1, Leaping 1

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Eye-gouge 1, Throat Strike 1

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

Income: 30G starting, 10G per month

Ussuran Ambassador

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

Arcana: Loyal

Advantages: Inheritance (1), Toughness (3), Large (5), Linguist (2), Théan (R/W) (4), Ussuran (R/W) (1), Montaigne (R/W) (3)

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

Hunter: Fishing 1, Trail Signs 1, Tracking 2, Traps 2

Performer: Acting 2, Dancing 2, Oratory 3, Singing 1, Storytelling 1

Pugilism: Footwork 3, Attack (Pugilism) 2, Jab 2, Ear Clap 1

Income: 500G starting, 0G per month

Vendel Merchant

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

Arcana: Greedy

Backgrounds: Hunting (2)

Advantages: Servants (Bodyguard) (3), Merchant's Guild (4), Linguist (2), Théan (R/W) (3), Vodacce (R/W) (2), Montaigne (R/W) (2)

Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 3, Fashion 1, Oratory 3, Sincerity 1, Mooch 1

Merchant: Any One Basic Knack 3, Accounting 1, Appraising 1, Haggling 1

Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3, Shopping 2

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

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

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3

Income: 3k2 x 3G starting, 3k2G per month





Sample Pirates/Sailors

Avalon Shantyman

Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Panache 2
Arcana: Inspirational
Backgrounds: Rivalry (2)
Advantages: Commission (2)
Artist: Singing 3
Sailor: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 3, Rigging 3, Sea Lore 1
Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1
Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 1, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 1
Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3
Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3
Income: 30G starting, 10G per month

Castillian Pilot

Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Panache 2
Arcana: Perceptive
Backgrounds: True Identity (3)
Advantages: Castillian Education (10), Inheritance (1), Dangerous Beauty (3), Théan (R/W) (0)
Sailor: Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1, Navigation 3, Pilot 3
Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 3, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1
Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3
Pugilism: Attack (Pugilism) 3, Footwork 3, Jab 2
Income: 500G starting, 0G per month

Sea Dogs Porté Sorcerer

Brawn 2, Finesse 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Panache 3
Arcana: Indecisive
Backgrounds: Cursed (3)
Advantages: Noble (5), Montaigne (R/W) (1), Vodacce (R/W) (2), Avalon (R/W) (3)
Porté (Full-Blooded): Pocket (3), Blooding (2), Bring (2)
Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Oratory 1
Doctor: Diagnosis 1, First Aid 3, Quack 1
Sailor: Balance 1, Climbing 2, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1
Streetwise: Socializing 1, Street Navigation 1
Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 2, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 1, Parry (Fencing) 2
Income: 1,500G starting, 500G per month

Sample Priests

Castillian Priest

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

Arcana: Trusting

Advantages: Faith (5), Ordained (4), Théan (R/W) 3, Castille (R/W) (1), University (1), Connection (Invisible College Member) (1)

Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Oratory 3, Diplomacy 3, Mooch 1

Doctor: Diagnosis 2, First Aid 3, Quack 1, Surgery 2

Merchant: Scribe 2

Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 2, Research 2, Natural Philosophy 2, Theology 3

Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 3

Income: 90G starting, 30G per month

Inismore Ship's Chaplain

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

Arcana: Loyal

Advantages: Faith (5), Ordained (4), Indomitable Will (3)

Artist: Singing 3, Musician (Any Instrument) 2

Doctor: Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Quack 1, Dentist 1, Surgery 1

Sailor: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2

Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 3, Research 2, Theology 1

Pugilism: Attack (Pugilism) 3, Footwork 3, Jab 3, Uppercut 3

Income: 90G starting, 30G per month

Vodacce Priest

Brawn 2, Finesse 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2, Panache 2

Advantages: Ordained (4), Théan (R/W) (4), Castille (R/W) (3)

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

Doctor: Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Quack 1, Surgery 1

Scholar: History 1, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 2, Research 3, Theology 1

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

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

Income: 90G starting, 30G per month





Sample Sorcerers

Avalon Glamour Mage

Brawn 1, Finesse 2, Wits 1, Resolve 3, Panache 2

Arcana: Ambitious

Advantages: Citation (4), Noble (5), Legendary Trait (Resolve) (1)

Glamour (Full-Blooded): Green Man 1, Horned Hunter 2, Jack 1, Robin Goodfellow 3

Hunter: Stealth 3, Survival 2, Tracking 2, Ambush 2

Archer: Attack (Bow) 3, Fletcher 3, Snapshot 3

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

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

Income: 1,500G starting, 500G per month

Ussuran Shapeshifter

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

Advantages: Toughness (3), Noble (5), Théan (3)

Pyeryem (Half-Blooded): Man 1, Bear 2

Spy: Shadowing 2, Stealth 3, Sincerity 1

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

Crossbow: Attack (Crossbow) 3, Fletcher 3, Reload (Crossbow) 1

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

Wrestling: Grapple 3, Bear Hug 1

Income: 1,500G starting, 500G per month

Vestenmannavnjar Ship's Sorcerer

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

Backgrounds: Vendetta (Against a Vendel) (3)

Advantages: Scoundrel (3), Inheritance (3), Théan (3)

Lærdom (Half-Blooded): Stans 1, Nød 1, Villskap 1

Sailor: Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1, Weather 1

Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 1

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

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3

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

Income: 1,500G starting, 0G per month

Sample Swordsmen

Eisen Pirate Marine

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

Arcana: Overconfident

Advantages: Inheritance (1), Swordsman's School (25), Swordsman's Guild (0)

Eisenfaust: Beat 1

Sailor: Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1, Sea Lore 2

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

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

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

Pugilism: Attack (Pugilism) 2, Footwork 3, Jab 1, Uppercut 2

Income: 500G starting, 0G per month

Montaigne Duelist

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

Advantages: Combat Reflexes (3), Merchant's Guild (4), Able Drinker (1), Swordsman's School (25), Swordsman's Guild (3)

Valroux: Double Parry 1

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

Merchant: Cooking 3

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

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

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

3k2 x 3G starting, 3k2G per month

Vestenmannavnjar Bodyguard

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

Arcana: Hot-Headed

Advantages: Swordsman's School (25), Swordsman's Guild (0), Large (3), Patron (6)

Leegstra: Beat 1, Corps–á–Corps 1, Lunge 1

Servant: Etiquette 1, Fashion 2, Menial Tasks 2, Unobtrusive 3

Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 2

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

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

Wrestling: Grapple 3

Income: 120G starting, 40G per month





Drama

Part Four

Archibald

He stood perfectly still, haloed by torch light, waiting for his ship to sail in. It was already three hours late and the cold was in his bones. The tankard once filled with warm wine was now empty and chilling. He pulled his collar up a little higher and crossed his arms a little tighter. He stamped his feet. He paced toward the edge of the light, turned on his heel and walked to the opposite edge.

Three hours late.

He was about to go back in to the tavern and fetch another tankard full of the liquid they called wine (he was suspicious) when he saw two men rowing a small boat out of the darkness toward the pier. A second look told him he was wrong: a man and a woman. He strained his eyes against the dim light to catch the name on the dinghy... another moment... closer...

"*La Dulcinea*," he whispered. "Something's wrong."

From the pier, he could hear them arguing. They didn't pause for a moment, even to climb on shore and tie up the boat. The man, short and dark, spoke with an Inish brogue – that made Archibald smile. The woman, taller and blonde, spoke Avalon but with a distinct accent. The Inish sailor filled in the blanks for him.

"If'n you keep this up, I'll kick you all the way back to your snow-covered paradise, Vendel!" he said, his tone rising with each syllable. The Vendel replied with a curse in her native tongue and the Inish spat. "Bless you," he said.

Archibald approached them, touching the Vendel on the arm. He knew better than to touch a red-faced, curse-spouting Inish. "Excuse me," he whispered.

The Vendel spun on her heel and slammed her fist into his chin. Archibald fell backward, struggled to keep his footing, failed, and fell straight to the deck. The first sound he heard was the Inish laughing. When he looked up, he saw the man down on the pier, holding his belly.

"Me father always told me the Avalons didn't know nothin' about women," he managed to work out between chortles. "An' every day, one o' you proves him right."

Archibald was on his feet before the Inish started speaking. He was face-to-face with the Vendel before he finished. The woman stood almost at his height, her long, wet blonde braid slung over her shoulder.

"Don't ever touch me, Avalon," she whispered, mist escaping her lips.

"I'll let my sword do that."

She looked down and saw the pin on his lapel. The ice in her eyes melted fast. "A Swordsman?" She took a step back. "Are you here for me?"

"No. But there's time." He unbuckled the leather strap across the pommel of his sword.

The Inish, still sitting on the pier grinned. "Trust an Avalon to ruin a good fist fight by pullin' a blade."

The Swordsman turned to face him, then paused. His eyes flashed in the dim light. The Inish caught the glare and knew exactly what it was. He jumped to his feet, knives in his hands. The two of them were back to back, almost an act of instinct.

"What is it?" the Vendel asked.

The Inish smiled. "Trouble..."



O'Connell

"...in the worst kind of way." He peeked over his shoulder, catching Helena's movement toward the boat in the corner of his eye. "You with me, Swordsman?"

"Aye," he said.

"Give me your name, then."

He could almost feel the Avalon's smile. "You can tell them I was Archibald Montgomery."

"Sean O'Connell."

As one voice, they spoke: "I'll see you there."

The sound of something heavy and solid hitting the pier; both of them turned to look. Helena was kneeling behind an open iron chest. O'Connell shook his head. "I cannot believe you insisted on bringing that..."

When he saw what she pulled from the case, his voice dropped. She ran forward, joined their circle and caught her breath. "I told you we needed this," she said.

Despite being surrounded by thugs, O'Connell couldn't take his eyes off the musket. "What in the name of the Lady is that?"

She looked at the Inishman. "If I tell you, it'll ruin the surprise." Helena turned a knob and the musket made a sound that O'Bannon swore was a banesidhe's wail.

The shadows crept closer. Their circle tightened. O'Connell felt his fingers twist around his weapons as the shadows crept closer.

Suddenly, the Swordsman leapt forward, his steel flashing in the firelight. Before he landed, two of the shadows fell to the planks: one clutching his throat and the other his belly. O'Connell smiled and followed suit, bleeding the dark figures as he went.

He felt hands on his limbs and shoulders, but he shrugged them off with speed and steel. Two more fell by the wayside before a careless thrust earned him a cut from his elbow to his wrist. He winced only once, but that was enough. Three men threw their weight against him and he fell to the pier, feeling his bones slam against the wood. Two sets of hands found his wrists and held them fast.

Just in front of him, a smile full of broken teeth grinned down at him. He knocked hard and the smile disappeared, but the wind he kicked out of grinning boy hit him straight in the face and O'Connell got himself a mouthful of stale wine and beer. Almost enough to make him retch, but not quite.

Another face took smiley's place, this time with a long scar and patch over one eye. No smile. "Hold 'im down, boys. The lady wants him in one piece."

"I already had me press gang this month," O'Connell jibed, but no one was smiling anymore. He saw someone lift a blackjack and he shut his eyes...

...lightning in the air striking the mast and the cabin boy in the crow's nest the sailors called him "Little Roy", Little Roy smelling like roast pork as he screamed to the deck O'Connell watching him fall and swearing he would never smell that sour tang again, the tang of flesh seared into oblivion was it only two months ago...?

...and the thunder was still in his ears when he opened them. All the thugs were slowly getting to their feet and backing away, hands held high. O'Connell looked to his left where the Swordsman stood, covered in blood, exhausted and out of breath. To his right, Helena stood with her smoking weapon, smiling that pretty smile of hers.

"Listen to me," she shouted in a halting Castillian. "Go now. All done." She raised the smoking barrel. "Or I cook some more."

The Castillians nodded curtly, turned on their heels and ran.

O'Connell pushed himself to his feet and walked toward the center of the pier. Archibald followed. Helena extended her hand to the Swordsman. "Helena Fjør," she said.

The Swordsman shook her hand. "Well met."

They turned to look at the bodies on the pier. Seven dead. More wounded and groaning. One a cinder.

"Friends of yours?" Helena asked the Swordsman.

"I was going to ask you the same question."

She knelt down next to her iron case and set the musket back inside. O'Connell shook his head. "If the town guard didn't hear that..."

She nodded. "We'd better move."

"I have a place close by," Archibald said, sheathing his sword.

O'Connell slapped him on the back. "Then let's go."

They started down the dark street, leaving the carnage they made behind, when Helena asked, "By the way, who were you waiting for on that pier?"

The Swordsman paused for a moment, watching her face. "A man named Villanova," he said.

"What a coincidence," Helena smiled. "That's who we're looking for."

* * *

In a very dark corner of a very dark alleyway, moving so softly that not even a Swordsman could see, a slender figure watched them leave.

"The Swordsman is perfect," she whispered. "And the others are a bonus."

She slid back into the shadows and smiled. "My Lady will be pleasantly surprised."

A Slight Apology

Much of the information presented here was glossed over in the *7th Sea* Quick Start "Primer" at the beginning of this book. It's presented here again for the sake of convenience. While this does make the book a little redundant in a few places, it also makes it a lot easier to use.

Introduction

7th Sea is more a storytelling game than a board game. Hours of play can pass without anyone rolling dice or consulting a rulebook. However, when conflict occurs, whether it is a swordfight or a duel of wits, the need for rules arises. The rules presented here will help you and the GM determine the outcome of such conflicts.

Generally, you need the rules when the outcome of one or more Heroes' actions come into question. Does the Castillian's strike hit home? Is the Fate Witch's tug successful? Does the Eisen's armor save him from the Montaigne musket shot? All of these questions can be answered with a simple toss of the dice.

The rules are flexible, each a suggestion to make your game run more smoothly. If you're comfortable using every rule we give you, go on and use them all. If you like only a few, throw out the ones you don't like and keep the ones you do. In fact, if you come up with rules you like better than ours, go ahead and use those. You bought this book, you have the right do with it as you wish. Have fun with it. Play around with the rules, learn which ones work for your group and which ones don't, then modify them to fit your needs. Just remember the *7th Sea* Golden Rule.

7th Sea Golden Rule

Here it is, the only rule you should never break:

If the rules ever get in the way of having fun, ignore the rules.

Now that we've gotten that over with, let's start all of this out by talking a little bit about time.

Time

The Game Master has the ultimate authority over the movement of time during a story. He tells Heroes how much time has passed from moment to moment. During combat, however, things have to slow down a great deal to make sure that everybody knows exactly what's going on. *7th Sea* combat moves like a swashbuckling movie, with Heroes leaping across balconies, catching chandeliers, sliding down banisters and catching their falling friends at the last possible moment, and that can be kind of difficult to keep track of.

7th Sea combat is divided into **Rounds**. A Round lasts as long as the GM needs it to, but it is always divided into ten

Phases, each of equal length. Heroes will have multiple actions per Round, but they will usually have only a single action per Phase.

Outside of combat, time is a bit more fluid. It is divided into **Scenes**, **Acts**, **Stories**, and **Epics**. A Scene is a single encounter with a specific group of people, or a single combat. Thus, if you encounter a merchant on the road and talk to him, that's a Scene, and if you get into a fight in a burning barn and dive into some water outside to end the fight, that's also a Scene.

An Act is a collection of Scenes that all take place in roughly the same area, such as a single city. If five separate fights take place in Freiburg, those are all Scenes in the same Act. If the Heroes then leave Freiburg and journey to Carleon (where they face two more fights), that's a different Act, and should they encounter a band of pirates on the way, then that's yet another Act. Thus, the first Act is in Freiburg and has five Scenes. The second Act is on the sea and has one Scene (the pirate raid). The third and final Act takes place in Carleon and has two Scenes. Most Acts have from two to five Scenes.

A Story is a collection of Acts that takes a single plotline from beginning to end. Most Stories have between one and six Acts.

Lastly, an Epic is a number of Stories that all lead up to one huge climactic event, such the reconstruction of a powerful artifact, or the death of a recurring Villain.

The Guilder

The exchange rates as determined by the Vendel League upon the creation of the Guilder are as follows:

Avalon: 1 Pound = 20 Shillings. 1 Guilder = 1 Shilling.

Castille: 1 Doubloon = 100 Maravedi. 1 Guilder = 20 Maravedi.

Eisen: 1 Mark = 10 Florins = 100 Pfennigs. 1 Guilder = 4 Marks, but you cannot exchange Guilders for Marks, Florins, or Pfennigs because the Merchant Guilds are attempting to take the Eisen coins out of circulation.

Montaigne: 1 Sol = 12 Pistoles. 1 Guilder = 2 Pistoles.

Ussura: Barter. 1 Guilder = 1 chicken or equivalent.

Vendel: 1 Guilder = 100 Cents.

Vestenmannavnjar: Barter. The Vestenmannavnjar refuse to use the Guilder for religious reasons.

Vodacce: 1 Senator = 5 Seats. The commercially-minded Vendel have set an exchange rate of 3 Senators to 1 Guilder. The Vodacce are being forced to deal with the Guilder's ramifications, whether they like it or not.

Rolling Dice

Like many traditional board games, *7th Sea* uses dice. The *7th Sea* system uses ten-sided dice exclusively, and you'll need a lot of them. When you read the rules, you'll encounter a term you'll need to become familiar with: **Keep**. Whenever you need to determine the outcome of an action, you roll a number of dice, but only count a few of them. These are the dice that you Keep. Generally, you will want to Keep your highest die rolls.

Example 3.1: Nicholas de Brasco is a Vodacce duelist. When he attacks another Hero, he rolls seven dice, but Keeps only three. Nicholas' player rolls seven dice, gaining a 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 9. He can Keep only three of these dice, so he decides to Keep the 8 and two 9s, giving him a total of 26 (8+9+9).

Most of the time, modifiers from advantages, magic, and such are going to be in the form of extra dice you roll, but do not Keep. These dice are referred to as **unkept** dice. When you take a penalty in unkept dice, these are applied first to the dice you don't Keep, and then, if there are penalty dice left over, applied to the dice you Keep.

Example 3.2: If you normally roll four dice and Keep three of them, but have a penalty of –2 unkept dice, you are reduced to rolling two dice and Keeping two dice. After all, you can't Keep more dice than you roll!

Exploding Dice

Ten-sided dice generate numbers from one to ten. Generally, the "ten" on a die is indicated with a zero.

Whenever a die rolls 10, you may roll that die again and add the result to the 10. This is called an **exploding die**. If the Hero rolls again and gets an additional 10, he may add that 10 and continue rolling until he doesn't get an additional 10.

Example 3.3: A player rolls a 10. He rolls the die again and gets a 5. He adds these two values together to get 15 on a single die. As long as the player keeps rolling 10s, he may continue rolling and adding.

Rolling More Than Ten Dice

While most gamers like rolling lots of dice, ten is about the most you can reasonably be expected to hold in your hands at once. Therefore, in *7th Sea*, whenever you are rolling more than ten dice at once, drop the excess dice, and change them into extra Kept dice. Thus, if you were rolling 12k6, you would drop the two extra unkept dice and Keep two extra dice, for a roll of 10k8. Should you reach 10k10 and still have extra dice left over, each additional die (whether it's Kept or unkept) becomes a bonus of 10 to the roll. Thus, 15k10 becomes 10k10+50, and 11k11 becomes 10k10+20.

Traits

(Note: While reading this section, we suggest you have a copy of the Hero sheet handy for visual reference. The Hero sheet can be found at the back of this book.)

How strong is your Hero? How fast is he? How witty and cunning? How resilient? How much does he stand out in a crowd? These questions are answered with a quick look at your Hero's **Traits**. Just as some people are stronger, faster and more charismatic than others, so are the Heroes you will play. Everyone in Théah is ranked from 0 to 5 (usually) in certain Traits. A Hero with a Brawn of 4 is stronger than a Hero with a Brawn of 3, who is stronger than a Hero with a Brawn of 1, and so on.

Every Hero has a set of five Traits: Brawn, Finesse, Resolve, Wits and Panache. Each describes a different aspect of your Hero. These Traits have values, known as **Ranks**, numbering from 0 to 5. The higher a Trait's Rank, the more potent it is.

In almost every case, Traits tell you how many dice you can Keep during any roll.

Example 3.4: Nicholas has a 4 Finesse, so whenever he makes a roll involving agility or reflexes, he rolls and Keeps at least four dice.

Rank 0 Traits

Some Heroes may have a Rank 0 in a Trait. This means that they are very weak in that aspect. A Hero with a Rank 0 Finesse may be crippled, while a Hero with a Rank 0 Brawn may be sickly.

A Hero who must make a roll based on a Trait in which he has a 0 always rolls one die, but if he rolls a zero, it is a zero and not a 10, *and* the die never explodes. Also, a Hero making a Contested Roll against a Hero with a Rank 0 in the appropriate Trait has a 5 for a Target Number.

If the Hero has appropriate Skills to add to the roll, he may do so, but the restrictions still apply.

Example 3.5: Jean-Pierre is a Montaigne peasant with a 0 Wits, which means Jean-Pierre isn't the brightest fellow in the county. When a con man visits Jean-Pierre's farm, he tries to convince the simple farmer to buy some magic seeds. Jean-Pierre must make a Contested Wits roll against the con man. The con man's TN is 5 because of Jean-Pierre's Rank 0 Wits. When Jean-Pierre rolls a 0 on his one die, it does not count as a ten, nor does he get to reroll it. It counts as a zero.

Skills

Just as every Hero has Traits, they also have Skills. However, while every Hero has the same five Traits (even if one or more of them are Rank 0), the number of Skills a Hero can have is much greater.

If Traits define who your Hero is, then Skills define what he's learned. Two Heroes with identical Traits could have (and usually *will* have) completely different Skills. This is because everybody's background is different. Even Heroes who have the same fencing teacher will develop into different fencers with separate skills and abilities.

Each Skill is further broken down into Knacks. Knacks are the abilities your Hero has gained from the Skill. Generally, Knacks make it easier for you to succeed at actions that they pertain to, such as swimming or parrying with a main gauche.

The Two Rolls

There are two kinds of rolls used in *7th Sea*: Simple and Contested.

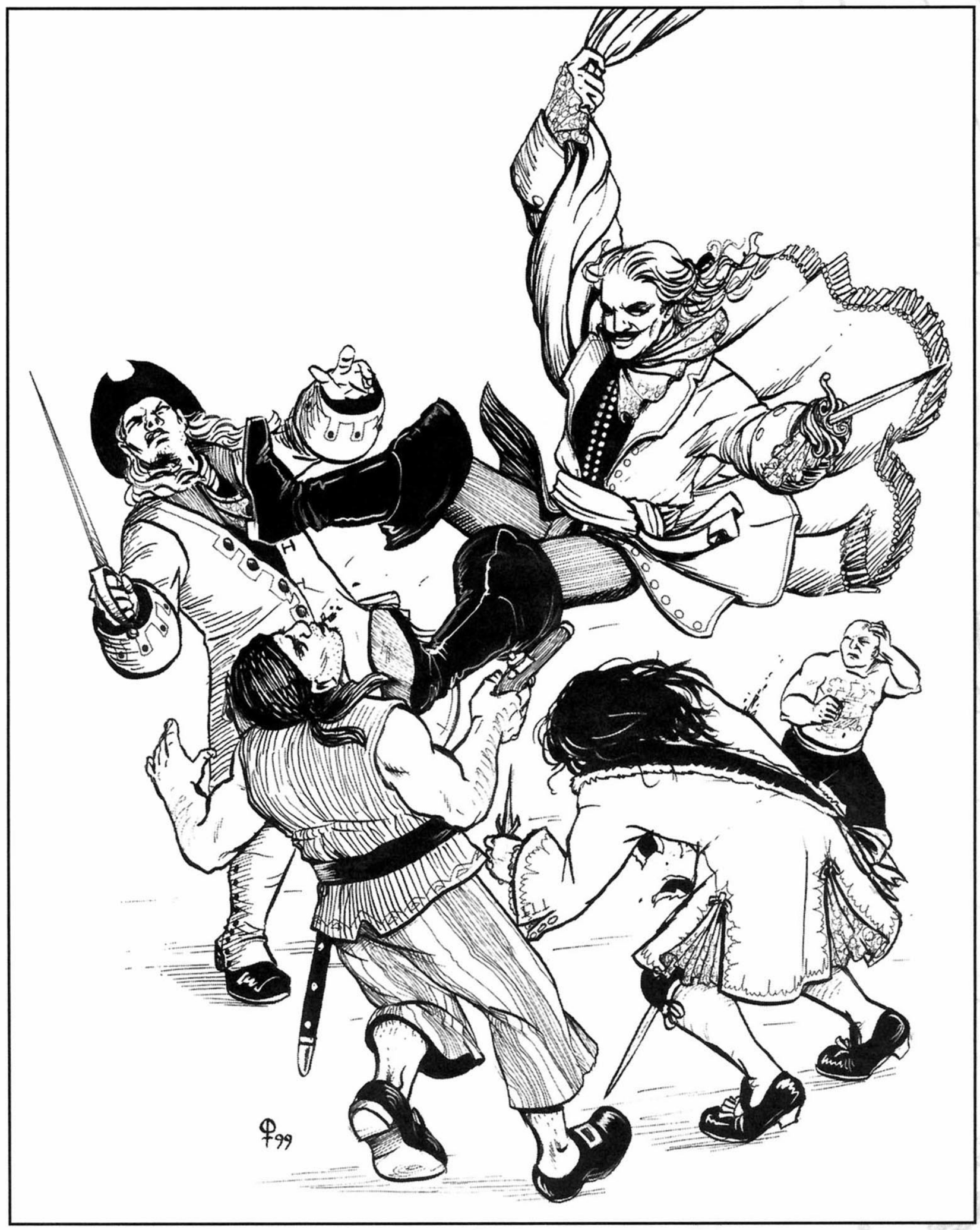
A Simple Roll is used when a Hero is acting on his own, when only his own abilities are being tested.

A Contested Roll is used when a Hero is actively opposing (or being opposed by) another character.

The Simple Roll

A Simple Roll is an Action whose outcome is based solely on the ability of the Hero. Does that Hero have the strength to lift and throw that table? Does he possess the deftness to pick that lock? Both are good examples of Simple Rolls. Here is how a Simple Roll is performed:

• Step One: You declare an action and the GM determines which Trait is appropriate for that action. Then he assigns a Target Number for the action.



• Step Two: You roll a number of dice equal to your Hero's appropriate Trait and add them together.

• Step Three: Compare the total generated by the dice with the TN. If your roll is equal to or greater than the Target Number, the action is successful. If your roll is less than the TN, the action fails.

The GM has a list that shows the relative difficulties for actions and their appropriate Target Numbers. The chart below gives you a good estimate as to what those Target Numbers may be.

The Contested Roll

Contested Rolls are a little different from Simple Rolls. You make a Contested Roll when you're trying to use an Action against another character. The GM tells you to roll a number of dice equal to the appropriate Trait, just like a Simple Roll, but:

• The TN for a Contested Roll is equal to the opposed Trait times 5.

• Both the Acting and Opposing characters make rolls, and the success of the action is determined by their rolls.

In a Contested Roll, one of three results can occur:

• If only one contestant succeeds at his roll (Opposing Trait x 5), then he succeeds and his opponent fails.

• If both contestants succeed in their rolls, the one who rolled higher wins.

• If neither contestant succeeds in his roll, the Action continues until one or both of them can make a successful roll.

Target Number Chart

5	Mundane
10	Easy
15	Average (This is the default Target Number)
20	Hard
25	Very Hard
30	Heroic
35	Never Done Before
40	Never To Be Done Again

Adding Skills and Knacks to the Roll

When you make a Simple or Contested Roll, you usually add your Skills to the equation in the form of unkept dice. Thus, if the Hero picking the lock above possesses the Lockpicking Knack at Rank 2, he adds two unkept dice to his attempt.

Example 3.6: Nicholas has a Rank 4 Finesse and a Fencing Skill with an Attack Knack at Rank 3. This gives Nicholas a total of seven dice to roll (4 Finesse + 3 Attack), but he can only Keep four of them.

Raises

When the GM assigns you a TN, you may find that TN a little too easy to hit. You may voluntarily **Raise** any TN you are assigned in increments of 5. Raising the TN increases just how impressive the success will be, usually by adding one unkept die to whatever effect the roll had per Raise (for an Attack Roll, the effect is damage, for instance). Raising allows you to complete tasks more quickly, more effectively, or with more style. A "called shot" (striking an opponent in the hand, firing an arrow into an opponent's leg, etc.) is an example of what you can do with Raises. The GM will notify you how many Raises are necessary for a called shot.

You can Raise as many times as you are able, but if you fail to hit your modified TN, you've completely failed at the Action you were attempting to perform.

Occasionally, you will receive a **Free Raise**. A Free Raise adds 5 to your roll.

Example 3.7: Nicholas (from Example 3.6) is making an attack against a monster whose TN to be hit is 10. He knows that since he's rolling seven dice and Keeping four, he shouldn't have any trouble beating that TN. In fact, he knows that he rolls at least a 20 on average, so he tells his GM that he's Raising two times. This makes his new TN a 20. If he fails to roll at

least a 20, his attack misses, but if he hits he'll get two extra dice to roll for damage (which could make a 5k2 attack into a 7k2 attack, for instance).

Example 3.8: If Nicholas received a Free Raise while making the attack in Example 3.7 and rolled a 17, his Free Raise would boost that to a 22, making it a successful attack. If Nicholas wanted to get the most effect from his Free Raise, then he should have Raised one extra time to take advantage of the fact that he was adding 5 to his roll.

Drama Dice

You begin each Story with a number of **Drama Dice** equal to your lowest Trait. They act just like regular dice, meaning they explode when you roll any tens. Drama Dice represent your innate ability to second-guess your surroundings and the intentions of your opponents, and perform actions beyond the capacity of the common man (*i.e.*, "heroic actions"). Your GM, on the other hand, starts with a number of Drama Dice equal to the highest Trait in the party, plus one for each Hero in the party. He can use these to make the challenges you face more effective, and generally make your Hero's life that much worse.

When you spend one of your Drama Dice, one of three effects can be invoked:

- You may add one Kept die to *any one roll*. This can be done *after* the roll is made, but *must* be done before the GM describes the result of the roll in question. You can spend as many of your Drama Dice as you like on any single roll.

- You may immediately recover from being **Knocked Out** (see *Combat*, below). It costs you one Drama Die to do so. However, regardless of the current Phase, you must then spend the remainder of this Round recovering, unable to perform any Actions. Your TN to be hit during this time is 5.

- You may activate your Virtue, activate a Villain's Flaw, or attempt to prevent the GM from activating your Hubris.

Your GM can give you additional Drama Dice when you do something that he feels is particularly cool, when you say something that makes the whole group explode with laughter, when you roleplay your Hero particularly well during a Scene, etc.

Drama Dice are also used to gain experience for your Hero. At the end of a Story, all of your unspent Drama Dice convert directly into **Experience Points**.

Be warned – when you spend a Drama Die to add to a die roll, your GM takes it from you and it goes into *his* pool of dice at the start of the next Scene. Your Hero's luck may be looking up now, but if you aren't careful how you spend your Drama Dice, things could go sour real fast.

"A + B": Roll and Keep Revisited

Here's a little formula that should keep Rolling and Keeping easy. Whenever we refer to a combination of dice (Trait + Knack, for instance), the first value refers to the number of dice you Keep, while the second value is just additional unkept dice you roll. In other words, whenever we refer to Trait + Knack, you roll a number of dice equal to your Trait + Knack, but keep a number of dice equal to your Trait.

Recap

All the rules for resolution of actions in *7th Sea* follow three steps. Whenever you aren't sure what to do, just remember these three steps and you'll do just fine.

1) The GM assigns a Target Number.

2) Determine which Trait and/or Knack (if any) are most appropriate to the roll.

3) Roll the dice. If you roll equal to or higher than the TN, you succeed. If you don't, you fail.

Combat

Combat is an important part of *7th Sea*. Scenes of swinging from tapestries and yardarms, or fencing on the edge of a perilous cliff are the heart and soul of the swashbuckling genre.

The rules for combat are pretty much the same for everything else in *7th Sea*: you roll your dice against a Target Number and compare the result. It's when we get to results that things start to get complicated.

Initiative

At the start of a combat round, you roll a number of dice equal to your Panache. These are **Action Dice**, and they *don't* explode. The numbers shown on the Action Dice are the Phases in which you will get to act. If you roll the same number on more than one Action Die, you will simply be able to act more than once during that Phase.

Example 3.9: Rodriguez Montello, a Castillian swashbuckler, has a Panache of 4. Therefore, he rolls four Action Dice at the start of every combat round. In this instance, he rolls a 1, a 5, a 9 and a 0. Since these are Action Dice, the 0 does NOT explode. This means that Rodriguez will get to act in Phases 1, 5, 9 and 10.

Example 3.10: A burly guard has a Panache of 2. Therefore he rolls two Action Dice at the start of every combat round. In this instance, he rolls a 1 and a 9. This means that the guard will get to act in Phases 1 and 9.

Example 3.11: If Rodriguez had rolled two 5's in example 3.9, he would be allowed to act twice during Phase 5.

Next, your GM will begin to count upwards from Phase 1 until he reaches Phase 10 (usually shown as 0 on a die). When he calls a Phase in which you get to act, you may do one of two things with each die *showing the current Phase*:

- Spend the Action Die in order to perform an **Action**.
- Leave the Action Die where it is, making it a **Held Action**. (Held Actions will be explained in just a moment.)

If more than one Hero or NPC wants to perform an Action in the same Phase, each adds up all his current Action Dice to get a number known as the **Initiative Total**. Note that Action Dice that have already been spent do not count towards the Initiative Total. The character with the highest Initiative Total goes first. If there is a tie, the character with the highest Panache goes first. If this doesn't break the tie, then determine who goes first at random (flip a coin, play Rock-Paper-Scissors, whatever).

Example 3.12: Rodriguez's Initiative Total adds up to 25 (1+9+10+5). The burly guard's Initiative Total adds up to 10. Therefore, Rodriguez has the option of acting first in Phase 1. If the guard's Initiative Total had been 25, then we would have compared Panache scores, and again Rodriguez would go first,



since his 4 is higher than the guard's 2. If the guard had also had a 4 Panache, then it would've been settled by a coin flip.

When the GM reaches Phase 10 everyone must use all their remaining Action Dice or lose them. Once all Action Dice on the table are spent or forfeited, a new Round begins, and the process starts all over again.

Example 3.13: Rodriguez rolled a 0 earlier on, and now Phase 10 has come. He can't hold that Action Die, because there are no further Phases coming up. He must use it now or lose it.

Held Actions

Once you've held an Action, it remains on the table. It is considered to match any later Phase called, but the number showing on the die doesn't change. This is important when adding up your Initiative Total.

Example 3.14: Rodriguez decides to hold his 1 for later use. It remains on the table, and he can use it in any Phase after Phase 1. However, it still only counts as 1 towards his Initiative Total.

Interrupt Actions

What if you didn't roll any low numbers at all, but you really need to get your Action off before the bad guys? In this case, you can perform an **Interrupt Action**: you exchange any *two* Action Dice showing later Phases for *one* Action Die showing the current Phase. You must still compare Initiative Totals if someone else wants to act in this Phase to determine who goes first, but at least you have a chance to act. It's cheaper to use a Held Action instead, but if you simply don't have one, you'll have to use an Interrupt Action. You cannot use an Interrupt Action to make an attack.

Example 3.15: It's now Phase 4, and Rodriguez has already used his Held Action from Phase 1 to bar a door that some guards were about to rush in through. Unfortunately, he has just noticed another guard at the window aiming a crossbow at him and would like to dodge. He has a 5, a 9 and a 0 remaining. Rodriguez wants to hang on to his Action in Phase 5, so he exchanges the 9 and 0 Action Dice to get a 4. His Initiative Total at the start of Phase 4 is now 9 (4+5).

Passive Defense

Your **Passive Defense** is used at all times without using up an Action. It is equal to 5 + (Defense Knack x 5). This is the TN that your enemies are usually rolling against in order to hit you. Look at the chart on the following page to see what Knacks you can use as your **Defense Knack** unless your GM declares otherwise. If you don't use any of these Knacks as your Defense Knack, then your Passive Defense is 5.

Example 3.16: Rodriguez has a Parry Knack of 3 in Fencing. Thus, if he has a fencing weapon in hand, he can use Parry as his Defense Knack, giving him a TN to be hit of 20. As long as he has his weapon in hand, the burly guard will need to roll a TN of 20 in order to strike him.

Example 3.17: If Rodriguez were to be disarmed, he could no longer use his Parry Knack as his Defense Knack. Luckily for him, he has the Footwork Knack at 2, giving him a TN to be hit of 15.

Example 3.18: The burly guard has no Defense Knacks other than a Parry of 2. His TN to be hit is 15 while armed and a paltry 5 when unarmed, because he has no other Knacks to fall back on in an emergency.

Lying Prone and Getting Up

Sometimes you will fall down – whether because you slipped when swinging on a chandelier, or because your opponent used his Corps-á-corps Knack against you. In any event, while you are lying on the ground, your Passive Defense drops to 5, and you must make two Raises in order to use your Active Defense (see **Active Defense,** below) – it's hard to parry while lying on your back. Thus, if your opponent rolls a 24 to hit you, while you're lying prone, you need to roll a 34 in order to avoid the blow. It takes one Action to stand up, and during the Phase you are standing up, your Passive Defense remains a 5 and you cannot use any Active Defense.

Making An Attack

When you spend an Action Die, you may choose to attack an opponent with that Action. You roll Finesse + Attack (for the weapon or fighting style being used), Keeping Finesse. This is known as your **Attack Roll**; remember its total for the next step. If you roll equal to or higher than your opponent's TN to be hit, you are going to hit him, unless your opponent uses an Active Defense successfully.

Example 3.19: Rodriguez has a Finesse of 3 and an Attack Knack of 4 in Fencing. Therefore, to attack the burly guard he rolls seven dice, Keeping three. Assuming the guard is armed, Rodriguez needs to roll a 15 or higher in order to send an attack winging towards the guard successfully. Shouldn't be too difficult...

Off-hand Penalty

When you are using an object (such as a main gauche) in your left hand (or right hand, if you took the Left-handed Advantage), you have a –1 unkept die penalty when doing anything with that object. Several Swordsman's Schools teach you how to avoid this penalty when using certain items (such as a buckler or main gauche) in your off-hand.

Active Defense

Once the attacker has rolled equal to or higher than your TN to be hit, you get one last chance to avoid the damage. First, you must spend an Action Die showing this Phase. You roll Wits + Defense Knack, keeping Wits. You must use the same Defense Knack that you were using as your Passive Defense against the attack. Your TN is the attacker's Attack Roll. If your roll equals or exceeds the TN, you have successfully avoided all damage from that attack. The Defense Knack Table below lists the different possible Defense Knacks and the instances when you can use them. Some circumstances demand that a particular Knack be used (for instance, if you're riding a horse, you must use the Riding Knack to make any Active Defense); they are noted on the chart.

You may use Held Actions or Interrupt Actions to pay for an Active Defense roll. Remember that Interrupt Actions cost you two dice instead of one.

Example 3.20: Rodriguez makes an Attack Roll of 34. Assuming that the guard can scrounge up an Action in this Phase (perhaps he Held his 1, anticipating an attack), then he must roll a 34 or higher to avoid the damage. Let's say his Wits is a 2, so he rolls four dice, keeping two. He gets a 16, which fails to meet or beat the TN, and he gets hit.

Example 3.21: The burly guard attacks Rodriguez with an Attack Roll of 22. Rodriguez decides to use Active Defense, and spends an Action Die. He has a Wits of 2 and a Parry Knack of 3, so he rolls five dice, keeping two. He gets a 25, successfully avoiding the attack.

Expanded Defense Knack Table

Defense Knack	When Used
Footwork	At any time, unless overruled by another Knack.
Parry (Weapon)	**May** only be used when holding the appropriate weapon.
Balance	**Must** be used when fighting on an unstable surface such as gravel, a ship, or a moving carriage.
Climbing	**Must** be used when climbing.
Leaping	**Must** be used when leaping.
Riding	**Must** be used when riding an animal.
Rolling	**Must** be used when rolling or sliding.
Sprinting	**Must** be used when running.
Swimming	**Must** be used when swimming.
Swinging	**Must** be used when swinging.

Movement during Combat

7th Sea works best with miniatures and a map of the area in which the combat is occurring. This enables everyone to visualize what's going on more easily,

and helps to prevent the arguments that often spring up when there's a miscommunication between the GM and the players concerning the layout of the battle. We recommend using 25mm–28mm scale miniatures, and we'll be producing a full line of *7th Sea* miniatures for your convenience.

The maps that you will find in *7th Sea* products will have numbers on them that represent the different heights of the depicted areas. Thus, a tavern map might have a 1 on the floor, a 2 on the table tops, lower stairs, and bar, a 3 on the upper stairs and chandelier, and a 4 on the balcony. Each different number represents a **Level** on the map, and corresponds to one die of falling damage. In our tavern above, a Hero falling from the balcony (Level 4) to the floor (Level 1) would take three dice of falling damage.

As part of any other Action, you can move anywhere on the map that is either on the same Level or one Level down from your current position. Thus, you can rush across the floor and attack some guards coming in the door all in one Action, or you could swing down from the chandelier, land on the bar, and kick someone in the teeth all in the same Action.

However, if you want to go up one Level, that costs one Action. You don't want the Villain forcing you up the stairs while he's fighting you because that makes you use up a lot of Actions.

You can drop down more than one Level at a time with one Action, but if you don't have the Break Fall Knack, you'll have to take falling damage in order to do so.

Lastly, use some common sense when moving around. A bunch of guards aren't going to let a Hero just walk around them to get to the Villain they are protecting. Certainly, they'll stand there dumbfounded if the Hero swings over their head on a tapestry and drops down next to the Villain, but that's an entirely different scenario. This applies to NPCs as well. If a Hero has blocked a stairway to protect another Hero's retreat out of the fight, the Villain can't just ignore the dramatic stand that Hero is making – that makes for poor cinema, and it cheats players out of feeling like Heroes.

Ranged Attacks

If you look at the missile weapons on the Weapon Chart, on the next page (the weapons with ranges on them), you'll see a number in parentheses next to their names. This is the maximum distance (in yards) that the weapon can be fired with any real chance to hit. If you're using 25mm miniatures and a map, we recommend that you say that one inch on the map is equal to five feet of range. This isn't exact, but it's close enough. When you fire at a target that is up to half of this range away from you, apply the Short Range modifier to your Attack Roll. When you fire at someone further than half the maximum range away from you, apply the Long Range modifier to your Attack Roll. You can fire at someone further away than the maximum range, but you have no chance to hit.

Example 3.22: Milo the archer is firing his bow at a Villain 50 feet away from him. He makes his normal Attack Roll, and then, since he is closer than half his maximum range of 150 feet, he uses the Short Range modifier and subtracts 5 from his roll. So, if he rolled a 28, it drops to a 23.

Example 3.23: Milo is firing his bow at a Villain 90 feet away from him, and he rolls 28 again. Since he is over half of his maximum range away from his target, he uses the Long Range modifier (–10) for a total roll of 18.

Firearms

When using a firearm (pistols and muskets), a Hero fires against his target's Passive Defense *only*. A Hero may *not* use Parry as his Passive Defense against firearms. Firearms may *not* be avoided with an Active Defense. In addition, firearms suffer no Short Range Modifiers when fired at targets less than 10 feet away.

Heroes can fire two pistols at the same target with one Action. This Action raises the TN to hit the target by 5 and also increases the damage rolled by one Kept die (raising the damage rating to 5k4). You don't get to roll two separate Attack Rolls; the two pistol shots do 5k4 and are considered a single attack.

Normal Damage

All weapons are listed with a Damage Rating (DR) that looks like this:

Weapon	**Damage Rating**
Fencing Weapon	2k2

When you deal out damage with a melee weapon (a hand-held weapon such as a sword or an axe), add your Hero's Brawn to the first number in the Damage Rating and roll that many dice. The second number (the one following the "k") tells you how many dice to Keep from your roll. Missile weapons (such as bows and pistols) do not add your Hero's Brawn to the Damage Rating.

The damage inflicted is referred to as **Wounds**.

Example 3.24: Rodriguez has successfully hit the guard, so now he determines how much damage he inflicts. His Brawn is 2, and he's wielding a sword with a DR of 2k2. Adding his Brawn makes the DR 4k2, so he rolls four dice, Keeping two. He rolls a 19, which means he inflicts 19 Wounds on the guard.

Improvised Weapons

When you pick up whatever's at hand (a mug of ale, for instance) and smash your opponent upside the head with it, you're using an improvised weapon. You use the Attack (Improvised Weapon) Knack, found in the Dirty Fighting Skill, for your Attack Roll. The damage you do with the weapon is dependent upon its size and shape.

The number of Kept dice is either one or two, depending on whether the object is blunt or sharp, respectively.

The number of dice you roll is equal to your Brawn + the weapon's size modifier, as shown on the table on the facing page.

Thus, using the mug given as an example above (blunt, hand-held), you would consider it a 0k1 weapon, while a table (blunt, larger than man-sized) would be a 3k1 weapon, and a person (blunt, man-sized) would be a 2k1 weapon.

Unfortunately, as you've seen if you've watched any good swashbuckling movies, improvised weapons have a tendency to break (and spill a lot of good ale). Soft weapons (like people) don't break, they just bend and spring back into shape later. Firm weapons (made of glass, clay, wood, etc.) break any time you roll a 10 on any of their damage dice, whether or not you choose to keep that die. Even hard improvised weapons (metal or stone) aren't built to fight with, and break any time any of the damage dice you roll explode more than once (*i.e.*, you roll a 20 or more on a single die). Of course, you can choose not to reroll your tens in order to avoid this, but it's probably easier just to grab another weapon.

Weapons Table

Weapon	Damage	Range	Short Range	Long Range	Reload
Bow	2k2	150 yds.	–5 to hit	–10 to hit	1 Action
Crossbow	2k3	100 yds.	–5 to hit	–10 to hit	6 Actions
Fencing Sword	2k2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heavy Weapon	3k2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Knife	1k2	5+2*Brawn	–0 to hit	–5 to hit	N/A
Musket	5k3	80 yds.	–10 to hit	–15 to hit	30 Actions
Panzerhand	0k2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pistol	4k3	30 yds.	–10 to hit	–15 to hit	20 Actions

Wound Checks

Once you've been damaged, you have to see if something bad happens to you, or if you shrug off the hit for now. This is referred to as a **Wound Check**. You roll your Brawn with a TN equal to the Flesh Wounds you've taken so far in the combat (including the damage you just got hit with). If you fail the roll, you suffer a **Dramatic Wound**, plus one additional Dramatic Wound for every 20 you failed your Wound Check by. Otherwise, nothing happens, but the damage stays with you. Firearms (pistols, muskets, etc.) are so dangerous that you take an additional Dramatic Wound for every *10* you failed by, instead of every 20.

At the end of each battle, erase all your Flesh Wounds (but not Dramatic Wounds.)

Example 3.25: After that blow from Rodriguez, the burly guard must now roll his Brawn of 4 with a TN of 19. He rolls a total of 22. He's okay for now.

*Example 3.26: Next round, Rodriguez hits the guard again for 17 damage. The guard must roll Brawn again, this time with a TN of 36! He rolls, getting a 35, so he takes a Dramatic Wound. If he had rolled a 16, he would have failed by 20, so he would immediately take an **additional** Dramatic Wound beyond the first.*

Dramatic Wounds

When you suffer a Dramatic Wound, the first thing to do is erase all the Wounds you've suffered so far. Don't get too excited; you still have to deal with the Dramatic Wound's effects.

First, if this Dramatic Wound brings your total number of Dramatic Wounds equal to your Resolve, you're **Crippled**. Until your total number of Dramatic Wounds is reduced below this level, none of your dice (except Drama Dice) explode.

Second, if this Dramatic Wound brings your total number of Dramatic Wounds to twice your Resolve, you're Knocked Out (see below), and you'll probably wake up in a dungeon or tied to a chair, assuming no one kills you.

Example 3.27: Rodriguez has a Resolve of 2, and he suffers his second Dramatic Wound. Until he gets one of those Dramatic Wounds healed, he is Crippled and his dice stop exploding. Should he suffer another two Dramatic Wounds, he goes down and becomes Knocked Out until either his friends heal him, or the GM has him wake up.

You'll either have to let your Dramatic Wounds heal with time (all Dramatic Wounds heal between Stories), have a doctor see to them (see the Doctor Skill on page 141), or find some magic to cure your hurts.

Improvised Weapons Table

Size	Size Modifier	To-hit Modifier
Hand-held	+0	N/A
Smaller than Man-Sized	+1	N/A
Man-Sized	+2	–1 unkept die to hit
Larger than Man-Sized*	+3	–2 unkept dice to hit

*The Larger than Man-Sized category is limited by how big an object your Hero can lift and swing around.

Knocked Out

When your Hero has suffered a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to twice his Resolve, he becomes Knocked Out. This means that he's taken so many wounds that he's completely out of it. The pain of his injuries has rendered him helpless, and anyone can simply walk up to him and kill him automatically by spending one Action. He can't do anything at all when he is Knocked Out. He doesn't even roll for Initiative.

You may recover from being Knocked Out by spending one Drama Die. However, regardless of the current Phase, you must then spend the

remainder of that Round recovering, unable to perform any Actions. Your TN to be hit during this time is 5. You also recover from being Knocked Out if you are healed of one or more Dramatic Wounds, though again you won't be able to do anything until the next Round, and your TN to be hit will be 5 until then.

NPC Wounds

In *7th Sea*, there are three kinds of NPCs: Brutes, Henchmen and Villains. Each of them is wounded differently.

Brutes

Brutes are riff-raff. They are the nameless thugs that villains employ by the dozens and who die by the dozens when Heroes show up. A group of Brutes is called a "Brute Squad."

When a Hero gets a successful strike against a Brute, the Brute is Knocked Out. That's it. There's no roll for Wounds, no Wound Check, just the Brute going down. The GM determines if the Brute has been killed or just knocked unconscious, but if a Brute takes even a single Wound after he's been knocked down, he dies.

Oftentimes, a Hero can dispatch a menacing Brute Squad with little effort. If a Hero is facing a Brute Squad directly, he may attack an additional Brute per Raise. In other words, if you were facing four Brutes, you would need three Raises (one for each additional Brute beyond the first) to attack them all.

Henchmen

Henchmen are the lieutenants and hangers-on of Villains and Heroes. They're tougher than Brutes, but only a little. Henchmen are actually just on the verge of becoming Heroes and Villains themselves; all they need is a little push and they're on their way.

Henchmen receive Wounds as Heroes do, but if they ever take a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to their Resolve, they become Knocked Out.

Villains

Villains are the counterparts of Heroes. They have the same abilities as Heroes, and the same potential to do evil as a Hero has to do good.

Villains are Wounded in exactly the same manner as Heroes. Whenever they receive Wounds, they make a Wound Check using their Brawn. If they succeed, there's no effect. If they fail, they take a Dramatic Wound. If a Villain ever takes a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to twice his Resolve, he becomes Knocked Out.

Example 3.28: Rodriguez is facing four Brutes. He only wants to spend one Action on dispatching them, so when he attacks, he tells the GM he wants to attack all the Brutes. There are four of them, so the GM tells Rodriguez he needs three Raises to attack them all. The TN to attack these Brutes is 10, so with three Raises, the TN becomes 25. Rodriguez makes his roll and all the Brutes fall down in a flurry of swordplay.

Armor

The intent of armor is to deflect sword strikes and musket balls to save its wearer from damage. Unfortunately, most modern Théan weapons go right through armor. Nowadays, armor is more of a liability than an asset. It simply isn't used, except by the Eisen, who have almost magical *dracheneisen* armor capable of deflecting musket balls while remaining light enough to move around in. If you want armor, play an Eisen noble. Everyone else simply goes without.

Surprise

When attempting to sneak up on or ambush someone, you make a Contested Roll of your Finesse + either your Stealth or Ambush Knack, as appropriate, versus your target's Wits + Ambush. If you win, your target is surprised for one Round.

While surprised, your Passive Defense drops to 5. In addition, you cannot use any Actions, including Interrupt Actions. You are allowed to Hold any Actions you would have normally received until you are no longer surprised.

Surprise only works in a situation where you can approach the victim unobserved.

Example 3.29: Rodriguez has a Stealth Knack of 3. He tries to sneak up on a guard who has a Wits of 2 and no Ambush Knack. Therefore, Rodriguez's TN is 10, and he rolls six dice, Keeping three. The guard's TN is 15, and he rolls two dice, Keeping two. Rodriguez gets a 21, and the guard gets a 12. Since Rodriguez succeeded and the guard failed, Rodriguez wins the Contested Roll, and the guard is surprised for 1 Phase. If Rodriguez saved an Action to take advantage of his surprise, the guard will most likely die a quick death.

Experience

As you adventure, your GM will award you experience points, or XP. Your GM will probably hand out 1–5 XP per player per game session (plus your leftover Drama Dice, which turn into XP, and any XP your Backgrounds give you), but it is his prerogative to raise or lower this number as he sees fit. You can use XP to improve your Hero's abilities in the following ways:

1. Buy a New Skill

Buying a new Skill costs 10 XP. This is more expensive than at Hero creation, and represents finding a new tutor to teach you the unfamiliar skill. When you buy a new Skill, the first Ranks in the Basic Knacks are free just as at Hero creation, with one important difference. If you already possess a Knack that you are getting a free Rank in, you cannot add the Rank to your existing Knack as you could when making your Hero. Thus, if you have a Footwork of 2, and you buy the Pugilism Skill, your Footwork does not go up.

2. Buy a New Background

You may buy a new Background for 3, 6, or 9 XP, which gets you a 1–, 2–, or 3–point Background. You may only have a number of Backgrounds equal to your Rank in Panache. Thus, if you already have two Backgrounds, and you have a 3 Panache, you may purchase only one more Background.

3. Raise a Knack

In order to increase a Knack, you must spend a number of Experience Points equal to twice the Rank you want to increase the Knack to. For example, if you want to increase a Knack from Rank 2 to Rank 3, you must spend 6 Experience Points. You may raise a Knack by only one Rank per Story. After Hero creation, Advanced Knacks cost the same to increase as Basic Knacks, so it is more cost-effective to start with low Advanced Knacks and work them up through gameplay. You can only raise your Knacks to a maximum Rank of 5 in most circumstances.

4. Raise a Trait

In order to increase a Trait, you must spend a number of Experience Points equal to *five times* the Rank you want to increase the Trait to. For example, if you want to increase a

Knack Advancement

Current Rank	Cost of Advancement
0	2
1	4
2	6
3	8
4	10
5	–

Trait Advancement

Current Rank	Cost of Advancement
0	5
1	10
2	15
3	20
4	25
5	30
6 (Special Ability)	35
7 (Special Ability)	–

Trait from Rank 3 to Rank 4, you must spend 20 Experience Points. You may raise a Knack by only one Rank per Story. Unless you have a special Advantage or ability, you can only raise your Traits to a maximum Rank of 5.

5. Join a Swordsman School

With your GM's permission, you may join a new Swordsman School. You must already possess both Skills in its Basic Curriculum and find a Master of the style who's willing to teach you. You must then pay an additional 50 XP. Your GM may also demand other payments, such as time and money spent training.

You may never use XP to do any of the following things:

1. Buy Arcana

Virtues are rare, even among Heroes, and if you missed the boat when making your Hero, then you're out of luck. Moreover, if you bought a Hubris, then you're stuck with it for life. We warned you that it was a fatal flaw, didn't we?

2. Buy an Advantage

Like Arcana, Advantages don't just magically appear when you have the points for them. On the other hand, your GM may want you to marry into a noble family, or something that similarly supplies you with an Advantage that you didn't have at Hero creation. In this instance, your GM will simply give you the new Advantage for free.

3. Raise your Drama

Drama is always equal to your lowest Trait. The only way to raise your Drama is to raise your Traits. Drama is what makes you a Hero, after all, so it's not cheap to come by.

The Repartee System

An essential element of the swashbuckling genre is banter. Witty remarks can cut as deeply as a blade and drive an enemy into a frustrated frenzy that gives the Hero the upper hand he needs to overcome the odds. Unfortunately, not all of us are as cunning as the heroes we'd like to portray, so here's a system to help you simulate banter with very real game effects.

Charm, Intimidate and Taunt

There are three basic interpersonal Actions that any PC or NPC may attempt – Charm, Intimidate, and Taunt. The base Trait used and effects of the attempt are determined by the Action (see their descriptions, below). How they are attempted in the game is left up to the players, who must decide on a reasonable course of Action to justify the attempt before the GM allows it.

The default TN for all interpersonal Action attempts is the target Trait x5. The target Trait is always the one being used to perform the action (*i.e.*, Resolve vs. Resolve, Wits vs. Wits, Panache vs. Panache).

Charm
Trait Used: Wits
TN: Target's Wits x5

Charm Actions attempt to convince a character of something by reducing his or her Resolve, representing the gradual effect the player Hero's words and actions are having on his target. The Hero makes a series of Contested Wits checks against the target. Once the Hero has made as many successful Charm rolls as the target's Resolve, the target is convinced of the Hero's point. (Raises count as extra successful rolls.) If the Hero ever fails with a Charm roll, then the process ends automatically, any accumulated successes are lost, and no further attempts with that target and point of argument can be attempted.

Charm is used to improve the attitudes of others, as well as convince them of a particular point or course of action.

Witty Repartee Table

Action	Trait Used	Effect
Charm	Wits	When successes = target's Resolve, target is convinced
Intimidate	Resolve	Target has a penalty of one unkept die + one additional die when acting directly against the Hero for the remainder of the scene
Taunt	Panache	Target must Raise as many times as PC did when acting against him.

When calling for a Charm attempt, the player must inform the GM of his intent and/or ideal result. As Charm is a prolonged Action (commonly taking several player Actions to complete), it is important to know what he is ultimately trying to accomplish at the beginning.

Limitations of Charm
It is *impossible* to convince anyone of anything that he or she is inherently opposed to (morally, ethically, or otherwise). Secondly, all Charm effects are temporary – the long-term attitudes of others *cannot* be permanently adjusted with this Action.

Intimidate
Trait Used: Resolve
TN: Target's Resolve x5

Intimidate Actions attempt to cow the target by sheer force of will. The Hero makes a Contested Resolve check against the target. Success indicates the target loses one die – plus one additional die per Raise – from every action when acting directly against the Hero.

Intimidate is far less complicated (and commonly much more direct) than Charm. In essence, your Hero is attempting to cow another by force of personality alone (though displays of wanton violence and unpredictable, hostile behavior help the process along).

Note that this effect can eliminate all the target's dice *before* he even counts them. This result indicates that the target is automatically unsuccessful with the action.

Taunt
Trait Used: Panache
TN: Target's Panache x5

Taunt Actions can cause the target to fail where he would otherwise succeed. When using this option, the number of Raises made by the Hero is important; with success, the target must also Raise by the same amount for his next Action directed at the Hero. Of course, if he overcomes this handicap, the Hero will be sorry for his words...

A combination of making fun at the target's expense and general derision, Taunt is the dark side of interpersonal communication. All that is required is a sharp tongue, a sadistic streak, and the knowledge that it's all in good fun.

The effects of all interpersonal Actions are temporary – after contact (*i.e.,* physical proximity) is broken between the Hero and his target, all effects vanish, and a new process must begin before any new modifiers can be applied.

Affecting More Than One Person

When a Hero wants to affect more than one target with this system, he must consider the level of the opponent he is facing. The following rules apply:

Villains: Heroes may affect only a single Villain at a time with any Repartee effect.

Henchmen: Heroes may affect more than one Henchman with Repartee. Each additional Henchman is a Raise.

Brutes: One unmodified roll is all that is required to affect a single Brute Squad. Additional Squads require one Raise apiece.

Ship Maximums

Total Points	Max in Trait	Max in Mods	Max in Flaws
10	3	2	2
15	4	3	3
20	5	4	4
25	6	5	5
30	7	6	6
35	8	7	7
40	9	8	8
45	10	9	9
50+	10	10	10

Ship Design

Some parties may wish to run a ship of their own as part of an ongoing campaign, or GMs may wish to construct ships as allies or adversaries to the Heroes. Sailing and ship-to-ship combat rules are detailed in the *Game Masters' Guide,* pages 180–182.

There are three steps to designing a ship in *7th Sea.*

1. Assign Traits

Ships have the same five Traits as Heroes (Brawn, Finesse, Resolve, Wits, and Panache) and can go up to an absolute maximum of 10 in each. This, as well as the points allowed in modifications and flaws, is further limited by the total number of points spent on the ship (see the chart below).

Ships may exceed their maximum in flaws or modifications if they take one, and only one. Thus, even a small ship can have Haunted as a flaw or Retractable Keel as a modification. In addition, a ship cannot have obviously opposing modifications and flaws, such as Good and Bad Captain, or Friendly Spirit and Haunted.

Heroes can only begin with a 10, 15, or 20 point ship. Beyond that, they'll have to either save up and buy a ship later in the campaign or capture one from someone else.

2. Add Modifications and Flaws

Once the Traits are assigned, modifications and flaws can be added. Each Modification costs a number of points equal to its Difficulty Rating, while each flaw reduces the point cost of the ship. Note that flaws and modifications cannot change the maximum Rank allowed in each Trait. That is set by the number of points spent in step 1.

3. Calculate Other Values

Draft and Cargo are both equal to a ship's Resolve, unless the ship has a modification or flaw that alters them. The Crew of a ship is equal to its Finesse unless modified by a flaw or modification, and a ship's Reputation always starts at 0, regardless of the Captain's Reputation.

Example: Bill wants his character to start with a ship. He settles on a 15 point ship; he can also take up to 3 points in flaws, for a total of 18 points. He may only take up to 3 points of modifications, and the ship's Traits can't be any higher than a 4 normally. (Even if he could have spent 5 points on flaws, the Traits would still have been limited to a 4.) He decides to make an agile ship with fewer cannons, so he assigns the Traits like this: Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Resolve 3, Wits 4, Panache 3. That costs him 15 points. If he wants any modifications, he'll have to pay for them with flaws, so he picks the Vermin flaw, for 3 points. Then, he chooses Wide Rudder for 2 points, to increase the ship's Wits to 5, and Hidden Towline for 1 point. Lastly, he looks at his Resolve for his ship's Draft and Cargo (3 each, as there are no modifiers), and Finesse for his Crew (3 also). The ship's Reputation starts at 0.

Ship Maintenance

It costs 250G and takes one week to repair one Dramatic Wound on a ship. Once a year a ship needs 100G in

maintenance costs. Failure to pay this results in the ship's Traits all dropping by 1 until maintenance is performed.

Ship Modification

Besides Traits, there are a number of other things that give life to a ship and make it memorable in the eyes of the crew. Some ships are built too heavily and sit low in the water, while others seem to have Legion's own luck in a fight. Some ships have more than their share of vermin, and a few were built with such skill that they exceed the normal limits their design imposes upon them.

Each ship modification has a difficulty rating assigned to it. A Shipwright must have a Shipwright Knack at least as high as a modification's difficulty in order to install it. Modifications cost 750G and take two weeks to install per point of difficulty if added to an existing ship. A ship can never have more modifications installed than it is allowed according to the chart in Step 1 of *Ship Design*, on the previous page. Ship flaws may be bought off after creation at a cost of 1,500G and two weeks for each point the flaw was worth.

Ship Building after Creation

In order to purchase a ship after Hero creation, go through all the ordinary steps of design, and then tally up the total number of points that would have been invested in the ship. It will cost 600G and take one week per point to build the ship.

The shipwright must then make a Wits + Shipwright test against a TN of 5 x the highest Trait or difficulty rating of a modification on the ship. Thus, a ship whose highest Trait is a Brawn of 5 calls for a TN of 25, while that same ship with a retractable keel would have a TN of 30.

If this roll fails, then the ship takes an additional two weeks to build. If the roll fails by 10 or more, then the ship acquires 1 additional point of flaws for every 10 by which the roll fell short. These additional flaws do not give the ship more points to build with. In any event, the Shipwright must roll again until he succeeds.

Modification List

Note: Modifications that cannot be added to a ship after its creation are marked with an asterisk after their name. Modifications and flaws may only be taken once per ship unless otherwise noted.

Difficulty 1

Hidden Towline

This modification fixes a hidden rope to the underside of the ship. *Smugglers use this to haul contraband materials beneath the water, where it is unlikely to be found. On the downside, this increases the ship's Draft by 1.*

Oars

The ship has one or more banks of oars. *This modification allows a ship to move even when becalmed or sailing directly into the wind. However, when oars are used, the ship's Wits is considered 2 less, to a minimum of 1.*

*Prow Ram**

This ship is equipped with a ram and a reinforced keel to absorb the impact of a collision. *When this ship rams another ship (see Advanced Naval Battles,* Pirate Nations, *page 106, for ramming rules), the target ship suffers one additional Critical Hit, and this ship suffers one fewer.*

Reinforced Masts

The masts of the ship are specially hardened against chainshot. *This modification allows the ship to roll two extra unkept dice for Wound Checks when fired upon with chainshot.*

Difficulty 2

Concealed Gunports

The gunports of this ship are designed to be nearly invisible when closed. *This ship's Brawn can be kept a secret until used. Brawn dice must be revealed before being used (this can be done at any time using no Actions), and cannot be concealed again after being revealed until the next Scene.*

Overgunned

The ship is loaded down with cannons. *This modification increases the ship's Brawn by 1. This may exceed the normal maximum for the ship's point cost.*

Silk Sails
The ship is equipped with rare silk sails from Cathay. *This modification increases the ship's Panache by 1. This may exceed the normal maximum for the ship's point cost.*

*Sturdy Hull**
The ship's hull is reinforced with extra planks. *This modification increases the ship's Resolve by 1. This may exceed the normal maximum for the ship's point cost.*

Well Trained Crew
The ship's crew are particularly skilled. *This modification increases the ship's Finesse by 1. This may exceed the normal maximum for the ship's point cost.*

Wide Rudder
The ship has a wide rudder, enabling her to make quicker turns. *This modification increases the ship's Wits by 1. This may exceed the normal maximum for the ship's point cost.*

Difficulty 3
Decoration
Due to her distinctive decorations, the ship is very memorable. *The ship's positive Reputation awards are all increased by 1.*

*Extended Keel**
The ship's keel is particularly long, granting increased stability at the cost of a deeper draft. *This ship rolls two extra unkept dice when checking for capsizing, but her draft is increased by 1.*

*Lucky**
The ship has always been particularly lucky, both in and out of combat. *This modification gives the ship one extra Drama die.*

Smuggling Compartments
Some of the supposedly solid areas of the ship are in fact hollow, and used to smuggle contraband. *Up to 1 Cargo can be hidden in these secret compartments, safe from all but the most thorough search.*

Difficulty 4
*Extra Cargo Space**
The cargo hold of the ship is well designed and can hold more goods. *This ship's Cargo is increased by 1.*

*Extra Crew Quarters**
Extra quarters have been provided for the crew, so the ship is manned by more men than other ships her size. *This ship's Crew is increased by 1.*

Good Captain
The Captain of the ship is a particularly able man. *Once per Round, the Captain may add one unkept die to any roll the ship makes. This modification can only be taken if the Captain (whether he is a Hero or an NPC) has a Leadership Knack of at least 4.*

*Narrow Hull**
The ship is built to be narrow, and slip through tight squeezes. *Piloting checks that involve sailing through a narrow opening receive one Free Raise.*

Difficulty 5
Boarding Party
This ship has a well-trained boarding party aboard. *When rolling on the Boarding chart in the Advanced Naval Battles section, this ship moves up one result on the chart.*

Extra Boarding Guns
The ship has a number of small cannons used to repel boarding parties. *When rolling on the Boarding chart in the Advanced Naval Battles section, ships attempting to board this ship move down one result on the chart.*

Friendly Spirit
The ship is inhabited by some sort of friendly entity that occasionally helps out. *Once per Scene, the ship rolls two extra Kept dice on any one check.*

*Slight Draft**
The hull of the ship is designed in such a way that she can sail in shallower water than other ships of its size. *This ship's Draft is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1.*



Swivel Cannon
A number of small cannons have been placed on swiveling mounts. *Once per Round, this ship can fire outside her normal firing arc with a Brawn of 2.*

Difficulty 6
*Retractable Keel**
This ship can retract its keel, reducing her draft, but making her less stable. *While her keel is retracted, the ship reduces her Draft by 2, but rolls one less unkept die when checking for capsizing. It takes one Action to retract or extend the keel.*

Ship Flaws

Note: Flaws that cannot be removed from a ship after her creation are marked with an asterisk. Modifications and flaws may only be taken once per ship unless otherwise noted.

1 point flaws
Flimsy Masts
The ship's masts are built of inferior wood. *This ship rolls one less unkept die for Wound Checks when fired upon with chainshot.*

*Old**
Some of the ship's planks are rotten, but overall, she's in good shape; she just needs a little more love than a newer ship. *This ship requires maintenance every six months instead of every year.*

Sluggish
The ship tends to sail more slowly than other ships of her size. *This ship travels one less hex when she moves forward.*

2 point flaws
Brittle Hull
The ship's hull was not properly cured, and splinters easily when struck by cannon fire. *When rolling Wound Checks, none of this ship's dice may explode.*

Leaky Hull
The ship's hull is poorly built, and takes on water even when carefully tarred. *When making Resolve-related checks, none of this ship's dice may explode.*

Poorly Trained Crew
The ship has a particularly poorly trained crew. *When making Brawn-related checks, none of this ship's dice may explode.*

Small Keel
The ship's keel is too slight for its size, giving the ship a slight tendency to roll over. *This ship rolls one fewer unkept die when checking for capsizing.*

Small Rudder
The rudder is not big enough to turn a ship of this size, so she turns slowly. *When making Wits-related checks, none of this ship's dice may explode.*

Tattered Sails
The ship's sails are in poor repair. *When making Panache-related checks, none of this ship's dice may explode.*

Undergunned
The ship has fewer cannons than most other ships her size. *When making Brawn-related checks (but not Wound Checks), none of this ship's dice may explode.*

3 point flaws

Gaudy

The ship is offensive to the eyes. Either she looks shabby, or has clashing decorations that make her look silly. *Due to her distinctive decorations, the ship is very memorable, but in a bad way. Therefore, her negative Reputation awards are all increased by 1.*

Incompetent Bosun

The Bosun is in charge of the deck, and if he does his job poorly, the ship suffers as a whole. The bosun of this ship is utterly incompetent at his job. *The ship's travel speed (see the Advanced Sailing section) is reduced by 25%.*

*Unlucky**

Something about the ship seems to have given her a run of bad luck. Perhaps her keel was laid on an unlucky day, or perhaps she sailed into a cursed area once. *The ship receives one fewer Drama die.*

Vermin

The ship is infested with rats, weevils, and other vermin that constantly get into the provisions. *Ship's provisions only last three weeks for every month's worth of supplies purchased.*

4 point flaws

Awkward Cargo Space

The cargo hold of the ship was poorly designed, so that this ship can't carry as much cargo as other ships of her size. *This ship's Cargo is reduced by 1.*

Bad Captain

The Captain of this ship is particularly incapable of doing his job. *The Captain subtracts one unkept die from the first roll the ship makes each Round.*

Cramped

The crew quarters of the ship are poorly designed. This means she has to make do with fewer crewmen than other ships of her size. *This ship's Crew is reduced by 1.*

Disgruntled Crew

The men on the ship are easily upset by any little thing going wrong. Theus help the Captain if the rum ration runs out. *The GM may spend one Drama die to have one Crew turn surly and refuse to do anything for the rest of the Scene. If they're in combat, they surrender immediately.*

5 point flaws

Deep Draft

The ship has a deeper draft than most of her size, and can't sail in shallow waters. *The ship's Draft is increased by 1.*

*Haunted**

The ship seems to be inhabited by a malevolent entity. Occasionally, strange things happen aboard her. Other times, it's as if she has a mind of her own. *The GM may spend two Drama dice to control the ship's actions for one Round. He may do this once per Scene. In addition, strange things have a tendency to happen on the ship.*

Warped Rudder

The ship's rudder is bent, either to port or to starboard. Left to her own devices, the ship will sail around in circles. *At the end of each Round, this ship turns 60 degrees to port (or starboard) without spending any Actions. The direction is chosen during ship creation.*

Sample Ships

10 point ships

Pirate Sloop

Brawn 4, Finesse 2, Resolve 2, Wits 2, Panache 2
Modifications: Overgunned (2)
Flaws: Vermin (3)
Draft: 2
Crew: 2
Cargo: 2
Reputation: 0

Explorer's Brigantine

Brawn 1, Finesse 1, Resolve 2, Wits 3, Panache 3
Modifications: Extra Cargo (4)

Flaws: Disgruntled Crew (4)
Draft: 2
Crew: 1
Cargo: 3
Reputation: 0

Naval Frigate
Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Resolve 2, Wits 2, Panache 2
Modifications: Prow Ram (1)
Flaws: Small Keel (2)
Draft: 2
Crew: 3
Cargo: 2
Reputation: 0

Merchant Snow
Brawn 1, Finesse 2, Resolve 2, Wits 4, Panache 2
Modifications: Wide Rudder (2)
Flaws: Undergunned (2)
Draft: 2
Crew: 2
Cargo: 2
Reputation: 0

15 point ships
Merchant Pinnace
Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Resolve 4, Wits 4, Panache 4
Modifications: Lucky (3)
Flaws: Deep Draft (5)
Draft: 5
Crew: 3
Cargo: 4
Reputation: 0

Pirate Schooner
Brawn 5, Finesse 4, Resolve 3, Wits 3, Panache 3
Modifications: Overgunned (2)
Flaws: Disgruntled Crew (4)
Draft: 3
Crew: 4
Cargo: 3
Reputation: 0

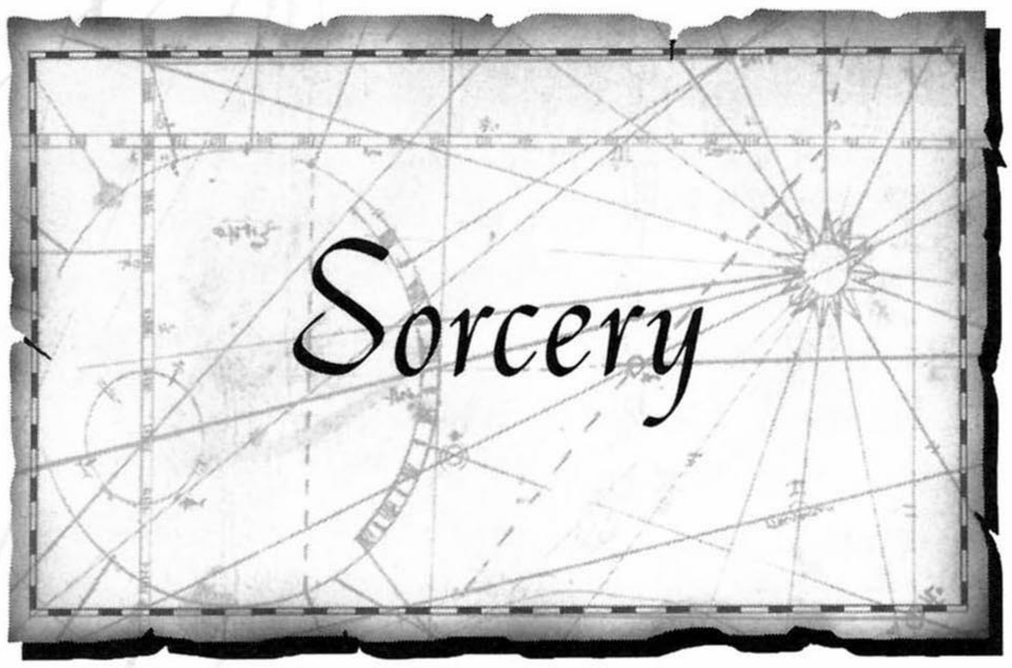
Smuggler's Fleut
Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Resolve 4, Wits 4, Panache 4
Modifications: Smuggling Compartments (3)
Flaws: Haunted (5)
Draft: 4
Crew: 3
Cargo: 4 (1 of which is hidden)
Reputation: 0

Naval Bark
Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Resolve 3, Wits 3, Panache 3
Modifications: Boarding Party (5)
Flaws: Awkward Cargo Space (4)
Draft: 3
Crew: 3
Cargo: 2
Reputation: 0

20 point ships
Naval Galleon
Brawn 4, Finesse 4, Resolve 6, Wits 4, Panache 4
Modifications: Sturdy Hull (2)
Flaws: Unlucky (3)
Draft: 6
Crew: 4
Cargo: 6
Reputation: 0

Naval Man o' War
Brawn 5, Finesse 3, Resolve 3, Wits 4, Panache 4
Modifications: Slight Draft (5)
Flaws: Awkward Cargo Space (4)
Draft: 2
Crew: 3
Cargo: 2
Reputation: 0

Pirate Barkentine
Brawn 4, Finesse 4, Resolve 4, Wits 4, Panache 4
Modifications: Good Captain (4)
Flaws: Disgruntled Crew (4)
Draft: 4
Crew: 4
Cargo: 4
Reputation: 0



There are two degrees of Sorcery: Full Blood (40 Hero Points) and Half Blood (20 HP). If you are Full-Blooded, you must choose only one Sorcerous Heritage. You may purchase Half-Blooded in two different Heritages (for a total of 40 HP); these Heroes, known as Twice-Blooded, are people whose parents were Full Bloods from different nations.

Sorcery gives you access to tremendous powers. What manner of magic this is depends on your blood.

The Heritages

Each Heritage has a number of Knacks. Full-Blooded Heroes begin with 7 Sorcery Points to spend on purchasing Sorcerous Knacks. Half-Blooded Heroes begin with only 3 Sorcery Points. Twice-Blooded Heroes start with 3 Sorcery Points in each Heritage, which may not be transferred back and forth between their sorceries. Like other Knacks, Sorcery Knacks cannot be increased above 3 during Hero creation. You cannot purchase additional Sorcery Points during Hero creation, but Sorcery Knacks can be bought up during gameplay through Experience Points (see page 191). While a Full-Blooded Hero may reach Rank 5 in his Sorcerous Knacks, Half-Blooded and Twice-Blooded Heroes may only reach Rank 3 in any Sorcerous Knack.

You may not purchase a Sorcerous Heritage from a nation other than your native country except in the case of Twice-Blooded Heroes, who may have one Heritage from another country.

Each Path has three degrees of mastery – Apprentice, Adept, and Master. When a Hero gains Rank 4 in four Sorcerous Knacks, he moves to the Adept Degree. When he gains Rank 5 in five Knacks, he moves to the Master Degree. Of course, Gamemasters may wish to roleplay initiation into the higher degrees, making the events part of their ongoing campaign.

Note that a Hero who is Full-Blooded had parents who were also Full-Blooded and from the same nation. Half-Blooded sorcerers are those who had only one parent capable of using sorcery, or who had two Half-Blooded parents of the same nationality.

The benefits, costs, and limitations of each level of Sorcerous Blood follow:

Full-Blooded
Choose one national heritage
Knack cost: 1 Sorcery Point per Rank
Unlimited advancement through experience

Half-Blooded
Choose one national heritage
Knack cost: 1 Sorcery Point per Rank
Cannot advance any Rank past 3

Twice-Blooded
Choose two national heritages
Knack cost: 1 Sorcery Point per Rank
Cannot advance any Rank past 3

Glamour (Avalon)

Knacks: Legends (The Green Man, The Horned Hunter, Jack, Robin Goodfellow, Thomas)

Apprentice Degree: Renown

Adept Degree: Good Fortune

Master Degree: Power

In the land of Avalon, the legends of the people come to life. Avalon sorcerers harness the energy of the people's belief and channel it in order to perform miraculous feats of strength, guile, or skill. This ability is known as Glamour. It was taught to the Avalons by the Sidhe, who gave them a magical artifact known as the Graal. If the Graal were to be lost, the sorcerers would lose their power until it was returned.

Apprentice Degree: The Blessing of Renown

At this level of mastery, you get two benefits. First, all your Reputation Dice are considered Glamour Dice. Second, you can use the Apprentice ability of any Legend Knacks you know by spending one Drama Die.

Glamour Dice

Glamour Dice are treated as Drama Dice in all but two ways. First, they cannot be spent to activate (or prevent the activation of) Arcana. Secondly, they do not turn into Experience Points at the end of the Story. Glamour Dice may be used to power Glamour Knacks, just like ordinary Drama Dice.

Adept Degree: The Blessing of Good Fortune

As you start a game session, the GM's number of starting Drama Dice is reduced by your lowest Trait to a minimum equal to the number of players in the game. Thus, if your lowest Trait is a 2 and there are five players, then the GM receives two fewer Drama Dice, to a minimum of five, at the start of each Story. Also, you can use the Adept ability of any Legend Knacks you know by spending one Drama Die.

Master Degree: The Blessing of Power

Your Drama is based on your *highest* Trait now, instead of your lowest. In addition, you can use the Master ability of any Legend Knacks you know by spending one Drama Die.

Here are several Legend Knacks that sorcerers can emulate with their Glamour. By emulating a given figure, the sorcerer taps into the people's beliefs about that figure and can demonstrate some of the same powers. You will notice that each Legend Knack is based on a specific Trait (listed in parentheses after its name). You cannot choose more than one Legend based on each Trait. Other Legends appear in the *Avalon* sourcebook.

The Horned Hunter (Brawn)

The legends surrounding the Horned Hunter describe him as a warrior of enormous strength and stamina. He could leap great distances, hurl huge boulders, and survive terrible blows that could carve a lesser man in two.

Apprentice: Spend a Drama Die to add your Rank in this Knack to your Brawn for one roll. This cannot be used during Contested Rolls, Wound Checks, or Damage Rolls.

Adept: Spend a Drama Die to add your Rank in this Knack to your Brawn for one Wound Check.

Master: Spend a Drama Die to add your Rank in this Knack to your Brawn for one Damage Roll or one Contested Roll (such as a use of the Disarm Knack).

Robin Goodfellow (Finesse)

Legends tell of the amazing feats Robin Goodfellow performed with a bow, hitting targets incredibly far away, putting an arrow through a man's eye, and even splitting an arrow in two with an arrow he fired.

Apprentice: Spend a Drama Die to lower the effective Range of your next attack with a bow by 5 feet for every Rank you have in this Knack.

Adept: Spend a Drama Die to add one extra unkept die of damage to your next attack with a bow for every Rank you have in this Knack.

Master: Spend a Drama Die to lower the TN of the next attack you make with a bow by 5 for every Rank you have in this Knack.

Jack (Wits)

Jack's legends tell of his trickery and guile. The victims of his trickery (usually giants) seldom realized what he had done until it was too late. Even more impressive, Jack was nearly invincible in his own home.

Apprentice: You may spend a Drama Die to transform a small object (less than one cubic foot in size) into one of the following items until the next dawn (or until you will the enchantment to end), when it reverts to its former self. If a transformed object is broken into pieces, all of the pieces disappear at dawn except for one (randomly chosen), which reverts to its original unharmed form.

A knife
A fist-sized hunk of cheese
If the cheese is eaten, the original object is destroyed.
A bird
If the bird is killed, the original object is destroyed.
A rock
You may affect up to 5 small objects at once.
A pair of dice
A normal-sized playing or Sorte card
You may affect up to five small objects at once.
Guilder
You may affect a number of small objects up to five times your Rank in this Knack.
A 20-foot ball of twine
A button

Adept: You learn one of the following five forms for every Rank you have in this Knack. You may spend one Drama Die to transform yourself into one of the forms you know until the next dawn. You may spend two Drama Dice to transform another willing person (or a horse, willing or not) into one of the forms you know until the next dawn.

The Child: The affected person temporarily becomes younger. If he is middle-aged or elderly, he becomes spry (see the Aging rules in the *GMs' Guide*). If he is younger than that, there is no effect. If the GM is enforcing Aging penalties, then this form negates them; otherwise there is no mechanical effect. An old horse affected by this form would temporarily regain its youth.

The Hag: The affected person appears older and much uglier. This results in a penalty of –1 unkept die to all social rolls, but the person is physically unrecognizable as himself. None of his other Traits or Skills are affected. A horse affected by this form would become a much less attractive animal.

The Noble: The affected person becomes more handsome or beautiful. This results in a bonus of +1 unkept die to all social rolls. A horse affected by this form would become a much more attractive animal.

The Ogre: The affected person is transformed in subtle ways to be more intimidating. Whether it's a sharper point to his teeth, or a slight red gleam to his eyes, he has an unnerving effect on those who see them. This results in a penalty of –1 unkept die to all social rolls except those involving Intimidation or Interrogation, which receive a bonus of +2 unkept dice. A horse affected by this form would be more frightening, possibly with fire coming from its nostrils or a red glow to its eyes.

The Peasant: The affected person assumes a much blander, more ordinary appearance. This results in a bonus of +2 unkept dice to all Disguise, Unobtrusive, and Shadowing Checks. A horse affected by this form would lose any distinctive characteristics, such as a white star on its forehead.

Master: You may enchant one building (no bigger than 4,000 square feet in size) with Glamour. It takes one month of preparation, and one tear from a Sidhe in order to do so. Once the enchantment is complete, you may select three of the Laws listed below as part of the enchantment. They work without fail inside the house unless some other sorcery (such as the Thomas Knack) disrupts them temporarily. You may have only one house enchanted at a time, but you can end the enchantment on one house and recast it on another (again needing a tear from a Sidhe).

1) I can't die in my house.
2) Nobody's magic but mine works in my house.
3) I always know where everything (and everyone) is in my house.
4) No one can enter my house without permission.
5) Nobody ages in my house.
6) The pantry in my house always has food and drink in it.
7) I can instantly rearrange the inside of my house with a thought.

8) My house cannot be harmed in any way.
9) The inside of my house is twenty times bigger than the outside.
10) No one can find the way to my house unless I let her.

The Green Man (Resolve)

Legends of the Green Man tell of the day he challenged a knight to strike off his head with an axe, then calmly picked it up and placed it back on his shoulders. The knight, unfortunately, did not survive his answering blow.

Apprentice: Spend a Drama Die, then roll one non-exploding die for every Rank you have in this Knack and Keep the highest one. Give that die to another Hero, who gains a bonus to all his rolls equal to the number showing on the die until the end of the Scene. Thus, if you roll a 6, he adds 6 to all his rolls until the end of the Scene. The following restrictions apply to these dice:

1) No one may have more than one of these dice at once.
2) You may not use this ability on yourself.
3) You may not affect more people at once than you have Ranks in this Knack.
4) You may not use this ability on a character who does not wish to be affected.

When the effect wears off at the end of the Scene, the Hero you gave the die to suffers one Dramatic Wound for every 5 points you rolled on the die, rounded up (in the above example, he would suffer two Dramatic Wounds at the end of the Scene.)

Adept: Spend a Drama Die and choose one character (you may choose yourself). The next Dramatic Wound that character suffers heals itself at the end of the Round in which it was received. This may bring a character back from being Knocked Out, but not from being dead.

Master: When you use your Adept ability on another character, the person being affected may pay the Drama Die to activate the ability instead of you.

Thomas (Panache)

In the legend of Thomas, he travels to the Sidhe court and there learns to sense and resist sorcery. When he returns to Théah, he gains great fame combating evil sorcerers.

Apprentice: Whenever someone (or something) that possesses sorcery comes with thirty feet of you, your left thumb begins to tingle. It continues to tingle until he or she moves out of range. When someone uses sorcery directly on you, you immediately detect what's being done, and if you spend a Drama Die you may resist that magic. This ability doesn't affect such things as being struck by a shape-changed Ussuran, since the magic involved is affecting the Ussuran, not you. The Rank of the Knack affecting you must be less than or equal to your Rank in this Knack.

Adept: When someone uses sorcery within thirty feet of you, you immediately detect what's being done. You may spend a Drama Die to cancel any one Sorcerous Knack that is being used, or is active, within thirty feet of you. This might cancel a Fate Witch's Blessing, turn an Ussuran back to his human form, or prevent a Porté mage from teleporting away. The Rank of the Knack being canceled must be less than or equal to your Rank in this Knack.

Master: Spend a Drama Die. Magic may not be used within ten feet of you for a number of Rounds equal to your Rank in this Knack. Any active magical effects that enter this area are immediately canceled.

Lærdom (Vendel)

Knacks: Kjøt, Bevegelse, Varsel, Ensomhet, Styrke, Uvitenhet, Stans, Storsæd, Kyndighet, Sterk, Velstand, Fjell, Høst, Grenseløs, Krieger, Nød, Sinne, Tungsinn, Herje, Reise, Fornuft, Lidenskap, Kjølig, Villskap

Apprentice Degree: Invoking

Adept Degree: Inscribing

Master Degree: Becoming

The Basics

Lærdom (*lair-dom*) is the study of words believed to be the "true names" of metaphysical concepts important to the Vestenmannavnjar. According to the Skjæren (*skyair-en*, Rune Carvers), these twenty-four words were spoken by their tribal ancestors, who became their pantheon of gods. Each represents a physical or emotional characteristic which is embodied by the god who first carved it. Today, PC Skjæren are able to tap into the primal forces of the world through use of the Lærds (*lairs*, Runes).

Runes are inscribed, forged or written onto specific items, granting them the power of their god. It is not enough to speak the word; it must be brought into the world and invoked in a ritual that only a Skjæren can accomplish.

The power invoked by the lærd depends on the level of mastery the Skjæren has achieved. Apprentices only understand the physical nature of the rune, the power lingering on the surface. Adepts have become familiar with deeper secrets and are able to inscribe them onto items.

Masters have discovered the final secret – the Great Wisdom – and are able to summon the lærd's power into themselves. But they have another advantage, as well. They are able to perceive the Living Myth – Valhalla – all around them as a shadowy, indistinct place. They can faintly hear the singing of their ancestors chanting the Song of the World as they ride into battle. Most of the time this has no effect on gameplay, but Master Skjæren may occasionally receive helpful advice from their ancestors or perceive important omens invisible to their friends (at the GM's discretion).

Apprentice Degree: Discoverer of Secrets

At this degree of skill, you are able to invoke only a small amount of power from the runes, and that power is temporary. When you tap into the power, it's like touching a live wire – the natural instinct is to pull away. You invoke the words spoken by Creation, after all, and such power could burn you if you aren't careful with it. Most apprentices use paper and ink to invoke the words, although they could also be written in the sand, on wood or glass, or on any other surface.

Adept Degree: Ward of Secrets

At the second degree of initiation, you have learned to hold the power of the lærds a little longer – time enough to mark an object with it, carving it into the item's surface. Runes have been found on swords, armor, doors, archways, and even goblets. Runes inscribed on objects are not permanent and must be maintained. Each one you've inscribed must be renewed once per year, or they lose their power. Conventional wisdom within Vendel holds that lærds renewed on the specific day they were inscribed gain additional effect, even allowing the Skjæren to make contact temporarily with their gods.

Master Degree: The Heart of Secrets

At the final level of mastery, the Skjæren has learned to touch the deepest heart of lærdom – he *becomes* the runes he summons. Lærds are branded into the Skjæren's flesh and become a part of him forever.

Mechanics

Most of the runes either add dice to specific Actions, or control the weather. These effects are explained below. In the descriptions, each rune is listed with three Target Numbers, used when invoking, inscribing, or becoming that rune (respectively).

Adding Dice

Invoking

When invoking a rune that adds dice, you use one Action and roll Resolve + Rune Knack versus that rune's Invoke TN. If successful, you receive the benefit from the rune for one Round + one Round for each Raise.

Inscribing

When you inscribe a rune that adds dice, you use five Actions (this shouldn't be possible in combat under most circumstances). Then you roll Resolve + Rune Knack versus that rune's Inscribe TN, and give the object that is being inscribed a name (which the item will thereafter always be called). Keep track of the number of Raises made at this point. If successful, the rune is inscribed for one year – to the day. On that day (or before if you desire), you may

perform the ritual of inscription again, renewing the rune upon the item.

Once an item is given a name, it may never take another. Anyone (even someone without Lærdom) who holds the inscribed object and speaks its name is affected by the rune inscribed on it for one Round + one Round for each Raise made at the time of inscription. No roll is made when using an inscribed rune, only when actually inscribing it.

Becoming
When you become a rune that adds dice, you brand or carve it permanently on your own body. This takes ten Actions (and is never possible during combat) and requires a red-hot iron brand. You roll Resolve + Rune Knack versus that rune's Become TN. If successful, the rune permanently becomes a part of your body, giving you its benefits as long as you live. The Damage Rating you take is 2k2.

The rune cannot be destroyed short of killing you, and it does not count towards the normal limit of runes affecting you at once (see *Limitations*, below), nor does it have to be maintained like an inscribed rune. If the Becoming ceremony fails, you take damage as normal, but it may be attempted again after a week, as the failed rune fades from your skin by then.

Weather
Weather runes have powerful effects. Typhoons, droughts, and blizzards can all be summoned using these runes in conjunction. The area affected is one square mile for Apprentices, three square miles for Adepts, and ten square miles for Masters. The duration is one hour for Apprentices, one day for Adepts, and one week for Masters (assuming another sorcerer doesn't tamper with the weather). You may choose to cancel any weather effects you've caused at any time.

Note that the GM has full control over the practical effects of weather. It is possible for people to be killed in monsoons or earthquakes, but the Skjæren who caused them through the use of runes cannot control this effect. With a successful Skill check and no called Raises, they can only turn the basic weather effect (as seen in the rune descriptions) on and off.

Raises can be called to increase or decrease the effects with some modicum of control, however. The Skjæren asks for a specific change to the basic effect as written, and the GM assigns a number of required Raises, as with all other Actions in *7th Sea*. Ordinarily, the GM will simply use the Weather rules found in his Guide.

Invoking
When invoking a Weather rune, you use one Action and roll Resolve + Rune Knack versus that rune's Invoke TN. If successful, the weather adjusts according to the specifics of the rune (as shown in the descriptions, below). You can only invoke Weather runes outdoors.

Inscribing
When inscribing a Weather rune, you use five Actions and roll Resolve + Rune Knack versus that rune's Inscribe TN, naming the object and making note of any Raises for when the item is used. If successful, the rune is inscribed and good for one use. Anyone (even someone without Lærdom) who holds the inscribed object and speaks the name activates the rune, as if the original sorcerer had just invoked it.

The person who activates the rune immediately takes 1k1 in Damage to power the rune. No roll is made when using an inscribed rune, only when actually inscribing it. Inscribed weather runes do not count towards a sorcerer's limit of maintained runes, and they can only be used outdoors.

Becoming
You Become one of the Weather runes, just like you Become one of the runes that add dice. This allows you to use its power at will.

Limitations
General Rune Restrictions
Runes are dangerous to work with. If you overstep your abilities, you'll get burned by their power. Whenever you try to invoke, inscribe, or become a rune and fail the roll, you take one kept die of damage for every five points (rounding up) by which you missed the target number. Thus, if you roll 7 lower than the rune's TN, you take two kept dice of Damage.

Skjæren can only control as many runes as they have Ranks in Brawn. A Skjæren with Rank 3 in Brawn, for example, may not use more than three runes at once. This can be increased through Raises (one per additional rune attempted, applied to every Action performed with that rune). If a Skill check with Lærdom is ever failed while using more runes than your Brawn, the sheer power coursing through your body becomes too much for you to handle, and you suffer one kept die of Damage for every rune being used at that time. All the runes immediately fail, ending their effects.

Most importantly, no one can be directly affected by more than one of the same rune at any time.



Restrictions on Invoking Runes
You may only attempt to invoke a number of runes per day equal to your Wits. Failed attempts and multiple invocations of the same rune count towards this total.

Restrictions on Inscribing Runes
First, runes cannot be inscribed onto anything alive other than a Skjæren.

Second, any individual object can only have one and only one rune inscribed on it – ever (*i.e.*, a sword that is inscribed with the Kjøt rune could not be reinscribed with the Sterk rune after the duration of the Kjøt rune wore off).

Third, the sorcerer cannot maintain more inscribed runes at once than he has Ranks of Brawn (i.e. a Skjæren may only inscribe runes upon as many items at once as he has Ranks in Brawn). If he exceeds this limit, then all runes he is maintaining fail, ruining all the objects involved. They may never have another rune inscribed on them.

Lastly, an inscribed rune may only be activated a number of times per day equal to the inscriber's Wits.

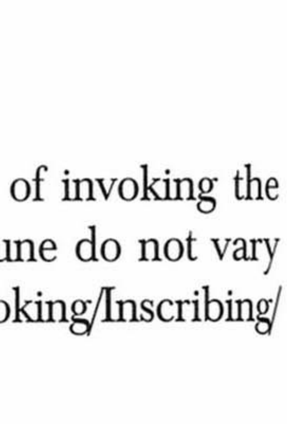
Restrictions on Becoming Runes
You may only become one rune – ever.

Rune Descriptions

In the following rune descriptions, the effect of invoking the rune, inscribing the rune, or becoming the rune do not vary unless indicated. TNs are listed for Invoking/Inscribing/Becoming, respectively.

1. Kjøt ("Flesh") – TN 15/25/40

The first rune is that of Self. "Know yourself," it sings. "That is the first lesson; the first truth..." The rune of Flesh demands that the sorcerer be honest with himself. It is said that the god who embodies this rune was the most hermetic Vestenmannavnjar to ever live, never speaking to anyone but Empathy (see *rune #2*) after he solved the Riddle of Flesh.



Effect: Adds two unkept dice to resist any attempts to fool or beguile through magical or mundane means.

2. Bevegelse ("Empathy") – TN 20/30/40

Beyond the inner Self lies the Outer World, in which others mingle and meld together in one cohesive (though chaotic) whole. Empathy is the next natural step from Flesh, being the union of Self with the Outer World. It is said that the goddess Empathy taught Flesh to understand himself, which made her the stronger of the two, though Solitude (see *rune #4*) took objection, saying that "the Second would never survive without the First



Effect: Adds two unkept dice to any social interaction.

3. Varsel ("Omen") – TN 15/25/40

The third rune belongs to the messenger of the gods, the Trickster who sends omens and subtle warnings. Though Omen has been blamed for being unfair in his games, making them too difficult for humans to see, he has disagreed, claiming that "only those willing to listen are worthy to hear..."



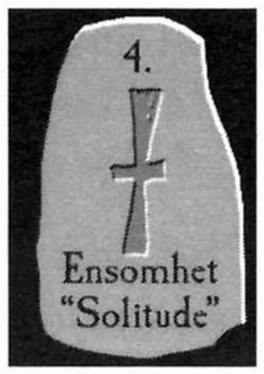
Note: All the effects that are listed apply to all Skjæren who choose this rune.

Invoke/Inscribe Effect: With a successful Skill check using this rune, the Skjæren may speak to others in secret (all those present whom the Skjæren wishes to deceive hear only a garbled, foreign language). Those using the Flesh rune (#1) are immune to the effects of this ability.

Become Effect: The Skjæren may use his Invoke/Inscribe ability at will, without rolling.

4. Ensomhet ("Solitude") – TN 15/25/40

The fourth rune cuts away the past, which is an anchor that prevents you from moving forward. It allows you to let your past angers, fears, and obsessions go, so you may concentrate on the present. This is the duty of the true hero, the one who understands that the future waits for no one. Solitude was the first to accept his gift, the first to use it, and the first to fall saving his home.



Effect: Adds two unkept dice to Resolve tests.

5. Styrke ("Strength") – TN 15/25/40

The fifth rune is that of Strength, who challenges Flesh for supremacy of the human body. He was a warrior, within and without, with the soul of a demon and the power of the wildest ox. The epic story of his courage is well remembered across Vendel; the modern sport of "caber tossing" (lifting the trunk of a large tree by its end) grew from the legend that he uprooted the tallest tree in Théah as a challenge to Legion itself. In so doing, he drew the line between this world and the demons it had embraced, a conviction shared by many Vestenmannavnjar today.



Effect: Adds one unkept die to all Damage rolls.

6. Uvitenhet ("Mystery") – TN 20/30/40

The sixth rune hides the truth; it is mystery. What was clear is concealed, and what was known is forgotten. When the Skjæren take on the aspect of Mystery, their deceits and lies go unnoticed, veiled even from the Gateway rune. Many have said that those same Carvers begin slipping away from themselves thereafter, becoming less and less as everyone knew them. As if in support of this, many who have fused with Mystery (becoming the rune) have permanently cut ties with all they knew, devoting the remainder of their lives to scholarly work and puzzling out the nature of all they encounter.



Effect: Adds two unkept dice when deceiving someone else and counteracts the Gateway rune.

7. Stans ("Calm") – TN 10/20/35

Calm is the seventh rune, also known as Sorrow. For the sailor, there is no greater tragedy than for the sea to still. At

the Skjæren's command, winds die, the air is becalmed and quiet, and doom is brought to the sea. The god Calm observed the moment of silent revelation after Legion was thrust back into Abyss at the end of the war for Vendel. He has observed the same silent moment between each Age since.



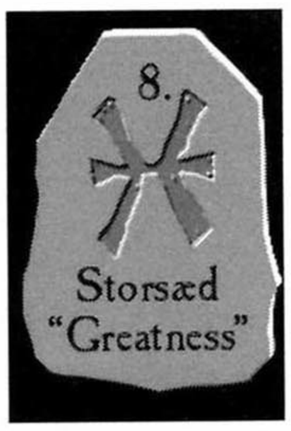
Note: During creation of any Hero with this rune, you must decide which one of two focuses you wish to have – weather or emotions. Each has a different mechanic that follows the Hero through his career. Once the choice is made and play begins, it cannot change and every degree of mastery uses that effect.

*Weather Effect: Stills the present weather conditions within the effective range according to the rules for weather runes (above). Gales fall to breezes, and blizzards are reduced to gentle snowstorms. Weather conditions cannot be changed with this rune (*e.g. *rain into an earthquake), however.*

Emotional Effect: Adds two unkept dice when trying to calm another's mood or curb aggressive emotions.

8. Storsæd ("Greatness") – TN 15/25/40

Like the Fool of the Major Arcana, Greatness represents the fledgling hero, the young and untrained prodigy begging to be honed to a sharp edge. It is also far more than that. Greatness is encouragement for others like itself, reflecting the best in all it meets. The first person to fill this role was a squire to Styrke, the man who would become Strength (rune #5). Though seemingly weak and always protected by others, Storsæd proved the most valiant of all, never wavering through the Worst Days and proving to be an example of what they were all fighting for.



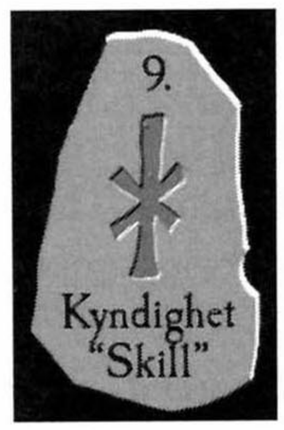
Note: All the effects that are listed apply to all Skjæren who choose this rune.

*Invoke/Inscribe Effect: The Greatness rune activates according to the same rules as any that adds dice. During its duration, and after performing any successful Action, the number of Raises made with that successful Action may be distributed among any who observed the Action (all going to one person, or one each to several). These are considered Free Raises, and must be applied to the very next Action they roll for. Note that the limit for this ability is the Skjæren's lowest Trait (*i.e., *if his lowest Rank is a 2, any Raises he succeeds with beyond the first two may not be transferred in this manner).*

Become-Effect: At the start of every Scene, the Master Skjæren receives a pool of Free Raises equal to his lowest Rank in any Trait. He may use these himself or divvy them out to others in his presence at any point during the Scene, but any not used by its end are lost.

9. Kyndighet ("Skill") – TN 15/25/40

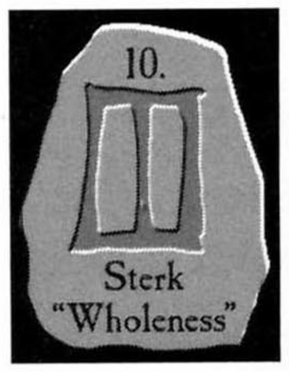
According to the Vestenmannavnjar legends, Kyndighet was the stout and clear-headed mentor to the group that saved the world. He knew that victory could not be rushed, that valor could not be hurried. He always taught the value of patience until the proper moment arrived – then he showed them all what triumph meant. His rune has become a symbol of adroitness and instruction.



Effect: Allows a reroll of one die each Combat Round. Note that all parameters for the use of runes that add dice also apply here.

10. Sterk ("Wholeness") – TN 20/30/40

"Understanding one's own weaknesses is more important than knowing those of your foes", is a Vestenmannavnjar phrase attributed to Sterk, the warlord who never fell. His fighting style was purely defensive, focusing on protecting himself over hurting the enemy. In the end, most of his battles were won by wearing the aggressor out until he could strike one decisive blow. In this way, he was good company for Kyndighet (rune #9), whose teachings were of utmost interest to him. Skjæren who worship through his rune are blessed with the uncanny ability to shrug off blows and dodge even crossbow bolts at close range.



Effect: Adds 5 to the TN to hit the Skjæren. Note that all parameters for the use of runes that add dice also apply here.

11. Velstand ("Wealth") – TN 10/20/35



To hear the Vestenmannavnjar tell the story, Velstand the Pauper was the richest man in the world. His altruism was perhaps the purest intent of any who walked as gods among the Vestenmannavnjar over a thousand years ago. Velstand came from a foreign land, with strange features and a voice that flirted with every wave of the ocean, and he was wise beyond his years. His homeland had been destroyed by Legion before the War, and he had come to Vendel to protect what he saw as an "innocent culture, devoid of the rampant greed and lust spreading across the world."

His rune would become known as Wealth for lack of a more accurate term. Through it comes an endless wellspring of ideas, as if the Carver's mind filled with the collective knowledge of all who had come before. The early Skjæren were very careful about who learned this rune's secrets, well aware of its potential for misuse, but most in modern Vendel do not share their concern. Wealth is rapidly becoming the most popular lærd among them, especially the merchant class.

Note: During creation of any Hero with this rune, you must decide which one of two focuses you wish to have – money or wisdom. Each has a different mechanic that follows the Hero through his career. Once the choice is made and play begins, it cannot change, and every degree of mastery uses that effect.

Money Effect: With a successful Skill check (according to the rules for runes that grant dice) the Skjæren gains an additional 100% of all monies acquired through means other than regular income while this rune is active.

Wisdom Effect: With a successful Skill check (according to the rules for runes that grant dice, above) the Skjæren may tap into his hereditary memory, and may ask of the GM one question relevant to his current situation. The answer will be a brief "flashback" into the life of a former Skjæren devoted to the Wealth rune which is pertinent to the Hero's present state somehow. The relevance of the scene must be determined by the player.

12. Fjell ("Mountain") – TN 15/30/45



Just as the twelfth rune is the rune of heroic sacrifice, so too it is the absence of suffering. Crippling wounds are ignored by Skjæren using this rune. It takes away suffering, salves pain, and frees the Skjæren's mind to live "in the moment."

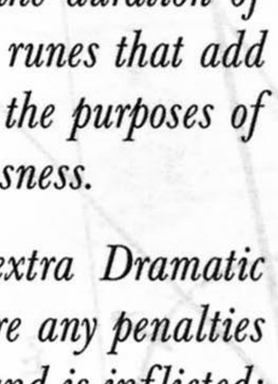
Fjell, the man who took on this rune in the name of his people, was a "sympathetic healer." During the final hours of the Worst Days, when the mighty Krieg (rune #15) fell before Legion, he took on the Warrior's wounds, saving Krieg's life while sacrificing his own. Never satisfied with defeat, however, Krieg defied the Bargainer who had gifted them all, venturing into its home within the Great Tårn Mountain to find a way to bring him back. When he returned, this rune, the name of power, prevented his imminent death.

Note: All listed effects apply to all Skjæren who choose this rune.

Invoke/Inscribe Effect: When used, the Skjæren selects one Dramatic Wound he has suffered already. For the duration of the rune's effect (determined as per the rules for runes that add dice), that Dramatic Wound is ignored, both for the purposes of penalties from it and for determining unconsciousness.

Become Effect: The Skjæren can suffer one extra Dramatic Wound before falling unconscious, and may ignore any penalties from one Dramatic Wound (chosen when the wound is inflicted; the Skjæren may choose another once that Wound is healed).

13. Høst ("Harvest") – TN 20/30/40



The thirteenth rune symbolizes the time of plenty, the Harvest. There is no famine during Harvest, and the gnawing hunger of the winter to come is forgotten. It is the season of rejoicing, for the fruits of one's labors are at hand. But Harvest is also the lesson that has been taught along the way – nothing can be gained without work and dedication, and perseverance reaps the most precious of rewards.

The man known as Høst was the only Skjæren left behind during the Worst Days. He tended the fields and farms of the Vestenmannavnjar during Legion's onslaught, and rallied the common folk to follow suit lest their homes and lives be forfeit. His long struggle is remembered over the first meal culled from each year's harvest, even among those who consider Lærdom a corrupt stain on their nation.

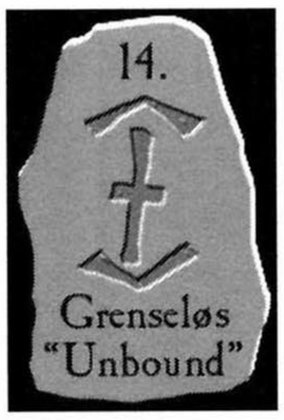
Note: All the effects that are listed apply to all Skjæren who choose this rune.

Invoke/Inscribe Effect: Prior to the start of any Story, the Skjæren may reduce one of his Knacks voluntarily by one Rank. With a successful use of this rune, the Rank is "stored away" throughout the adventure, not granting the die it normally would. At the end of the adventure the Skjæren receives the Rank back, along with 2 Experience Points he may spend only on that Knack.

Become Effect: The Skjæren may use his Invoke/Inscribe ability once per adventure without rolling.

14. Grenseløs ("Unbound") – TN 15/25/40

The way is opened by the fourteenth rune. Those things that would try to constrain the Skjæren are defeated. While locked doors may still bar his path, shackles, ropes, and bindings slip from him and cannot find a hold. Grenseløs, the first to exhibit this ability, was the only person ever to escape the Great Keep of Krigsfang, where even Legion was said to have been bound.



Note: All the effects that are listed apply to all Skjæren who choose this rune.

Invoke/Inscribe Effect: Bindings and shackles fall off the sorcerer when this rune is invoked.

Become Effect: Bindings and shackles slip off the sorcerer when he wishes.

15. Krieg ("Warrior") – TN 15/25/40

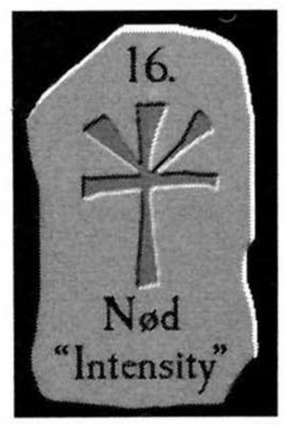
The fifteenth rune, the Warrior, is victory in battle. The arrow finds its mark more easily, and the axe's thirst for blood quickens. The Sons of the North greatly prize this rune, though many look back to the days following the Great War, when Krieg the Inhuman ravaged the coasts with an army of branded followers as proof of its ultimate corruption of the flesh.



Effect: Adds one unkept die to all Attack Rolls.

16. Nød ("Intensity") – TN 15/25/40

Sixteenth among the runes is Intensity, who diametrically opposes Calm (rune #6). Legend states that the two married prior to the Worst Days, and that they were driven apart by their differences once they received their runes. Intensity is all that is violent, aggressive, and forthright. She (and her rune) are a terror on the open sea, almost as bad as her former mate. She howls with a savage wind, seethes beneath the roiling waves, and stings the eyes of all who look upon her angry shape.



Note: During creation of any Hero with this rune, you must decide which one of two focuses you wish to have – weather or emotions. Each has a different mechanic that follows the Hero through his career. Once the choice is made and play begins, it cannot change and every degree of mastery uses that effect.

*Weather Effect: Worsens the present weather conditions within the legal range for weather runes (above). This can turn a drizzle into a downpour, or a snowstorm into a blizzard. Weather conditions cannot be changed with this rune (*e.g., *rain into an earthquake), however.*

Emotional Effect: Adds two unkept dice when trying to incite another's wrath or promote aggressive emotions.

17. Sinne ("Anger") – TN 15/25/40

The seventeenth rune is that of the bitter gale winds. Anger wells up within the sky until it bursts forth in fitful gusts of air like a godlike infant run amok; it is uncontrollable to most, and unquestionable to the rest. Sinne was the

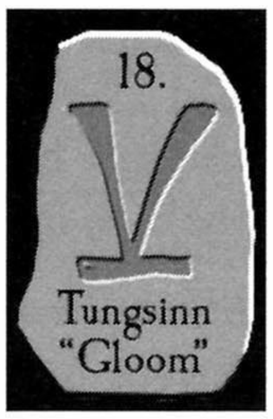


living embodiment of this fury, a ravishing beauty no one could possess, control, or even hold the attention of for very long. She remains one of the most emulated of the Vestenmannavnjar pantheon.

Effect: Adds two unkept dice to all Skill checks based on Brawn.

18. Tungsinn ("Gloom") – TN 15/25/40

The eighteenth rune brings sullen morning showers. Gloom drains the life from all around it, casting everything in a lifeless shade of gray before it covers the world with an endless stream of lonely tears, and leeching the courage from the bones of Heroes. It reminds most of their losses and washes over the rest without care. Tungsinn was the living embodiment of this malaise, a nihilistic critic who was sure the Vestenmannavnjar would lose the War until several long moments after its end. He has been mostly forgotten, as people have better things to do than sulk and cower.



Emotional Effect: Adds two unkept dice when trying to cause depression or fear in another person.

19. Herje ("Ruin") – TN 20/30/40

The nineteenth rune is that of disruption and the destructive forces of nature. Ruin comes unexpectedly, brutally awakening everyone it touches and thrusting them into a desperate struggle to survive. Herje was the living embodiment of this devastation, a man plagued with the worst luck of any who ever survived childbirth. Like many of the original gods, Herje fled his homeland after the Worst Days, and nearly all images of him (save those carried by the Skjæren who "worship" him through this rune for its power) have been burned in the hopes that he will never return.



Effect: Add your Rank in this rune to the TN of your target's next Action. This rune's effect ends immediately thereafter.

20. Reise ("Journey") – TN 15/25/40

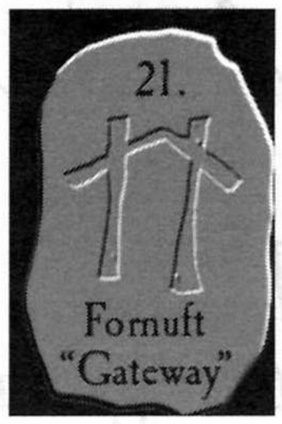
The twentieth rune is the swift Journey. Though a battle may be miles away, the Sons of the North who hear Journey's call rush to answer, their blood burning in their veins. It is the path that matters to them, not the goal, for they have come to understand the importance of every experience along the way. If anything, they are loath to see a journey end (especially life itself), though their dedication to travel and years of careful consideration have prepared even the most fearful to pass on the mantle of their god to the next generation when the time comes. The god of this rune may have been the first to take this title, but he will not be the last – the name Reise has become very common in Vestenmannavnjar over the centuries.



Effect: Adds two unkept dice to any Perception Checks.

21. Fornuft ("Gateway") – TN 20/30/40

The twenty-first rune is the Gateway. Visions appear in the waters stirred by the Skjæren's finger. With this rune, the Sons of the North can spy on their enemies and learn their plans. The rune of Mystery (#6) forms the only certain defense against Gateway. Carvers who have learned the secrets of Knowledge are a valuable commodity in Vendel (particularly among the various Guilds, who hire their services out for a profit).



The original bearer of this rune, Fornuft, was an aging artist who had gone blind while trying to paint the sun. He later received an epiphany, what he referred to as "divine inspiration", and began creating works of art based upon the exploits of the other Vestenmannavnjar gods. During the Worst Days, he learned that his "visions" were actually happening as he observed them, across the nation and beneath the bitter, darkened sky of battle. From then on, his statements and works of art weighed more heavily, and he eventually joined in the pantheon he had once aided.

General Effect: The Skjæren may call up visions of other places, but the rune of Mystery blocks the visions for a radius of 50 feet, showing only a cloudy gray haze. While calling up a vision, the sorcerer must close his eyes and cannot speak.

Invoke Effect: The Skjæren may view events in a place he is familiar with for one Round + one Round per Raise.

Inscribe Effect: When this item is used, it shows events in a location the user has seen before for one Round + one Round per Raise. The object must have a reflective surface of some kind.

Become Effect: The Skjæren may call up visions of anywhere in the world he's been to and maintain them for one Round + one Round per Raise. While calling up a vision, he must close his eyes and cannot speak. This ability may be used only once per day.

22. Lidenskap ("Passion") – TN 15/25/40

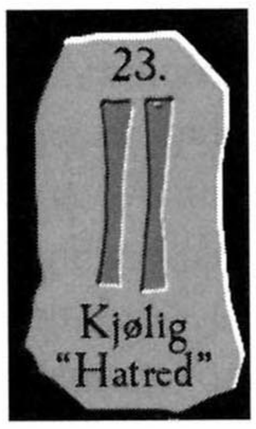
The twenty-second rune is Passion, or day. The clouds part; the rain ends, and the sky clears up. Fog, too, is dispelled by the auspices of this rune. With the use of the runes of Passion and Hatred, nearly every journey can be made a pleasant one. Lidenskap was a fiery man whose temper appeared as often as the sleek edge of his blade.



Effect: Can increase the temperature within the range accorded by the rules for weather runes (above). This may include such things as blistering heat waves, droughts, and other heat-based effects.

23. Kjølig ("Hatred") – TN 15/25/40

The twenty-third rune is Hatred, or night. The clouds come together, the moon smiles upon the cool ground, and the air becomes more crisp, more sharp. Kjølig was a brooding angel, whose billowing black form skirts the moonlit clouds on clear nights to this day. The bodies of those who felt her acid kisses linger still upon Tårn Mountain in the north.



Effect: Can decrease the temperature within the range accorded by the rules for weather runes (above). This may include such things as freezing nights, snow, and other cold-based effects.

24. Villskap ("Fury") – TN 15/25/40

The twenty-fourth rune is Fury, or lightning. The rumbling of the sky foreshadows the doom of the enemies of the Vestenmannavnjar. Villskap fought alongside Styrke and Krieg during the Worst Days, hurling lightning bolts down upon the Tårn Mountains. When Krieg went mad after the battle, Villskap was the one who slew him, but only after Krieg strangled Styrke in his madness.



Effect: Allows you to fire a lightning bolt from your hands, which is targeted like a normal missile attack, with a range of 25 times your Mastery degree. The value for both the Attack Roll and Damage value is your Mastery degree + Villskap Knack, keeping your Mastery degree.

Porté (Montaigne)

Knacks: Attunement, Bring, Blooding, Pocket, Walk

Apprentice Degree: Items

Adept Degree: Self

Master Degree: Others

The most famous sorcery (perhaps because it is so violently spectacular) belongs to the Montaignes. Doorway magic (called *Porté* by those who practice it) involves the sorcerer ripping holes the fabric of the universe and stepping through to somewhere else. Not only do the doorways bleed, but some swear they can hear a slight sound when the hole opens as if it were screaming in pain. Not only is the "bleeding" of the doorway itself a part of the sorcery, but bleeding of the sorcerer is also necessary.

The Montaignes call the nether dimension that links the doorways the "walkway", a place as deadly and mysterious as the Seventh Sea itself. No one knows what beings reside there, but most sorcerers know better than to linger in their realm for long.

Apprentice Degree

In the beginning of your training you learn to make small doorways, just large enough for a fist to fit through. Then, you are taught the "bleeding method." You mark an object such as a mirror, knife or snuffbox with your own blood. Then you are taken to another room and told to concentrate on the object. When you are ready, you rip open a small hole and reach through to the blooded object. When you feel the object, you pull it to you back through the doorway.

Adept Degree

At this degree, you have learned to pull yourself to objects you have blooded. This time, you concentrate on the object and rip a hole large enough to step through. When you feel you've reached the object, you grasp it and find yourself holding the object in the location you left it.

Sorcerers learn *never* to open their eyes while passing through a doorway. It is said that those who do are lost forever in the walkway. Of course, no one can prove this theory, for most sorcerers are too... wise to open their eyes as they step through. The ones who do not make it to the other side presumably ignored their master's wise advice.

You can also now pull objects as large as yourself (6 feet, 200 pounds) through the doorway. These items must be blooded and you must be physically able to pull them through the doorway, which means you must be able to lift them in the first place, let alone pull them through a magical doorway.

Master Degree

Finally, you have learned to move objects larger than yourself, most notably other people. Those who pass through portals suffer from portal sickness (see below), and the danger of moving someone through who might open his eyes is always present.

You may only move a number of people equal to your Resolve, and they must hold on to you or someone who is holding on to you. Of course, those who lose their grip in the maelstrom between doorways (Brawn Test with a TN of 10 when the winds are *really* bad) are lost forever.

Look and See!

Many players may feel tempted to open their eyes while moving between doorways. We encourage this activity. It weeds out the foolish.

However, some have said there is a force that tugs at their will while they step between doorways, whispering promises if they open their eyes. If a Hero encounters such an occurrence, he may be forced to make a Resolve roll (TN=10) in order to keep his eyes shut.

If such an encounter were to occur, that is.

The Limits of Porté

Portal Sickness

Portal sickness is a condition suffered by any human moving through a doorway, even the caster himself. Its symptoms are akin to sea sickness, but much more violent. Nausea and dizziness are common, and the effect can linger for hours afterward.

Whenever moving through a doorway, the caster rolls a die and subtracts his Resolve. The result is the number of rounds he suffers from portal sickness. Until he recovers, he is at –2 dice for all actions. Those who do not possess doorway magic and move through the bloody portals also roll a die, but do not subtract their Resolve. They suffer for a number of rounds equal to their die roll.

Pulling Through

Heroes with Porté can pull objects through the doorways toward them and pull themselves toward blooded objects. There is no other physical connection between the two doorways. In other words, if a Hero drops a blooded pin into the ocean and opens a doorway to that pin, water will not rush out through the doorway. The pin *will* be wet when the Hero pulls it through, however.

Likewise, if a Hero tries to pull himself through a doorway toward an object and the object is in a place that the Hero

cannot enter, he will find his passage blocked and he'll be forced to go to another blooded object in order to get out of the portal... not a very pleasant option. For example, if a Hero leaves a blooded pin in a lady's chamber and the lady places the pin in her jewelry box, the Hero will not be able to move through the portal into the jewelry box. However, he will be able to pull the pin toward him without compromising the integrity of the box.

If a Hero has stepped through the Doorway, walks to his item, finds that he cannot connect with it and has no other blooded objects to home in on, then he's trapped on the other side forever, or at least until *something* finds him.

The Anchor
When Walking or Bringing, there must be a blooded item or "anchor" at the opposite end of the portal, whether you are Bringing it to yourself or Walking to it. Without this anchor, the magic cannot work.

The Knacks

Attunement
Attunement allows a Hero to sense, very generally, where the items he has blooded are in relation to himself. For every Rank in this Knack, you can sense items that are further away.

Rank 1: Up to 10 feet
Rank 2: Up to 100 feet
Rank 3: Up to 1 mile
Rank 4: Up to 5 miles
Rank 5: Up to 10 miles

Blooding
When a Hero wishes to blood an object, he makes a Resolve + Blooding roll against a TN of 20. Success means that the item is blooded and the Hero can home in on it and open portals to its location. For every Raise made when blooding an object, the TN to open a portal to it is reduced by 5. Apprentices may have up to three objects blooded at once, Adepts may have six, and Masters may have nine. They may drop the link they have created to a blooded object at any time, but it cannot be reestablished without the object being reblooded. The ritual to blood an object takes ten Actions to perform, but the blood can be washed off by a person observant enough to spot it in the first place.

Bring
When a Hero wants to Bring a blooded item to himself, he rolls Resolve + Bring. The base TN is 20, reduced by 5 for every Raise made when the object was first blooded (signifying a stronger link). It requires one Action to open a small doorway and one Action to reach through and pull the object out.

Pocket
The Hero can claim a small "pocket" of the Walkway as his own and store things there. These objects do not need to be blooded, but there are a few restrictions. 1) Living creatures cannot be stored in the pocket; they simply can't enter it. 2) The sorcerer can only store ten pounds worth of items in the pocket per Rank in this Knack. Exceeding this limit causes the pocket to dump all the items in it onto the Walkway, where they are lost. 3) There is a small chance that items may disappear when placed into the pocket; it isn't a great idea to leave valuable or one-of-a-kind items in it. The sorcerers aren't sure what causes this, but there's a theory that the objects are being stolen. 4) Lastly, any object placed inside the pocket must hold its shape on its own. Thus, liquids could not be stored in the pocket unless they were in a container. Attempts to pour a liquid into the pocket result in the liquid falling back out of the portal. It takes one Action to reach in and pull a specified object out of the pocket.

Rank 1: 10 lb. capacity
Rank 2: 20 lb. capacity
Rank 3: 30 lb. capacity
Rank 4: 40 lb. capacity
Rank 5: 50 lb. capacity

Walk
When a Hero wants to Walk to a blooded item from wherever he may be, he rolls Resolve + Walk. The base TN is 20, but this is reduced by 5 for every Raise made when the object was first blooded, signifying a stronger link. If a Hero wants to bring along another Hero for the ride, this Raises the Target Number twice (by 10). Every additional

passenger requires another two Raises. It requires two Actions to open a doorway large enough for a man to fit through and five Actions to move through to the next doorway. Every two Raises decreases the walking time by one Action. Every extra passenger adds one Action onto the opening time and two Actions to the walking time.

Pyeryem (Ussura)

Knacks: Speak, Man, Animal Forms (*e.g.*, Cat, Goshawk, Kodiak Bear, Mouse, Otter, Owl, Rabbit, Red Fox, Snow Leopard, Wolf, etc.)

Apprentice Degree: Full Transformation

Adept Degree: Partial Transformation

Master Degree: Spirit Conjuration



Pyeryem is the most unusual of the mystic arts, in that it is not exactly a form of sorcery. The ability to take animal form is more of a holy act than a sorcerous one, a benefit from the Ussurans' spiritual relationship with Matushka. She also gives them the ability to speak the tongue of the animals.

Those with these abilities look upon them with the reverence of prayer. They are not to be used frivolously, or as spectacle. They are gifts which can be taken away from those who choose to abuse them.

The art of Pyeryem passes on to a child from his mother. An animal then comes to the child and presents it with the gift of its "spirit skin." This later enables the child to shapeshift into that particular animal's form by "draping" the skin over all or part of his body. The child is neither able to change shape nor speak with animals until first learning to speak with other humans.

In order to acquire a new shape, the gifted Ussuran finds an animal of the desired type and bargains with it for permission to assume its form. The animal then gives its spirit skin to him, and he is thereafter able to assume its form. In return, the animal lives as long as the Ussuran. If the animal ever dies, the ability to assume its form remains, but the Ussuran has to provide for that the animal's young if they are too small to take care of themselves.

Apprentice Degree: Shape of the Beast

You have only just begun to learn the potential of your power, but you can at least affect a Basic Transformation. You must transform your entire body into the animal's form, and you thereby gain all of the "Boons" associated with that form for the duration of the transformation (which can be as long as desired.) You can speak with other animals (and gifted Ussurans) while transformed, but you cannot speak with humans who do not know the art of Pyeryem.

In order to transform, you must spend one Action and a Drama Die, and test against the form's TN using Resolve + your Knack in that form. The Drama Die allows you to attempt the transformation, but doesn't give you any

additional benefit. If the roll fails, the action and the Drama Die are wasted. If the roll is less than ½ the TN (rounding up), you are trapped in your current form until the next dawn. The Man Knack is used to return to your normal form (TN 15) in a similar manner, but it does not cost a Drama Die to use.

You can speak to any animal found within Ussura's boundaries. Outside of Ussura, your GM will determine the TN you need to roll against using your Resolve + Speak Knack in order to speak to a particular animal. The difficulty goes up the further you are from Ussura and the more domesticated the animal is.

Adept Degree: Heart of the Beast

Now you've become familiar with the process of changing and can control the effects better, performing a Partial Transformation. You select one Boon (even a nonbeneficial one), make your check to transform (remember to spend the Drama Die) as usual, and if successful only the body part involved with the Boon transforms. This is a physical transformation, and it is obvious to anyone nearby. Thus, if you use a Partial Transformation to activate the Night Vision Boon given to you by your owl form, you would gain a downy cover of feathers around your eyes and a faint hook to your nose.

You cannot use two Boons at once that obviously interfere with one another. This includes Boons with contradictory effects as well as Boons that both affect the same area of the body (GM's decision). Lastly, you cannot activate more than one Boon at a time from the same animal type. You could use the Night Boon from your owl form and the Flight Boon from your goshawk form, but you couldn't use both Boons from your owl form.

Each Boon requires one Action to activate, since this effect requires much more control than a Basic Transformation. The Man Knack must still be used to transform the body part back to normal (TN 15), with a roll of less than ½ the TN (rounding up) trapping you in your current form until the next dawn.

Master Degree: Soul of the Beast

At last you understand the greatest truth of Old Grandmother's gift: form is unimportant; the spirit will always shine through.

Now you may use the Boons granted by your animal forms without actually physically transforming yourself. You do this through a process called Spirit Conjuration. You may activate as few or as many Boons from a single form as you desire, all with one Action and a single Drama Die. However, you may not conjure up Boons from more than one form at a time using this ability. There is no need to use the Man Knack to transform back, as no physical transformation has taken place. The effects of the Conjuration always wear off at the next dawn, unless canceled beforehand.

Sample Animal Knacks:

These are a few animal forms that an Ussuran can possess. Explanations of the Boons follow. The *Ussura* sourcebook will contain many other precalculated forms for your use, as well as rules on creating new forms.

Man
TN: 15
Notes: This Knack returns an Ussuran to his normal form. It is difficult to return to your original form, overcoming the magic of the spirit skin. Using this Knack does not require the expenditure of a Drama Die.

Cat
TN: 15
Boons: Climb, Falling, Finesse +1, Keen Hearing, Night Vision, Silence, Brawn –2, No Grasping Limbs
Notes: Finesse +1 and Brawn –2 are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations. Silence and No Grasping Limbs are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Goshawk
TN: 15
Boons: Attack (0k2 Claws), Flight, Keen Sight, Speed, Brawn –2, No Fine Manipulation

Notes: Speed and Brawn –1 are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations. Flight and No Fine Manipulation are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Kodiak Bear
TN: 35
Boons: Attack (0k2 Bite), Attack (0k3 Claws), Brawn +3, Keen Smell, Swimming, Warmth, Finesse –2, No Fine Manipulation
Notes: Brawn +3 and Finesse –2 are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations. Attack (Claws) and No Fine Manipulation are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Mouse
TN: 15
Boons: Armor (+10 to TN to be hit), Keen Hearing, Keen Smell, Night Vision, Silence, Brawn –3, No Fine Manipulation
Notes: Armor and Brawn –3 are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Otter
TN: 15
Boons: Hold Breath, Keen Smell, Swimming, Brawn –1
Notes: Swimming and Brawn –1 are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Owl
TN: 10
Boons: Flight, Night Vision, Silence, Brawn –1, Finesse –1, No Fine Manipulation
Notes: Flight and No Fine Manipulation are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Rabbit
TN: 15
Boons: Armor (+5 to TN to be hit), Burrow, Keen Hearing, Keen Sight, Leaping, Speed, Brawn –2, No Grasping Limbs
Notes: Armor and Brawn –2 are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations. Speed and No Grasping Limbs are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Red Fox
TN: 15
Boons: Armor (+5 to TN to be hit), Howl, Keen Smell, Leaping, Silence, Brawn –1, No Grasping Limbs
Notes: Armor and Brawn –1 are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations. Silence and No Grasping Limbs are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Snow Leopard
TN: 35
Boons: Attack (Bite 0k2), Attack (Claws 0k2), Brawn +2, Climb, Keen Smell, Leaping, Speed, Warmth, No Grasping Limbs, Poor Sight
Notes: Attack (Claws) and No Grasping Limbs are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

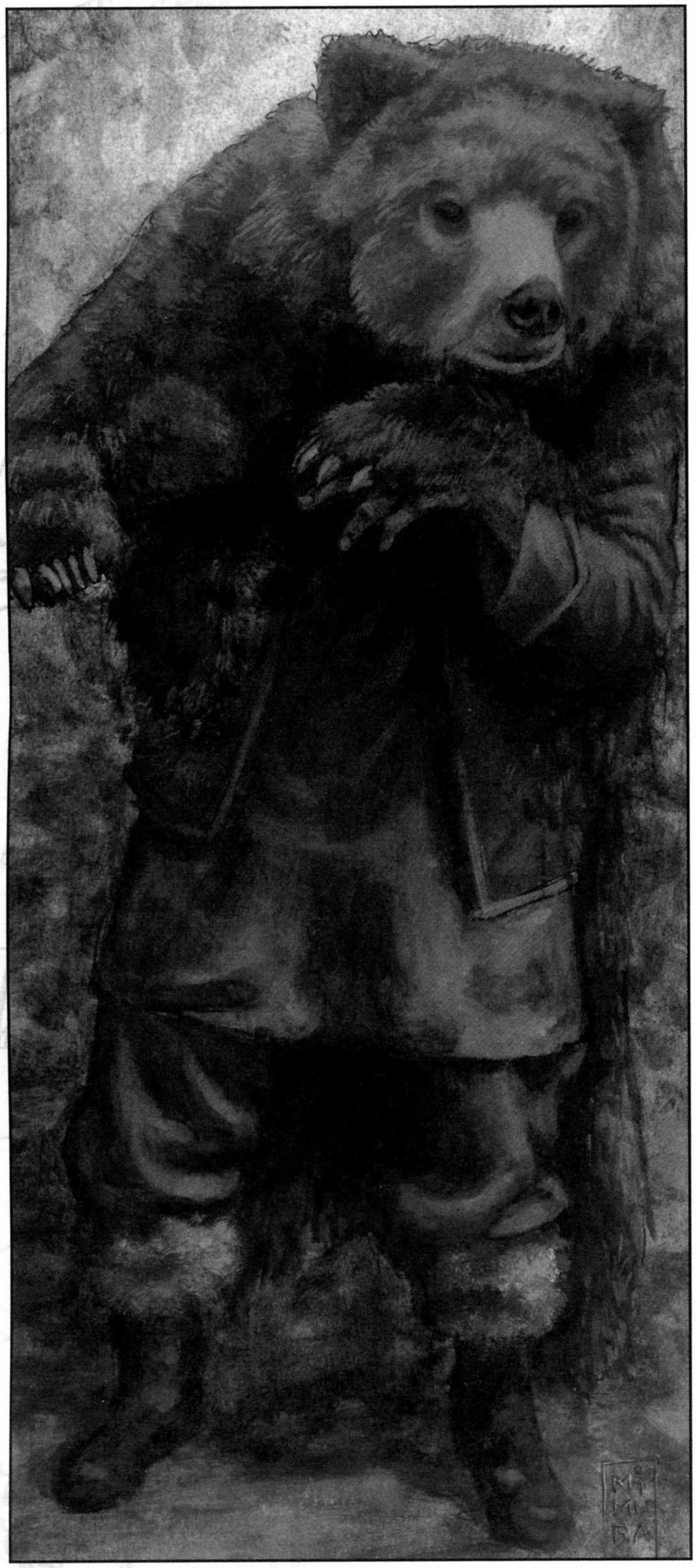
Wolf
TN: 25
Boons: Attack (0k2 Bite), Brawn +1, Howl, Keen Smell, Keen Hearing, Silence, No Grasping Limbs
Notes: Brawn +1 and No Grasping Limbs are considered a single Boon for purposes of Partial Transformations.

Explanation of Boons

Note: The effects of a Boon only apply when the Boon is active.

Armor
The TN to hit you is raised by the indicated amount. Although this Boon is called "Armor", it can also represent the difficulty to hit you due to speed, size, or any other factor.

Attack (Bite, Claws, or Gore)
You may make one attack using the appropriate body part (teeth, claws, antlers) as a weapon with the indicated Damage Rating, which should be either 0k2 or 0k3. Your Attack Knack is considered to be your Animal Form Knack. If an animal form doesn't have this Boon, it can still perform the usual 0k1 barehanded attack, using the Animal Form Knack as the Attack Knack. When the Bite Boon is active, you cannot talk to other people unless they are gifted Ussurans.



Brawn
Your Brawn increases or decreases by the amount indicated.

Burrow
You can dig a tunnel through dirt big enough for your current form to crawl through. You dig at a rate of (2 x Finesse) inches per Round.

Climb
You roll three extra unkept dice for Climbing rolls.

Falling
Your Break Fall Knack is considered to be 1 higher (giving you a Rank 1 if you don't have the Knack normally).

Finesse
Your Finesse is increased or decreased by the amount indicated.

Flight
You are able to fly.

Hold Breath
The Hero's Resolve is considered 3 higher than its current form's Resolve when using the Drowning Rules found in the *GMs' Guide.*

Howl
The Hero can communicate with other animals and gifted Ussurans over distances of up to 5 miles.

Keen Hearing
You roll three extra unkept dice for Perception Checks involving hearing.

Keen Sight
You roll three extra unkept dice for Perception Checks involving sight.

Keen Smell
You roll three extra unkept dice for Tracking and Perception Checks involving smell.

Leaping
You roll three extra unkept dice for Leaping.

Night Vision
You can see even in near-total darkness. Bright light causes a –1 unkept die penalty to all your actions.

No Fine Manipulation
You must drop your highest die when attempting to manipulate anything held in your hands, claws, whatever.

No Grasping Limbs
You cannot hold or manipulate anything, except perhaps (very crudely) by holding it in your mouth.

Poor Sight
You roll two fewer dice for Perception Checks involving sight.

Silence
You roll three extra unkept dice for Stealth.

Speed
You get to roll one extra unkept Action Die each combat round.

Swim
Your movement is unimpeded when swimming.

Warmth
You are not bothered by extreme cold. Extreme heat (but not fire), on the other hand, affects you twice as much as usual.

Sorte (Vodacce)

Knacks: Arcana, Coins, Cups, Staves, Swords

Apprentice Degree: Measure, Blessings and Curses

Adept Degree: Tug

Master Degree: Weave/Unweave

Fate magic is one of the rarest sorceries in Théah. It is only found in Vodacce, and runs only in the blood of its women. Those attuned to *Sorte* can see the great web of fate and how its tendrils connect to all things. With enough skill, the *sorte strega* ("Fate Witch") can recognize the types of strands as well. Finally, the grand witches (called *nonna* by lesser witches) can create or destroy strands, a very dangerous undertaking.

The Strands

When the Fate Witch is young, she learns how to observe the strands using a sorte deck. The deck is comprised of 78 cards, divided into two categories: Lesser and Greater. The Lesser Cards are further divided into four suits: Coins, Cups, Staves and Swords. Each suit has cards numbered from one to ten along with four Court Cards: the Squire, Knight, Queen and King. The Greater Cards are different; they have no suit, and the cards are numbered from zero to twenty-one. These Greater Cards are sometimes referred to as "Arcana."

The Fate Witch learns to read fate strands by learning the relationships between the Lesser Cards. She reads the complicated patterns the fate strands make while shuffling, dealing and reading card configurations. Each suit corresponds to a specific strand type, and once she can identify the symbolic meaning of the different suits, she can also identify the meanings of strands.

As for the Greater Cards, they reveal the strengths and weaknesses that lurk in the hearts of other people. The Fate Witch can't affect the Arcana in any way, but she can use this knowledge to manipulate those whose weaknesses she knows.

Meanings of the Lesser Cards

Coins
Coins are yellow strands that represent Commerce. A Coin strand from one person to another indicates some sort of business relationship, or a relationship based on fiscal advantage.

Cups
Cups are blue strands that represent Passion. A Cup strand indicates an emotional link between the two subjects.

Swords
Swords are red strands that represent Conflict. A Sword strand indicates that some degree of conflict (emotional or physical) exists between two subjects.

Staves

Staves are green strands that represent Authority. A Staff strand between two individuals represents a relationship based on status or respect (forced or otherwise) rather than emotion or commerce.

Meanings of the Greater Cards

There are twenty-two Greater Cards in the Sorte deck; when viewed together, in numerical order, they make what the *sorte strega* call "The Great Tale."

Arcana appear as ghostly images looming over the person they accompany. These images can appear right-side-up, in their "proper aspect", or upside-down, referred to as their "inverted aspect." The proper form of an Arcana normally indicates a strength of some sort, while the inverted form of an Arcana indicates a weakness. The sole exception to this rule is the Legion card, whose strength is inverted, instead of its weakness.

The Arcana

Arcana	Inverted	Normal
0 Fool	Rash	Pure
1 Magician	Ambitious	Willful
2 High Priestess	Hedonistic	Intuitive
3 Empress	Lecherous	Comforting
4 Imperator	Hot-headed	Commanding
5 Hierophant	Trusting	Creative
6 Lovers	Star-crossed	Passionate
7 Chariot	Overconfident	Victorious
8 Strength	Cowardly	Courageous
9 Hermit	Overzealous	Focused
10 Fortune	Misfortunate	Fortunate
11 Justice	Judgmental	Exemplary
12 Hanged Man	Indecisive	Altruistic
13 Death	Reckless	Adaptable
14 Temperance	Envious	Self-controlled
15 Legion*	Loyal	Perspicacious
16 Tower	Arrogant	Uncanny
17 Star	Stubborn	Inspirational
18 Moon	Inattentive	Perceptive
19 Sun	Proud	Friendly
20 Judgment	Righteous	Insightful
21 Terra	Greedy	Propitious

Apprentice Degree: Touching the Strands

Sorte apprentices (called *Clotho* by their sisters) first learn to sense the strands of fate. As the apprentice's skill grows, she can see the connections between people. Soon enough, she can also determine the nature of those connections. A Clotho, for instance, could see the Cups strand between two secret lovers, and the Swords strand beginning to form between her lover and her unaware husband.

Adept Degree: Tugging and Stretching the Strands

Adepts of Sorte (called *Lachesis* by their sisters) have the ability to "tug" on the strands they've learned to perceive. They can make some strands tug harder on a Hero than others. For instance, if a Hero feels slight loyalty to his father and a stronger loyalty to his mother, the Lachesis can tug on the slighter Staves strand, making it stronger than the mother's Staves strand for a short period of time.

Instead of tugging on a strand, the Lachesis can stretch it. Stretching the strands increases or decreases the target's chances of success or failure.

Fate Witches do not use this power carelessly. Although they know they will get the desired effect when using their magic, they are never certain just how the magic is going to accomplish its goal, and Sorte can be perverse in its interpretations of a Fate Witch's wishes.

Master Degree: Cutting the Strands

Master Fate Witches (called *Nonna Atropos* by their sisters) have learned the most potent ability of all: to create and destroy fate strands. Again, the Witch will get what she asked for, but the means of accomplishing the desired effect can only be guessed at.

Creating and destroying fate strands is *extremely* dangerous. It tampers with the very fabric of reality, a fabric that is very

elastic and has been known to snap back at those who tamper with it.

Mechanics

Sensing Strands

A Fate Witch can do one of two things when sensing fate strands. She can either sense the most important strands in a person's life, or attempt to look at a specific strand between two people.

A Fate Witch can automatically look at a person's most important strands. An apprentice can see the single most important strand, an adept can see the two most important strands, and a master can see the three most important strands. A Fate Witch does not need the appropriate Knacks to see strands, only to manipulate them.

A Fate Witch can also attempt to see a specific fate strand between two people. The TN is 15 and she must roll Wits + the Knack corresponding to the suit of the strand. If she succeeds, she receives the information under *The Composition of a Strand* (see sidebar). If she fails, she is unable to find that particular strand.

Blessings and Curses

Vodacce men are famous for their outrageous fortune, good and bad. Vodacce women are even more famous for their blessings and curses. The Vodacce are so in tune with the elements of fate that they can actually force its hand. The cost is high, but many times it is worth it. On their deathbeds, many Vodacce mothers call to their children for one final blessing before they pass into the next world. Likewise, new Vodacce mothers often bless their children moments after they are born.

Enemies of the Vodacce take care never to meet the eyes of a Vodacce woman, just in case. The wrath of an angry Fate Witch should not be underestimated. In fact, most of Théah's greatest historical and literary tragedies begin with a Vodacce curse.

Vodacce women who wish to pass on a blessing or a curse do so at the risk of great harm to their own fate. The ritual is very simple. The witch looks into the eyes of the recipient and speaks his name three times. Then she kisses him. If the ritual is interrupted, the curse or blessing fails.

The Composition of a Strand

Type: The Fate Witch always perceives the strand's suit. When manipulating strands, the Knack used is always the suit of the strand. Thus, a Fate Witch who is trying to alter a Cups strand uses her Cups Knack.

Ends: The Fate Witch can see who the other end of a strand is attached to, as long as the other person is also within sight. If not, she can still see the general direction that the strand's other end extends toward.

Strength: Strands have a strength of 1 to 10, with 10 being the strongest. The higher the strength, the more important the connection.

Court Cards: There are four primary instances during which Fate Witches cannot alter strands, and these are signified by the four court cards of the Sorte deck. There is a set of court cards for each suit: Squire, Knight, Queen, and King. The Squire is the "Discoverer of the Suit", which means that the strand is too new and unstable to be manipulated. The Knight is the "Defender of the Suit", which means that the strand is simply too powerful to be altered. The Queen is the "Mother of the Suit", which indicates that the strand is splitting, or creating a new strand, and cannot be manipulated until it has finished separating. The King is the "Ruler of the Suit", which signifies that the strand is too old and stable to be changed.

Twisting: If the strand is becoming stronger, the Fate Witch sees it twisting around and around.

Fraying: If the strand is becoming weaker, the Fate Witch sees it fraying.

Remnants: The Fate Witch can see the remnants of a strand that has been severed. Unless she can create a new strand, she cannot alter it.

When the ritual is complete, the witch rolls her Resolve + the appropriate Knack. For every 15 points rolled, the recipient gains a Blessing Die or a Curse Die. However, the Witch gains one Curse Die for every 10 points rolled.

Blessing and Curse Dice

A Hero who receives a **Blessing Die** rolls one extra Kept die with every roll linked to the appropriate strand. However, this die cannot explode. For example, a Swords Blessing would give the Hero an extra die to roll with every roll involving a conflict. The die remains until it rolls a 1, then it is discarded.

Example 3.28: Antonio has a Cups Blessing. Whenever he makes rolls involving passion, romance or emotion, he rolls his Blessing Die and adds the result to the roll. Under normal circumstances, Antonio can only keep a number of dice equal to his Trait, but the Blessing Die doesn't count toward that total. When Antonio's Blessing Die rolls a 1, he adds one to his total roll, then discards the die.

Curse Dice work identically to Blessing Dice, but instead of adding to each roll's total, a Curse Die subtracts from it. The Die remains until it rolls a 10, then it is discarded.

Example 3.29: In addition to his Blessing Die, Antonio also has a Swords Curse Die. Whenever he makes rolls involving conflict, Antonio must roll his Curse Die and subtract its score from his total roll. When Antonio's Curse Die rolls a ten, he subtracts ten from his roll, then throws away his Curse Die.

Tugging Strands

Fate Witches cannot tug on Strands they have not first perceived. Therefore, a Witch must first see a strand before she can begin manipulating it. Tugging on a strand can increase or decrease its strength. Strands that currently have Court Cards cannot be tugged upon.

In order for the witch to increase or decrease the strength of a strand, she must make a Simple Resolve + (the Knack corresponding to the Suit of the strand) roll with a TN equal to 10 for each point she wishes to alter the strand's strength up or down. If she were trying to change a strength 10 strand to a strength 8 strand, her TN would be 20. This change lingers for one day per Rank in the Knack used.

The effects are not sudden, nor are they spectacular. Technically, the witch has caused something to interfere with the relationship. If she has weakened a Passion strand, then perhaps the two lovers will quarrel tonight. Perhaps she will notice his eye wandering over to a Castillian beauty. Maybe he will be sent away to war, and their relationship will fade over the distance. Whatever the reason, the relationship will suffer, at least until the Fate Witch's magic wears off.

Stretching Strands

A Fate Witch cannot stretch a strand that currently has a Court Card.

The simplest way to use Fate magic increases or decreases the dice a Hero gets to use for an action. If a Fate Witch wishes to increase the dice a Hero uses for an action (tugging on the strand of success), she must make a Resolve + Appropriate Knack roll. The TN is the number of unkept dice she wishes to add times 15. She must have a Knack that corresponds to the action; the Cups Knack cannot increase a Hero's chance at bargaining. For example, if a Fate Witch wishes to add two dice to a Hero's total while fencing an enemy, she must roll her Resolve + Swords Knack with a TN of 30. Subtracting dice from a Hero's pool works in the same manner.

Destroying Strands

While both creating and destroying strands is very difficult, it is easier to destroy something that has already been created than it is to create something from scratch.

Destroying a strand is like ripping apart a spider web: each strand is just as important as another in maintaining the balance of the structure; the stronger the strand, the more vital it is to maintaining that structure. A Fate Witch cannot destroy a strand that currently has a Court Card.

In order to destroy a strand, the Fate Witch must make a Simple Resolve + Appropriate Knack roll against a TN of 40. If the roll is successful, the strand snaps. The effects of this are very dramatic. Life-long friends, lovers, husbands and wives suddenly feel no emotional connection whatsoever. A tragic accident might tear a father and his son apart, and the two might never meet again.

This is the most dangerous kind of magic, for the Fate Witch is inevitably caught up in the wash of its effect. All strands attached to the targets are affected by the act, and by default of her cutting the strand, the witch is attached to *both* targets, even if only as a casual acquaintance. Thus, few witches are willing – even if able – to destroy strands; the consequences are simply too grave.

Creating Strands

Creating new strands puts an unexpected strain on fate's skein, thus causing pressures that cannot be predicted. In order to create a strand, the Fate Witch must make a Simple Resolve + Appropriate Knack roll against a TN of 50. Like destroying strands, the Fate Witch will feel the repercussions of that added strain.

However, creating new strands tends to be less menacing than destroying them, although the effects are equally chancy. Creating a new political relationship between two important leaders can lead them to a mutual agreement, but it can also lead to a war if the relationship isn't tended properly. Likewise with a romantic relationship: a witch who makes a man love her courts disaster if she isn't careful about the man she picks. If she doesn't watch out, she ends up with a romantic interest who just won't go away, and must resist the temptation to just cut the man – literally – out of her life... and then face the metaphysical consequences.

Vodacce women must be careful with their power. It is one of the most versatile sorceries in the world, but at the same time, if it is abused, it exacts a heavy toll.

The Arcana

When a Fate Witch wishes to see if a person has an Arcana, she must roll against a new TN of 15. If she succeeds, she can tell whether or not that person has an Arcana, and if so which one he or she possesses. In game terms, the Arcana reveals which Hubris or Virtue the Hero possesses, if any.

Fate Lashes

There are times when witches pull too hard on the strands of fate. "Mad Queen" Marietta was one. She brought her husband's personal guard to a small village, had each of the villagers held down, looked into each of their eyes and cursed them all.

For years, she made certain that the peasants who served under her husband were kept in line with her power. But as the years passed, she developed painful red, oozing scars on her lily-white skin. Every strand of fate she twisted and snapped raked against her, leaving a physical – and spiritual – mark. Eventually, she went completely insane, killing her husband and her children before her own mother put a knife in her throat.

A Witch earns a Fate Lash when one of the dice she rolls for any Sorte-related check explodes two times or more. That is to say, for each single die that generates a total of 20 or higher, the Witch receives a Fate Lash. Please note that she can choose not to reroll 10s, so any Fate Lashes she receives are the result of her own ambitions.

Each Fate Lash immediately causes the Fate Witch to lose three Drama Dice. For every Drama Die she is short, she takes a Dramatic Wound. The physical scar remains for three months, but there are no further mechanical disadvantages.



Player

Part Five

Clarisse

She stood in the center of the room, the center of attention. In her hand, she held a delicate goblet filled with blood-red wine. She turned so her voice would be heard in every corner of the enormous room.

"Welcome, friends," she said. "Welcome to the King's birthday party."

The crowd applauded politely and she took a quick bow. "No, I cannot take complete credit for the festivity. There are others... I just cannot remember their names."

This time, the courtiers laughed openly and her smile broadened. "So let us rejoice in our good fortune and toast to the good health of our fair king."

"Theus bless Good King Sandoval!" someone in the crowd shouted and Clarisse raised her glass.

"Theus bless Good King Sandoval!" she replied with the crowd and everyone emptied their glasses. Then, in the blink of an eye, the room's attention splintered and the large group split into smaller groups.

She smiled. *The gossiping has begun.*

Just then, he stepped through the crowd. Or, more accurately, the crowd parted for him, whispering his name as they did.

She lowered her chin and looked at him with sinful eyes. She knew how much he loved that. When she said his name, her voice came low in her throat. He loved that even more.

"Signore Villanova," she curtsied.

"Marquise d'Alreaux," he bowed.

He took her arm and she squeezed his hand. "Everything is in place," she whispered. "Even now, my maid is letting them in through the secret panel in the study."

"Excellent."

They passed by a gaggle of gossips and nodded politely. The women fluttered their fans to hide their blushing cheeks as they watched the pair pass by. As they drew closer, the women took two steps back.

He paused, smiling politely. "I'm sorry to disappoint you, my little chickens, but even Villanova cannot taint your virtue from three paces away." He leaned in closer. "I would need a *slightly* more intimate propinquity."

Clarisse put her fan before her lips to hide her smile as they left the stunned women behind.

"What in the world was all that about?" she asked.

"I topped her," he said flatly.

"You didn't!"

His gaze met hers. "I most certainly did. And don't question my word again."

Clarisse lowered her head. As they turned, a black-clad figure by the door caught her eye. She stopped and turned into him, pressing her body against his. "My apologies, my lord," she whispered. "And in Montaigne, there is only one way for a lady to apologize to her lover." She stretched onto her toes and placed a kiss on his lips.

Villanova's brow raised and she stepped away, smiling. The courtiers around them stood aghast. Someone whispered something about Montaigne virtue, but she said nothing. She just watched Villanova and the man standing behind him.

The man with the sword.

Archibald

"Signore Villanova?" he asked.

The dark man turned and faced him. Archibald had never seen eyes so black and bottomless. "Yes...?"

Archibald's leather glove hit him hard, but the Vodacce didn't show it.

"I am a Swordsman, Signore. I am here on a commission."

Villanova looked him up and down. "A commission from a destitute jenny, judging by the look of you." He took a step away from Archibald and raised his brow. "She certainly didn't pay you cash."

Archibald's eyes slipped to see Clarisse's response. Villanova noticed. His sneer was darker than his eyes.

He turned away from Archibald to Clarisse but the Swordsman slipped between them. "Your duel is with me, Signore."

Villanova nodded. "Very well, then. First you..." he looked over the Swordsman's shoulder. "Then the woman." He looked across the room. "Someone bring me a blade." He turned to Archibald, his eyes burning. "All I need is a butter knife."

One of the King's guards brought him a sheathed sword. Villanova snatched it from him and pushed the guard away. Then, he turned to face Archibald. "Anytime now, boy."

Archibald drew his own blade and put himself into position. Villanova smiled at him. "You've studied," he said.

"It was the least I could do to entertain you."

"Then let's begin."

The swords flashed and tasted each other's steel. Archibald had never faced a Vodacce before and the style was troublesome. All targets were hidden by Villanova's left-handed stance. His attacks came from the wrong direction. His parries left Archibald open for ripostes. He hoped his trepidation didn't show, but with all of his concentration on defending against Villanova, he didn't have any left to put toward keeping his eyes clear.

He tried for a quick shot to the head, but Villanova arched his neck half an inch and thrust his sword forward three. The riposte only caught his coat, but only because Archibald saw the riposte at the very last moment. Villanova chuckled and pressed his advantage.

The Swordsman was pushed back. His back met the edge of a table. He jumped back, put his left hand on the table and pushed. Villanova caught its edge and flipped it at precisely the wrong moment. Archibald tumbled backward, hitting his hip against the edge of the table. He winced and Villanova laughed. Archibald's sword moved almost on its own, striking wild. He felt the tip catch and heard Villanova curse. When he looked up, he saw blood from the Vodacce's left hand.

Everything stood still for a moment. Archibald was down with one knee on the floor. Villanova stood looking at the blood oozing from the back of his dueling hand.

Then, he looked at Archibald.

And shifted the sword from his left hand to his right hand.

"My blood," he said. "Yours is next."

Archibald sprung to his feet just in time to parry Villanova's thrust. The Vodacce counter-thrusted the parry, feinted to the left and swung his pommel into the Swordsman's face. Archibald's vision went white and he felt something rip the sword from his hand.

He opened his eyes and saw Villanova standing before him, his sword at Archibald's throat. Behind the Vodacce the population of the room held their breath. Archibald took a step back. Villanova followed. So did the room. Archibald saw their faces... and something he hadn't noticed before. Standing just behind Villanova was a small, dark-haired woman. A Vodacce woman.

A Vodacce woman.

Her eyes were fixed on his own, her fingers twitching just slightly. Archibald knew what had happened here. He never stood a chance.

"A Swordsman." Villanova sneered, snapping Archibald's attention away from the woman. "I've killed Swordsmen. Dozens of them."

"If you were going to kill me," Archibald said through his teeth, "you would have done it already."

"Killing one of your kind is a delicacy that must be savored," Villanova said. "Besides, your death isn't what I'm after." Archibald let his curiosity show. "Oh no. I've killed

enough Swordsmen to know the taste. There's something else I want from you."

He pushed the blade harder against Archibald's skin. He took one more step back and found himself backed against a wall.

Villanova's smile turned as dark as his eyes.

"I want to hear a Swordsman beg."

Archibald shook his head. "You won't hear it tonight."

"A pity. It might have saved your life." The crowd's reaction was palpable. Villanova shrugged, now speaking to the crowd. "You have to let me finish." He turned back to Archibald. "It might have saved your life, if I weren't a Villanova."

The villain's fingers twisted tight around the pommel and he thrust the sword forward...

Lucia

...straight into the wall behind Archibald.

She couldn't see his face until he turned from the Swordsman and saw her. His face was a vision that would haunt her dreams for the rest of her life.

"*Strega*!" he cursed.

It was already too late.

The Swordsman spun toward Villanova, putting his back against the sword, wrapping his arm around Villanova's right arm. His left elbow smashed into those dark eyes and the Vodacce fell to the floor. The blade was free from the wall and at Villanova's throat.

All of that movement in less than a heartbeat.

"Now," the Swordsman muttered, "I think this crowd may be anxious to hear a Villanova beg."

"A moment, Swordsman!" said the voice from the back of the crowd. Archibald never let his eyes leave Villanova.

As she made her way through the crowd, their excited whispers almost made him smile.

"A real archæologist!" one of them exclaimed.

"Only at the King's birthday," someone else said.

Helena broke through the crowd and knelt beside Villanova. She didn't pause for a moment. She thrust her hands in his coat and let them roam. "I know you're not used to this," she said. "But try to enjoy it while it lasts."

The courtiers almost laughed, but their fear of laughing at a Villanova got the better of them.

"There!" she declared and held the object high above her head.

"What is it?" Archibald asked.

Helena showed the object – which looked like an intricately carved blue egg – to the crowd. "It is from our library in Vendel, and the juice inside could kill every man, woman and child in this room."

The entire crowd backed away.

Archibald's eyes filled with concern. "You mean, when I threw him down, I could have broken it?"

Men gasped. Women swooned. Villanova groaned.

"No," Helena replied. "It's only dangerous if you know how to open it."

Lucia stepped forward, looking at the Swordsman. "Excuse me, sir," she said in a soft voice. "But shouldn't you finish your commission?"

Archibald nodded. "Indeed."

"You do and it will mean your head," Villanova said under the blade.

Archibald eyed him. "What do you mean by that?"

The Vodacce smiled. "You know the Swordsman's Code. What is the highest crime a Swordsman can commit?"

Archibald shook his head. "I don't..."

"Accepting a commission... on a fellow Swordsman."

Lucia felt her stomach drop and her blood freeze.

"No," she whispered.

Villanova nodded. "Yes." He looked at Archibald. "Go ahead, then. Kill me. Kill me and seal your fate."

Archibald took a deep breath. If he let Villanova live, the man would destroy him. If he killed the Vodacce, he would be killing himself.

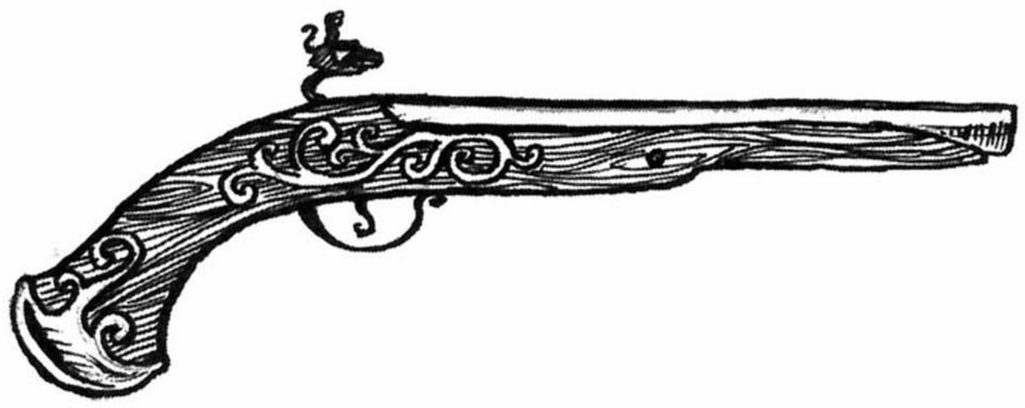
He nodded and took his foot off Villanova's chest and pulled the blade away from his neck. As Villanova stood and dusted off his black coat, Lucia positioned herself behind Archibald. Villanova's glare made her knees weak.

"Little one," he said, pointing his bloody finger toward her. "You are the only one in this room who will understand what I am about to say, so pay close attention.

He brought his hand up and tasted the blood. Then, he glared at her again.

"I owe you," he whispered.

The words he spoke were in Vodacce, and when he said them, the only reason she didn't fall to the floor was because the Swordsman caught her.



The last few pages of this book are dedicated to you, the player. We've divided it into two sections, the first for folks who have never played a roleplaying game before and the second for more experienced players. However, we strongly urge the experienced people out there to read the Novice Player section anyway. It never hurts to see old lessons through new eyes.

Introduction for Novice Players

This chapter is designed to help you get the most out of playing *7th Sea*. If you've never played a roleplaying game before, it's easy to get lost in all the jargon. We want to make your first roleplaying experience easy and fun. We'll start with talking a little bit about designing a Hero and making that Hero fit the world and your gaming group. Then we'll spend a few minutes discussing your role in the game itself, and your relationship as a player with the GM.

Hero Concept

There's more to making a Hero than slapping down numbers and words. After all, *7th Sea* is a game of heroes and villains, of dashing acts of derring-do and dastardly deeds of degenerate villainy. There are a few traditional conventions we have to acknowledge in order to maintain that atmosphere. Let's take a look at how those conventions affect how you make your Hero.

The Ensemble

Some people, when they start an RPG, come up with a Hero like this:

He's the best kind of killer and the kind of killing he does isn't pretty. He's a bad man who lives by his own rules and those who cross him come away with one fewer extremity. Don't walk in his shadow, because doom and gloom follow him wherever he goes. He doesn't play well with others, because he's a lone wolf, a shadow-browed killer who won't get close to anybody because getting close means losing and he ain't gonna lose ever again.

Who wants to party with *this* guy?

When we're talking about *7th Sea* stories, we're talking about "ensemble stories." Ensemble stories revolve around a group rather than just one individual. While D'Artagnan may be the viewpoint character of *The Three Musketeers,* the story is about a team of men and their mission to save the King of France. Lord Percy may indeed be the Scarlet

Pimpernel, but his league of agents, informers and friends make the story work. In the end, even Captain Blood must recognize that his own personal agenda is not as important as the lives of the men who followed him for so many years.

When you first sit down and think of the kind of Hero you want to play, keep all of that in mind. You are going to be a part of a group, and you have to find your own niche within that group. That doesn't mean the group has to swallow your style (after all, everyone has his own favorite musketeer), but your style should complement the group you join. If your group looks like it's going to be sailing in search of the hidden Seventh Sea, then you should make a Hero who's interested in such a quest.

On the other hand, sometimes contradictory Heroes make the perfect complement to a group. That same nautical search could do well with a Church scholar who sneers at the prospect of a "lost sea" and is along for the ride to make sure *somebody* on the boat has his perspective straight. Of course, the scholar isn't going to sabotage any evidence the party might stumble on; that would be obfuscating the Creator's Truth, something no honest scholar would never do.

"But what if my Hero *isn't* honest?" you ask. "What if I want to play someone who wants to sabotage the party's goal?"

Ask yourself this: Would you want to play with a character in the party who was putting your Hero at risk? If a Hero acts against the best interests of the group, how would that group rationally respond? Would you trust that Hero after you found out he was doing less than honorable things, or would you just throw him over the side and let the mermaids have him?

In a nutshell, playing a Hero who acts against the rest of the party asks the other players to accommodate your character concept by compromising their own. That's having fun at everyone else's expense, and it's not the kind of fun we're looking for.



The Buddy System

"He is the most egomaniacal, self-absorbed, overbearing, insolent man I have ever met. I've never met anyone I trusted more in my life."

Think for a moment about the Three Musketeers. Each of them is unique and fulfills a specific role in the group. When you sit down to make a Hero, you should really do it as a group. That way, you can talk about the kind of Heroes you want to make and create a group that really works well together. If someone wants to make a sorcerer without a hint of fighting ability, he's going to need a very big/fast/mean buddy who keeps him out of trouble when the kitchen gets hot. Likewise, the big, brawny swordsman needs a quick-on-his-feet counterpart. The dashing cad needs a beautiful swordswoman to be his witty foil and the idealistic archæologist needs a skeptical church scholar to "keep him honest."

The best groups banter back and forth, they argue about where they're going next, they even give each other the evil eye once in a while, but they always – *always* – look out for each other. It's important to have someone you can trust watching your back and if it isn't that guy sitting across the table, who is it going to be? These group dynamics can develop by themselves, but why not give them a little nudge? When you make your Hero, get a buddy or two. Sure, you may not agree with him *all* the time – and you think that hat makes him look like a fop – but when you really need it, he'll be right there beside you, no matter what.

What is a Hero?

A hero doesn't always do what's smart, but he always tries to do what's right.
– Berek's Proverbs

More than anything else, *7th Sea* is a celebration of heroes. While the game system seems to encourage the notion that heroes are walking gods, that's not exactly what we're after here. Heroes are mortal men and women. They bleed the same as everyone else, they weep and mourn and even fail the same way. Yes, our heroes have a game mechanic advantage over other mortals, but there's something else that separates them from others, and that is a need to set things right.

Every day, common folks see injustice in the world. They see a bully roughing up somebody smaller than himself – and we're not talking just the third-grade kind, but the industrial strength grown-up bully – and more often than not, they ignore it because it's just easier to say "It's none of my business" than to get involved. Heroes can't do that. They have to get involved. They have to do *something*.

Every hero has a different reason. Some get involved because they sympathize with the little guy, and they know what it's like to get pounded and that nobody's going to help because it's "none of their business." Other heroes do it because they feel a duty to do so, because they get a sick rumbling in their stomach when they see injustice. Some heroes do it because they need to feel like they've left behind a legacy, and they can't imagine leaving the world without being remembered for doing something noteworthy, even if it's one little thing. Whatever the reason may be, heroes make justice in an unjust world, and the reason we remember them is because they had the courage to do what we couldn't.

With all that in mind, take a look at the Hero you want to play. Is he a hero? Does he have the potential to be a hero, even if that moment is still very far away? It's not enough to ask if he's heroic, you also have to ask why he wants to be a hero. What drives him, compels him to take his own life into his hands to make a difference? Is it worth putting life and limb aside to do the right thing? That's a question the hero has to ask every moment of every day. Of course, for some heroes, the question is irrelevant; for them, the answer is always "yes."

What is a Scoundrel?

Let's spend a moment to talk about the hero's dark-haired cousin, shall we?

The scoundrel is a different kind of character from the hero. It's not that he has a problem with that whole good/bad thing – he knows that it's important to do right – it's just that every time he has to pick up his sword and save

someone from distress, you can hear him grumbling about it.

Every scoundrel is different, but they all have one thing in common: something keeps them from making that little step over to hero. You can guilt them into doing the right thing, you can seduce them into doing the right thing, you can even bribe them into doing the right thing, but the fact remains, it takes a lot of effort to do it.

Playing a scoundrel can be tricky. There you are, so close to toppling over into villainhood, and all it would take is a little nudge. Of course, on the other side are all the heroes, urging you to take that little step their way. Sooner or later, the scoundrel must make a choice, and his destiny will be altered forever.

The Charter

Every guild, secret society and club in Théah has one: a charter. A charter defines the goals and guidelines of an organization, values and ethics that the organization venerates and aspires to. Your group should be no different.

A charter makes it very clear what your group will and will not do. All too often, a gaming group can degenerate into squabbles over "the right thing to do." A charter solves that problem: the agreement is right before you with your signature at the bottom. Of course, some groups enjoy arguing over the exact meaning of a charter's terms, which provides exciting roleplaying opportunities – provided you can leave arguments between characters at the table.

Hero Creation

What follows is some friendly advice for when you start putting pencil to paper and assigning those one hundred points to your Hero sheet. We'll start with a discussion on Traits, move to Skills and Knacks, discuss the advantages of Advantages and do a little talk on Backgrounds.

Traits

In some roleplaying circles, the term "soft trait" indicates a game mechanic that you can overlook because good roleplaying will supplant the need for it. You may have noticed that there are no soft traits in *7th Sea*. Every Trait has a very real effect on the game mechanics. Let's take a look at each and how ignoring even one of them will cost you more than you may suspect.

Brawn

Brawn is important for two reasons. First, it represents your Hero's simple brute strength. Whenever your Hero tries to lift, push, shove, pull, rip or climb, he makes a Brawn Check. Do not underestimate the need for strength. Some folks prefer to play a quick Hero rather than a strong one, inflicting many smaller wounds instead of one or two large ones. However, one hundred little paper cuts are not equal to one broken neck.

The second important aspect of Brawn is that it is the Trait you use for Wound Checks. Every time you fail a Wound Check, not only do you come a little bit closer to falling down. The lower your Brawn, the harder it is for your Hero to resist pain.

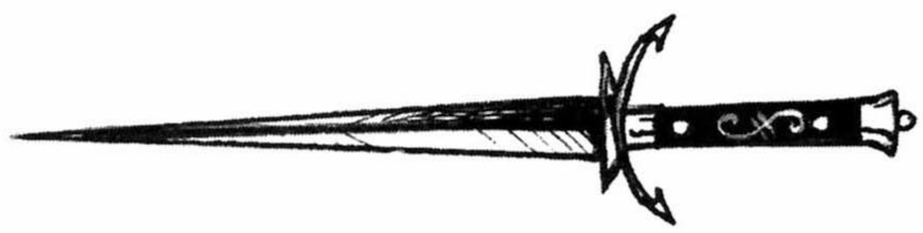
Finesse

Finesse is important for one reason, but that reason is important enough not to ignore. Finesse is the measure of your Hero's coordination, and thus your ability to hit your opponents in combat. It also determines the success or failure of throwing objects and weapons and for catching those same objects when they're thrown at you. Your Brawn can be Rank 5, but if you have a low Finesse, you're never going to get to use it.

Resolve

While Brawn determines when you take a Dramatic Wound, Resolve determines how many Wounds your body can sustain before it refuses to work anymore. Look at the numbers. A Hero with a 2 Resolve will fall down after four Dramatic Wounds while a Hero with a 5 will fall down after ten. Which one do you want to bet on?

The second important aspect of Resolve is willpower. Whenever your will is tested – as it is when dealing with



Sorcery – you make a Resolve test. It doesn't matter if you're strong, fast or even witty; if you've got no intestinal fortitude, you're nothing more than pudding.

Wits

Wits doesn't just determine memory and reasoning, it also gets you out of the way of trouble. Whenever you make an Active Defense roll, you roll Wits + Defense Knack, representing your ability to react to sudden stimuli. Wits is also a Hero's perception, determining if he notices when people are pulling the wool over his eyes, picking his pocket, moving just out of sight, palming a knife or slipping a drop of poison in his wine. In short, a good Wits Rank is useful in almost any situation, while the Hero who disregards his Wits can't think his way out of a wet paper bag, let alone that ambush coming up around the corner.

Panache

At first glance, Panache may seem to be the most important Trait of them all. After all, it determines how many action dice you get per round and when you get to use them. Don't overestimate its value. After all, you could act seventy times per round, but if your other Traits suffer, it won't matter a single bit. Panache provides opportunities for action, but the other Traits determine whether those actions will be successful or not.

Skills and Knacks

When you're done picking your Traits, it's time to move on to Skills and Knacks. Even more than Traits, Skills truly define your Hero. Before you start pouring all of your potential into Skills, however here's a little advice to make sure you get the most out of your Hero points.

When first creating a Hero, try to resist the temptation of buying Advanced Knacks. It's all too easy to put a whole bunch of points into one or two Skills to get Uppercut, Side-step and all those other cool special effects, but the fact of the matter is, you'll be sacrificing versatility to get them.

Heroes who exclusively purchase Martial Skills and ignore the social graces are not gentlemen, they are butchers. They are also next to useless when an ambush jumps them from behind (go take a look at the Ambush Knack; it's right under Criminal and Spy). Nor can they talk their way out of the simplest Vodacce verbal traps or even discern the difference between Avalon Glamour and Inish charm.

Likewise, Heroes who invest only in Academic Skills will find themselves at a great disadvantage in Théah's sordid city streets. A gentleman has to be able to protect his honor, as well as the honor of all those hearts he won in court.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds are subplots, plain and simple. They are secondary story threads you ask your GM to include in the game, and the points you pay are the cost of admission. Backgrounds are like episodes of your favorite TV show, with your favorite character as the centerpiece. Each time they come into play will be a new experience, revealing a little more about your character and the subplot he is developing.

When you consider taking a Background, come up with a couple of ways for it to affect your character. If you would like to take a True Identity, think about how it will play out. Are you the one with a True Identity, or do you know the true identity of another? Maybe you know that the late Bishop who baptized the King was a fraud, which would invalidate his claim to the throne. Give that to the GM as a little extra depth for your character, and he'll probably come up with some way to incorporate it into the ongoing game.

When playing through a Background, keep a few things in mind. First, remember that you asked for it; the GM has formulated a story around the initial Background you chose, but you gave him the seed. If you want to have an impact on the kind of story you'd like the Background to fulfill, talk to your GM. Let him know that you what kind of game you want to play with the Backgrounds you choose.

Second, remember that your Background may be the primary part of any story, but it won't always be the center of attention. Other players at the table have their own Backgrounds, and each needs to take center stage once in a while. In fact, you may want to find a way to "play into" your fellow players' Backgrounds. Just remember that those

Backgrounds belong to other players, and you are only there to help out, making yourself a small part of someone else's larger story.

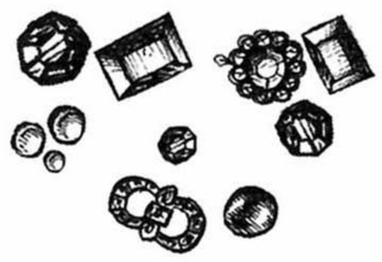
That's the way it's done in all of the major fantasy novels and sci-fi television shows. Each character gets his own story once in a while, and the rest are written into that story with their own perspectives on the problem at hand, or their own skills and abilities to help out with.

Third, pay attention to pacing. For example, it's not always a good thing to finish off a Background. Not only will you stop getting points from it, it's always a little sad to see a good story reach its end (do you remember the last episode of your favorite TV show?). On the other hand, some Backgrounds prove to be too incongruent with the overall story, or they're simply not fun. If this is the case, let them go. Tell your GM you're not enjoying the Background, and let him wrap it up or exchange it for a new one. Remember that the only limits to Backgrounds are your imagination and willingness to play them up.

Lastly, avoid taking a Background you're not genuinely interested in. Not only will this make the game harder for you, it'll be less fun. If you like a game with lots of witty banter between you and the Villains, take a Rivalry, but avoid it if you like a more combat-oriented evening. If you obtain more satisfaction from a game in which you are well challenged, take a Vendetta and watch the stakes rise, but keep in mind that you are asking for a tense, roller-coaster ride when you do.

Also remember that Backgrounds can be purchased during play as well as during character creation. You can tell the GM that you want a certain Background, pay its cost in Experience Points, and then let him work it in. Or if you see an NPC or plotline going on at the table that you feel would complement your character perfectly, then let the GM know ("I want *her* as my Nemesis!"). This will usually result when the trigger event for the Background has already occurred (such as the lady pirate in question sinking your Hero's ship). If the GM approves, all you have to do is pay the cost (again in XP), and you're off.

So if you're looking for a way to flesh out your *7th Sea* character through the system, start here. You can take a Nemesis to spar with every other episode or so, or you can buy into a Lost Love and try to win her back (or avenge her if she's dead). If mysteries are more your style, pick Cursed or Great Destiny, either one of which provides countless hours of gameplay to resolve.



Arcana: The Virtues of Hubris

Arcana include Hubrises (heroic flaws) and Virtues (heroic merits). These are advantages and disadvantages designed to get your roleplaying group to work more effectively as a team. Some of the Hubrises admittedly can disrupt the group, but none of them are designed to destroy party unity, and you shouldn't play them as such. We feel that the Arcana present a valuable roleplaying tool. Let's take a look at Hubrises first, and later we'll get to Virtues.

First of all, you're only allowed one Hubris. This forces you to decide which aspect of your character you want to play up the most. More to the point, only one Hubris allows you to focus on the theme of your character and let the details pencil themselves in as you go. Characters seldom have a strong personality from the very start; they have a way of becoming better over time like a fine wine. Therefore, if you feel that your character is two-dimensional at the start of a new campaign, give him some time to develop before you throw him away in favor of a new one.

Secondly, your Hubris doesn't always affect you. You don't have to roleplay it every second of every day. Your GM has limited resources with which to activate your Hubris, and he's going to think carefully before doing so. Simply put, you only have to worry about it when it's *important.* Your GM will likely have a specific effect in mind for it, which he'll let you know when he tries to activate it. The Hubrises allow your GM a little flexibility in when he can activate

them, so be prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt if you aren't quite sure of his motives. Remember, you got 10 HP for it, and that's a lot of Skills and Knacks you could buy. Also keep in mind that you don't have to take a Hubris, so whatever you take, you're asking for the GM to use it against you. A Hero's Hubris should be able to bring about his downfall or even *death.*

Lastly, if you are willing, you can overrule the GM's activation of your Hubris. You have to spend a Drama Die to do, however, so it costs you XP. This may *feel* like the GM docking you Experience Points for not roleplaying your disadvantage, but it is – in fact – you choosing to dock your own XP.

What about Virtues? We realize that many people will view them as costing 20 HP (rather than 10) since they prevent you from taking a Hubris, but think carefully before you write them off. While a Hubris gives you a tragic flaw that you have to deal with, a Virtue allows you to be larger than life. Certainly, they cost XP to use, but that's to prevent them from taking over the game. This encourages you to use your Virtue only when you absolutely need it, rather than at every opportunity. Some of the Virtues, such as Intuitive or Creative, are admittedly designed for newer players. It's okay to think of them as training wheels – when you feel you can get along without the assistance the Virtue gives you, leave it off your next character.

Besides this, there's something very cool about doing big heroic things that no one else in the party can do. Whether you're immune to Fear, or one of the greatest Swordsmen in the world – that niche is yours, and no one else in the party can fill it. Some of the Virtues even allow you to make other Heroes more effective.

So, before you get stuck in the mindset that Virtues are too expensive, or that they are useless, just remember – Virtues make you a Hero, and they let you do things that no one else can. Even at 10 HP, Virtues are a *bargain.*



Introduction for Experienced Players

Old dogs can learn new tricks, but stubborn ones can't learn anything, no matter what their age.
– Kevin Jones, Avalon privateer

Okay, so you're an experienced player. You've played tons of other roleplaying games before and you know all the ins and outs. *7th Sea* takes a particular mindset, however: playing *7th Sea* isn't about playing a character, it's about playing a Hero.

Playing a Hero

So you've sat down with the other players and created a character that works within the group. You've spent your Hero Points carefully and prudently and you've even talked over your Background and Hubris with the GM, so he can find a way to wrap it up in the story he's developing.

That was the easy part. Now, it's time to actually *play* this character. Don't worry, the rest of this book is devoted to showing you how to get the most out of your Hero, the game system and even the Game Master (but don't tell him we told you how!).

Physicality and Vocalization

In the movies, every hero has something that sets him apart from the rest of the show. Beyond the back story that spawned him, and any interesting plot twists that revolve around him, he has a certain quality that makes him special, a level of depth that the supporting cast usually lacks. Screenwriters agonize over this, spending countless hours building unique traits and mannerisms into their central characters that are both tangible and visible to the audience.

In period dramas (like *The Three Musketeers* and *The Mask of Zorro*), this is particularly difficult, due to the culture chasm between the audience and the characters. After all, few people know the mannerisms of a soldier or courtier in the seventeenth century!

This section should help you customize two of the most important aspects of your character's presentation – voice and habits – so that he can attain that level of heroism that will linger in the memory for years to come.

Find Your Character's Voice

Every hero has particular mannerisms of speech, modulation of voice, or turns of phrase that are his and his alone. Perhaps others emulate him, or maybe he even picked it up from someone else, but in the end, he makes it cool. Everyone remembers what Inigo Montoya (the Spanish swordsman from *The Princess Bride*) plans to say when he meets the Six-Fingered Man. As he tells the story to the Man In Black, we know he's told it to every man he's ever faced in a duel. Of course, we only see him say it once because seeing it over and over again would compromise some of the magic of the story.

Examples of things that you as a player can do to make your character's voice memorable include turns of phrase ("Your eyes are like the setting sun, my lady") or quotes from period books. Accents should be employed only if you can manage them. There's nothing more cheesy than a bad accent. It should go without saying, but avoid anything that annoys the other players at the table, such as shrieking or high-pitched noises.

One really great benefit from generating a mannerism for your Hero is that others at the table will always know when you are in character. There are moments during play when you must take a step back and ask the GM or another player a question, but when you are "speaking in character", then they know that you are roleplaying and are available for interactive dialogue and in-character queries; they don't have to break the mood by asking first.

Like all other aspects of this system, many GMs will develop these traits for their NPCs as well. If you have trouble with your own, watch him. In the end, he's the best resource you've got.

Physicality

Once you've got your Hero's voice figured out, start thinking about his "physicality", or body language. Everyone's got habits, and your Hero is no exception. How he stands, sits and bows can tell a lot about him. If he's a scholar, he probably handles a blade a little differently than a Swordsman would. Perhaps he wrings his hands while he's thinking or runs his fingers through his long hair when he's worried. If she's impulsive, does she bite her lip when she's fighting back the impulse to curse or does she just squint slightly and stare?

A Hero's physicality is like communicating in shorthand. Instead of saying "I'm tired," you can simply yawn. Instead of saying "I'm nervous," you can rattle your fingers on the table. Instead of saying "I'm angry", you can communicate your emotion with a single long, cold, hard stare. The more you learn about your character's body language, the more three-dimensional your Hero will become.

Playing the Same Game

Roleplaying is an ensemble experience, designed for multiple players to work towards one common goal. And that isn't limited to the players with characters, either. The GM plays a large part in maintaining the game's unified purpose. Before a campaign begins, it's important to make sure the players understand that, and that they're prepared to work hand in hand with their GM to make the experience an enjoyable one.

Some players see the GM in an antagonistic light, as someone trying to kill or at least threaten the Heroes whenever possible. Admittedly, some Gamemasters do little to discourage this attitude, tormenting their poor Heroes whenever they can. This is the wrong way to set up a campaign; if you see your GM as an obstacle to get around, or an opponent to outsmart, you're going to be at each other's throats every session. The campaign will quickly degenerate into arguments over rules and variants on the "but I *said* I was checking for traps!" theme. Sound like fun to you?

In order to avoid that, players and GMs need to talk before the game begins. As early as possible, you should sit down with your GM and decide what kind of campaign you'd like to play. By spelling out what interests you and listening to what the GM is interested in, you can craft a campaign outline that everyone will enjoy. Will it be dashing and heroic, or sinister and intriguing? Will it take place on the galleons of the High Seas, or in the noble courts of Théan nobility? Talk about what you have in mind. Explain what you see in the world of *7th Sea* and how you'd like to play it out in the campaign. Then listen to what the other players (including the GM) have in mind. Are their ideas compatible with yours? Is it possible to run them all within the context of one campaign? If not, which ones will engage everyone's attention? The more you talk about it, the easier it will be to craft something that the entire group can get excited about.

Character creation plays a big part in this process. The kind of Hero you make says a great deal about the kind of campaign you want to play, and can give your GM the right ideas for designing adventures. If you create a rough-and-tumble Sea Dog, chances are you'll want to spend your time fighting scurvy pirates and terrible sea monsters on the deck of some man o' war. On the other hand, you might fancy a cultured, sophisticated Montaigne nobleman engaging in diplomatic tete-a-tete with the Castillians, or thwarting an attempted Eisen coup. Both are *7th Sea* Heroes, but they demand radically different themes and ideas.

Tell your GM about your Hero; let him know what the Hero's strengths and weaknesses are, what he does well, where he is apt to thrive. The GM can then run adventures that play to his strengths and won't leave him out in the cold. Similarly, if you know what sort of campaign is planned beforehand, you can incorporate its themes and ideas into your character's concept; that way you won't be stuck with a diplomat on a pirate ship, or an Inquisitor in the midst of a search for sorcerous knowledge. By knowing how your Hero interrelates with the other elements of the campaign, you'll be able to make the most of him when the time comes to start playing.

The same principle applies to the rest of the players. Every party needs a proper balance of skills and abilities, but

should also be unified in its purpose. An ensemble cast means that the GM must juggle the quirks and goals of several different characters at once, without resorting to playing favorites or disrupting the common purpose of the entire party. Working with your fellow players to achieve a proper balance between variety and unity can make the GM's job a great deal easier.

No one wants to play a useless character, whether it's another musketeer in a group full of them, or a Vestenmannavnjar pit fighter in the courts of the Sun King. Make sure everyone has a role to play, a useful purpose in the group that they can fulfill; incorporate as wide a variety of character types as you can while making sure that all of them can function in the forthcoming campaign. Are the adventures going to take place on a pirate ship? Make sure every Hero has a reason for being there and something unique to do on a regular basis. Will it be set in the back rooms of the Vodacce family palaces? Give the Heroes a reason to stick together while still following their personal agendas.

Setting things up this way lends individuality to the party without sacrificing their common goals. It gives everyone a distinct and unique Hero to play, one that they're excited about and willing to slog through a lengthy series of adventures with. It also ensures that none of them will be short-changed during the campaign, and that they all can function as a team. By staying focused on the story, and ensuring that everyone has a part to play as it unfolds (and more importantly, that everyone *wants* to play a part), the campaign can keep everyone interested for a long time.

Resisting the Story

In simple terms, resisting the story means being antisocial. It means putting your character and your character's motivations ahead of the rest of the group, and forcing them into doing things they don't want to do. Sometimes the concept of character and what a given Hero would or would not do threatens to overwhelm other elements in the campaign. Don't let this happen.

When reading the above paragraph, it's easy to think "I'm not a jerk, so I won't do anything that disrupts the campaign like that." Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Resisting the story rarely comes about through personal idiosyncrasies (although that can disrupt a campaign just as much). In fact, it usually arises from a perfectly innocent desire to play "right": that is, according to the Hero's ethics and personality. If you create a character with a fanatical hatred of Avalon, for example, you want to play him as hostile to everything that nation represents; you'll challenge Avalon noblemen to duels, cheer when Avalon ships are defeated, kick Avalon dogs in the street, etc. All of those actions rise from the perfectly logical pursuit of the Hero's given ideals.

Let's say our Avalon-hater is in a party who kidnaps a noble from Elaine's court. The noble is suspected of many heinous crimes, and is to be brought before Empereur Léon's court to face trial. The other characters have sworn on their honor to bring him back to Montaigne. Everything goes fine until they have the noble in their clutches. The Avalon-hater argues that they shouldn't take him back to Montaigne – they should just kill him on the spot. After all, Léon will have him killed anyway, and the long journey before them may give the captive opportunities to escape. Better to finish him off now and be done with it. The other party members argue fiercely against it. They have their honor to maintain, and even if he is guilty, it is not their place to determine his fate. In the midst of this, the Avalon-hater's player decides it would not be in character to let the others argue him off this point. So one night, while everyone else is asleep, he walks up to the kidnapped lord and slits his throat.

Now there's a big problem. What had been an interesting debate suddenly threatens to derail the entire campaign. Their captive has been killed as he lay there helpless; the Avalon-hater has committed murder. The other Heroes now have to explain to the king why they have failed their duties; the knightly orders they belong to may strip them of their ranks. In order to preserve their status, they may have to kill the Avalon-hater, or at least bring him up on charges. To do otherwise would be a violation of *their* character concepts, forcing them either to attack the Avalon-hater or junk their own Heroes' beliefs for the sake of party unity. So now we have the characters at each others' throats, because one



player put his Hero's motivations ahead of the party's. Such schisms rarely get left behind at the gaming table.

Avoiding such situations is simple: don't poison the PC pool. Don't act destructively just because "it's in your character," and don't force other players either to ignore your action or kill your character because it's in *their* characters. Know where the line is and make sure you – and your Hero – never cross it.

This doesn't mean that there shouldn't be any conflict within your party. On the contrary, some of the best and most rewarding roleplaying experiences come from moral or ethical disputes between Heroes. As long as you know where the limits are, and when engaging conflict becomes irreconcilable conflict, feel free to pursue arguments with your fellow Heroes.

To return to the Avalon-hater example, above, perhaps the Hero can argue passionately with his fellows, trying to convince them that their captive is too dangerous to live. Perhaps he can petition *l'Empereur* for an execution. Perhaps he can even "allow" the captive to fall into enemy hands, where he will surely perish. There are multiple options he can pursue, none of which foster the schism that an openly antagonistic approach would.

It's fun to develop your Hero as much as you possibly can. Just remember the story your group is telling, and work with it rather than fighting against it. The more easily you

can resolve the differences between your Hero and the plotline – the more often you can find a middle ground to express your character without destroying everything around you – the smoother and more enjoyable your campaign will be.

Playing Against Type

In roleplaying games, as in every other creative medium, there is a tendency to stereotype. Picking an easily recognizable character type gives an instant sense of identity. Roleplaying is especially conducive to stereotyping, because you don't have millions of readers or viewers to please, so you can get away with "Ha-ha! I'm the pirate king! And I buckle swashes, and swing from chandeliers and send all scurvy dogs who cross me to the bottom!" There's just you and your friends, having a good time. It can be fun to play a cliché sometimes, and RPGs are a great place to do it.

There comes a point, however, when anyone with a sense of imagination gets bored with the same old thing. Gallant musketeers and scheming courtiers are all well and good, but they need something extra if they want to sustain your attention. It doesn't need to be a whole lot. Sometimes it can be as little as one simple distinction to give your Hero a sense of self.

Oftentimes, it's enough to go against the grain in one single area. Pick a trait or a habit that's completely unlike the stereotype, and attach it to the character. If your Hero's a gigantic Ussuran woodsman, let him play the flute. If he's an effete nobleman, give him a taste for blood sports. Suddenly a flat, one-dimensional cut-out becomes an intriguing personality.

At the same time, even the most original character has a little cliché in him; people have been telling stories for far too long to come up with something truly unique. Archetypes are useful tools and should never be completely abandoned. If you try to create a Hero without any connections to any preconceived notions, you'll end up with an unrecognizable mess. A half-mermaid, one-legged, alcoholic, albino Inquisitor will inspire bad jokes and not much more. At some level, a certain amount of stereotyping is inevitable.

The trick is to use it as one part of the development process, not the end-all and the be-all. Think of a stereotype as the framework to base your character on, the bare bones waiting for flesh and spirit to come to life. It gives you a good opening concept – a basic image on which you can build. Start with something you'd like to play – the aforementioned pirate king, perhaps, or a royal grenadier. Then build on it, bit by bit. Ask yourself why your Hero would be in the position he is; give him reasons for his current status. Even if it feels simple, it lends a great deal to the character's plausibility. Say he's in the royal guard: ask yourself why. Maybe his father was in the guard and he's following in his footsteps. If that's the case, then how did he feel about his father? Did he look up to him and want to emulate his heroic career? Or was he forced into it, pushed by a parent into doing something he really didn't want? By taking the time to answer these questions, you go a long way towards pushing your Hero beyond the cookie-cutter clone.

Along the way, think ways to distance the character from his basic template. Consider what expectations the stereotype engenders, and then go against them. When people think of musketeers, for example, they think of daring deeds and expert swordsmanship. But what if your musketeer doesn't like to fight? What if he prefers to talk his way out of situations instead? By playing on preconceptions like this, you can create a distinctiveness for your Hero that's tough to beat. (You also give him an edge over his enemies; if he knows what they expect him to be like, he can surprise them at the most opportune moment...)

When assigning personality traits, avoid arbitrariness. Don't give your Hero a quirk just for the sake of having a quirk. It's silly and artificial, and doesn't add anything to the final result. Again, try to think about your character's motivations, about why he would have a particular quirk. If he wears a feather in his hat at all times, he should have a reason for it. If he doesn't like the color blue, there's probably some justification. Whatever the cause of your character's quirks, it should be reasonable and easy to understand. If he almost drowned once, he would naturally

have a fear of water. If he grew up in an occupied village, he probably holds a dislike for members of the occupying nation. Proper motivation makes your Hero a real personality, instead of just a jumble of traits.

Asking Questions Your Hero Knows

Admittedly, most of us have never been in a duel to the death, nor have we swung from the rigging with the raging seas far below, waiting to swallow us if we fall. Your character might have, however, and he should have learned something from the experience. If you play a skilled swordsman, you have the right to expect the GM to tell you if you're about to do something that no swordsman in his right mind would attempt, and to point out the most advantageous ground in a battle. A sorcerer should know when what he's about to do is likely to kill him – he's had years of special training designed to warn him about such things.

So if you aren't sure that what you're about to do is the smartest thing in the world, just ask the GM. Phrase the question like, "Does my Hero know where the best spot to hold off the assassins would be?" and let the GM make the call. He may decide that your character is too inexperienced in that area of knowledge to know the answer or he might ask you for a Wits + Tactics roll before answering. The idea is to let the GM do his job. If he says that you don't know the answer, then you just don't know. If you aren't belligerent about asking these questions, then your GM will most likely be more cooperative.

Ultimately the GM is in charge. He's the one who put the effort into designing and running the adventure, and he's not really getting to play, so don't make the experience of running the game miserable for him.

Improvising the Details

Player: *"Ok, now I'm going to swing on the chandelier... umm... is there a chandelier? You didn't say."*

GM: *"Well, you didn't notice it before, but now that you mention it, yes, there is a chandelier."*

If you want to do something like grab a bottle off the bar and hit someone with it (or swing on a chandelier) and you aren't sure if the necessary scenery exists, tell your GM what you want to do anyway. *7th Sea* is about drama, not sweating the details. At the same time, you need to be reasonable about what you're asking for. It's one thing to find a bottle sitting on the bar. It's quite another to find a loaded cannon when you're fleeing down an alley. Ask for things that might have a good reason to be where you need them. A wagon load of barrels is great when you're running away from the city guard, and a chandelier or tall curtain is excellent when you're fighting in a ballroom.

Don't be afraid to ask the GM leading questions if you have an idea that you want to incorporate into the game. For instance, if you run into a penniless Castillian swordsman on the road, the exchange between your GM and you ideally might run like this:

You: *"Do I recognize him?"*

GM: *"Hmm. Sure. Who is he?"*

You: *"Well, he looks my old fencing master, but what's he doing so far from home and dressed so shabbily?"*

GM: *"Sure, that sounds good."*

This takes trust, so don't abuse the privilege. If your GM had said, "No, as you look more closely, you see that he's not really your old fencing master," then let it go. Your GM probably has a better idea in mind for the swordsman.

This isn't the only way you can participate in story creation. It may be that your Nemesis is a Castillian Don who beats his peasants. Until the GM has actually worked that character into the campaign, you have a certain amount of flexibility. You might run into a snotty Avalon noble that strikes you as the biggest jerk in all of Théah, and so you decide on the spot that he's a much better Nemesis for you than the Don. Just tell your GM, "I hate this guy. Can I change my Nemesis to him?" If it's okay with your GM, go ahead and change the Background. If you aren't having fun hating your enemies and foiling their plans, then *7th Sea* isn't doing its job, and you should speak with your GM to see what can be done.

Be Prepared to Have Fun

Finally, remember that you are sitting at a table of friends and – like everybody else sitting at that table – you're there to have fun. If any single rule (or even group of rules) gets in the way of your group's good time, throw out it and move on. The game system is designed for that. In the end, all you really have to do is call a Target Number, roll some dice and see if you rolled high or low. Don't get caught up in arguments about which rule to use. Just have a good time.

Afterword

John Wick

Someone once said that the reason we write books is so we can tell people how much they mean to us in the Afterword. Before I go any further, I'd better thank all the people I can so I don't get pelted when the book comes back from the printer.

A special tip of the hat to all the fans who said "Farewell" when I left Rokugan and waited patiently to see what I've been doing for a year. Here it is, folks: the best I could do in 512 pages. You deserve nothing less.

I can't say enough about the people who helped this project see the light of day. All of them (they're on the credits page; go read their names) worked damn hard to make sure Théah sang. As always, it is *never* a "John Wick Game", it's an AEG Game.

A big, hearty hello to the Sea Dogs, a sea shanty group I used to sing with. All of you taught me something, even if it had nothing to do with this book, and I owe you all much more than I can say. Not just some of you, but *all* of you.

A thank you to Jean-Marie. You'll see where I've thanked you if you look closely. It's the least a writer can do for a friend.

And lastly, a wave to my sister Julie, who continues to remind me why I believe that heroes don't live in our past, they are much closer than we believe.

* * *

We tell the tales of heroes to remind ourselves that we too can be great.

That's a quote I wrote for another game. Remember it. It's going to come in useful in a moment.

This book presented a particular problem for me. You see, I have a personal policy about dedications: I don't dedicate books to anyone who won't notice. I'm only going to write a handful of books in my lifetime and that means a handful of dedications, and if I give even one of them to someone who's made the grave, it means I've wasted the chance to give it to someone who will appreciate it.

Now, I'd love to dedicate this book to a whole bunch of folks: Alexandre Dumas, Errol Flynn, Douglas Fairbanks (Junior and Senior), Basil Rathbone, George Lucas and William Goldman. Unfortunately, I don't think *any* of them will ever see it. Not even Mr. Lucas or Mr. Goldman; a roleplaying book just doesn't get around all that much.

I was pondering this little problem of mine the other night, realizing that I had to say *something*. I sat up all night, trying to express what I wanted with this book. Then, like a lightning strike, it hit me. I jumped up, turned on the computer and started writing.

When we're children, it's easy for us to believe in heroes. The world is simple black and white, and we know that it's the Good Guys' job to protect us common folk from the Bad Guys. Unfortunately, we grow up, go to school, get picked on by bullies, pay our taxes and our adult voice tells us that the world is not black and white, but a patchwork of grays.

The most honest part of me believes that there are Bad Guys in the world and its the duty of all Good Guys to bring them to justice. I truly believe that every day each of us has the opportunity to be a hero. If it's buying a 99¢ Happy Meal for the guy on the corner, driving a drunk friend home, or just kicking the hell out of a bully who's picking on someone, it's an opportunity to make the world just a little bit brighter.

Every moment of every day, you've got to decide which voice you're going to listen to. Right now, that little kid

inside of you is yelling to get your attention. He wants you to believe.

Every time I lose my voice, I turn to the folks I mentioned at the beginning of this little essay. I read *The Three Musketeers* or *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. I turn on the tube and watch *Star Wars* or *The Princess Bride*. The cynic in my head tells me that I can't save the world, but the kid in my heart tells me that I *can* make a difference, even if it's a small one.

So, here it is. My dedication. Not to Dumas and Company, but to that little kid in your heart. His voice is ragged after years of screaming, but he isn't giving up on you.

Don't you dare give up on him.

Until we meet again,

– *JW*

Jennifer Wick

Who doesn't love pirates? Sure they were villains, scoundrels and as much fun for legitimate merchants of their time as computer viruses are now, but time casts a softer light on lots of things. We create our own mythologies, pick and choose our fairy tales. And so we envision gentlemen pirates tipping their hats to their lady "guests," grand balls in which everyone looked marvelous and spoke brilliantly, and dashing highwaymen who robbed with justice on their side and a gleam in their eye. We make our own myths: the outlaw becomes hero, the hero becomes us, one step ahead of the mundane, a sword's point away from the commonplace.

With a little luck, *7th Sea* will help some people dream out loud with a few close friends.

I'd like to thank my parents, my sister Rebecca, and the rest of my family for their years of support. I thank my friends – Sylvia, Alvi, Arwen, Tina, Andri, Bonnie, Jeff and Kai (in order of acquaintance), plus all the rest of House Wanderer, wherever they may be – for inspiration. And finally, I thank my husband John for saying, "I always wanted to do a game with pirates," at just the right time, on just the right day, to launch all this happy madness.

– *JW*

Kevin Wilson

First things first. I'd like to dedicate my part of this book to my Mom and Dad. Thanks for everything you've done for me!

Thanks also to everyone at AEG for giving me the chance to show what I can do, and to the numerous friends who helped me out with ideas, criticisms, and translations.

I'd like to leave you with a few words of wisdom, but I don't really have enough to go around, so I'll leave you with a fortune I once found in a cookie instead:

"The marvels of this world are only beautiful if you can see them. Your lucky numbers are 2 6 13 21 42 67."

Be seeing you,

– *KW*



Appendix A: Glossary

Action: A single act taken by a character during a Phase. A Hero may make a number of Actions per Round equal to his Panache.

Action Dice: Dice that represent a Hero's Actions during a Round. Each die's facing tells the Hero in which Phase he has an Action.

Active Defense: An action that gets a Hero out of the way of a successful attack (therefore, rolled after the attack has been proven successful). A Hero's Active Defense is Wits + Defense Knack; the TN for the Active Defense is his opponent's Attack Roll.

Arcana: A term referring to the twenty-two Greater Cards in the Vodacce Sorte deck; also a Hubris or Virtue available to Heroes at the beginning of the game: a kind of "heroic halo" that hangs above the Hero's head that only Fate Witches can see.

Background: Unresolved stories in a Hero's past that come back to haunt him every once in a while.

Brawn: The Trait that determines a character's strength; used for rolling damage and resisting the effects of Wounds.

Character: A list of words and numbers that represents a persona. There are 5 kinds of characters: Heroes, Villains, Henchmen, Brutes and Non-Player Characters.

Contested Roll: An action that a character takes against an opponent who is actively resisting that action.

Defense Knack: Knacks that protect a Hero from getting hit by opponents.

Dramatic Wound: A serious injury that results in a failed Wound Check.

Finesse: A Trait that measures a character's physical coordination; used for striking opponents.

Flesh Wound: An inconsequential injury. Whenever a Hero takes a Flesh Wound, he makes a Wound Check (using Brawn) against his total number of Flesh Wounds.

Free Raise: When a character's Target Number is reduced by 5.

Game Master (GM): The player who runs the game. He doesn't play a particular character, but instead plays all the characters the other players will encounter in Théah.

Keep and Drop: When a Hero takes an action, the player rolls a number of dice. Throughout the rule book, the total is always listed with this formula: "A+B". "A" is the number of dice he can keep (add together) and "B" is the number of dice he must drop (cannot add to the total).

Knacks: Knowledge and abilities gained from the study of a Skill.

NPC: Non-Player Character. This is a character whose part is played by the Game Master, not one of the other players.

Panache: A Trait that determines a character's style; at the beginning of a Round, a Hero rolls a number of Action Dice equal to his Panache.

Passive Defense: Based on a Defense Knack, the TN an opponent needs to roll in order to successfully strike a character. The formula for determining Passive Defense is 5 + (Defense Knack x 5).

Perception Check: The GM will call for a Perception Check whenever he wants to see if your Heroes spot something that isn't readily visible, such as a hidden catch, a far-off ship, or a dust-obscured hieroglyph. A Perception Check is a straight Wits roll, only adding dice for Advantages such as Keen Senses which specifically add to Perception Checks.

Phase: One-tenth of a Round.

Raise: When a TN is assigned by the GM, a player may chose to Raise the TN in increments of 5. For every 5 points a player raises the TN, the quality of his success increases.

Rank: A number, usually between one and five, that represents a Trait or Knack. The higher the Rank, the stronger the Trait or Knack.

Reputation: A character's fame (or infamy) measured from –30 to 100. For each 10 Reputation Points (positive or negative), the character has one Reputation Die, usable in Reputation Actions.

Resolve: A Trait that determines a Hero's intestinal fortitude; a Hero may take a number of Dramatic Wounds equal to his Resolve before he is Crippled and twice his Resolve before he is Knocked Out.

Roll: A number of dice rolled to determine the success or failure of an action.

Rounds: A value of time. Each round is approximately 10 seconds long, but can be longer or shorter as the GM sees fit. A Round is divided into 10 Phases.

Simple Roll: An action in which the outcome is based solely on the skill and ability of the Hero.

Skill: A word that describes knowledge the character has learned. All Skills are accompanied by Knacks, which are "sub-Skills" or "specialities." Skills do not have Ranks, but Knacks do.

Trait: A word that defines a physical or mental aspect of a character. Each Trait is listed with a Rank; the higher the Rank, the stronger the Trait. The five Traits are: Brawn, Finesse, Resolve, Wits and Panache.

Target Number (TN): A number assigned by the GM when a Hero declares an action. The higher the TN, the more difficult the action.

Wits: A Trait that determines how quickly a Hero can think on his feet; used for Active Defense rolls and rolls involving intelligence and memory.

Wound Check: Whenever a Hero receives new Flesh Wounds, he must make a Wound Check: rolling his Brawn against a TN equal to his total Flesh Wounds.

Appendix B: Pronunciation Guide

The following pronunciation guides are not meant to be complete; they are only quick guides to give you an idea how to pronounce personal and place names. More complete pronunciation guides will be provided in the Nation Sourcebooks.

Avalon

Cymru (kim-ree) is Avalon's native tongue. Much of Avalon's geography has names that look confusing, but once you understand the language, they are easy to pronounce.

Vowels

Cymric vowels are always long and stress is always placed in the next-to-last syllable.

w: is a vowel, pronounced "oo" as in "food"

Consonants

c: is always hard, as in "cat"
dd: is an aspirated "th"
f: pronounced "v"
ff: pronounced "f"
ll: is a sound unique to Avalon. Put your tongue between your teeth, blow softly and make the "l" sound.

Castille

A quick note: The word "Castille" (*kas-teel*) is the foreign pronunciation for "Castillo" (*kas-TEE-yo*) or "Castle." Castillians don't appreciate their nation's name being mispronounced.

Vowels

a: "ah" as in father
e: "ay" as in café
i: "ee" as in need
o: "oh" as in piano

u: "oo" as in June

Consonants

b/v: the Castillian b and v are almost identical, as if slurring them together
j: "y", as in "yam" and "yonder"
ll: "ya" as in "million"
ñ: a combination of n and y as in "canyon"
rr: the "trilled r" or "rolling r"
x: "ch", as in the Highlands "loch"

Eisen

Vowels

ä or **ae:** Shape your mouth like you're going to say "ee", and say "ay"
ö or **oe:** Shape your mouth like you're going to say "oh", and say "ee"
ü or **ue:** Shape your mouth like you're going to say "oo", and say "ee"
ie: pronounced "ee"
ei: pronounced "eye"
au: pronounced "ow"
aü: pronounced "oy"
eu: also pronounced "oy"

Consonants

v: pronounced "f"
w: pronounced "v"
s: pronounced "z"
ss (also written **ß**): pronounced "s"
z: pronounced "ts"

Montaigne

Montaigne is a complicated language; there are more exceptions than rules. What follows is a very rough guide to speaking Montaigne.

Vowels

Montaigne's vowels are similar to Castille's, except:

u: as the Eisen "ü"
ou: as in "bush"
oi: pronounced "oh-ah"
eau: pronounced "oh"
ai: as in "paid"
er or **et:** pronounced "eh"

Consonants

The consonants d, n, p, r, s, t, and x are usually silent at the end of a word.
r: rolled, like a Highland "r"
g: when followed by a, o, or u, as in "garden"; when followed by e or i, as the second "g" in "language"
gn: as the Castille ñ
ch: pronounced "sh"
h: silent at the beginning of a word

Ussura

Ussuran has its own alphabet, unlike the one used by the rest of Théah. The Ussuran names in these books have been transliterated into the familiar alphabet, and so are pronounced more or less as spelled. No foreigner can speak Ussuran like a native, anyway.

Vendel/Vestenmannavnjar

Vowels

a: as in "awe"
á: as in "father"
ä: as in "bar"
å: as in "call"
e: as in "gin"
é: as in "day"
i: as in "is"
o: as in "boat"
ö: as in "not"
ø: as in "earl"
u: as in "foot"
ü: as in "boot"
y: as in "fruit"

Consonants

c/k: as in "bank"
g: as in "give"

j: as in "year"
r: as in "trilled"

Vodacce

Vowels

a: as in "far"
e: as in "fate"
i: as in "machine"
o: as in "store"
u: as in "spoon"

Consonants

c: (before a, o, u and consonants, including h) as in "cat"; (before e or i) as in "champ"
g: (before a, o, u and consonants, including h but not including l and n) as in "gap"; (before e or i) as in "gem"
gli: as in "billion"
gn: as in onion
h: always silent
q: (always followed with u) as in quick
r: rolled like the Highlands r
s: as in "rose", also when followed by b, d, g, l, m, n, r, v; at the beginning of a word or when doubled is unvoiced as in "sap"
sc: before e or i as in "shot"; before a, o and u as in "skate"
z: as in "treads"

How to Speak Pirate

This is the "Pirate Voice" made famous by Robert Newton in the 1950 movie adaptation of *Treasure Island.* He built this accent using old Welsh dialects.

The Crying Baby "A"

The sound found in "blather" and "ran" is also used in words like "father" and "water."

Short "E"

"E" is always short, as in "get" and "set."

The Popeye "I"

The Pirate "I" is like the Australian "I". When Popeye says "Oi yam what Oi yam", he's speaking Pirate.

The Canadian "O"

The "O" sound found in Canada is the sound we're looking for. It's a combination of "ow" and "oo," as in "out and about."

The Monkey "U"

The Pirate "U" is short and clipped and almost an "oo" sound. Make an "oo" sound while saying "nuptial" or "cup" and you'll have it.

The Hard Pirate "R"

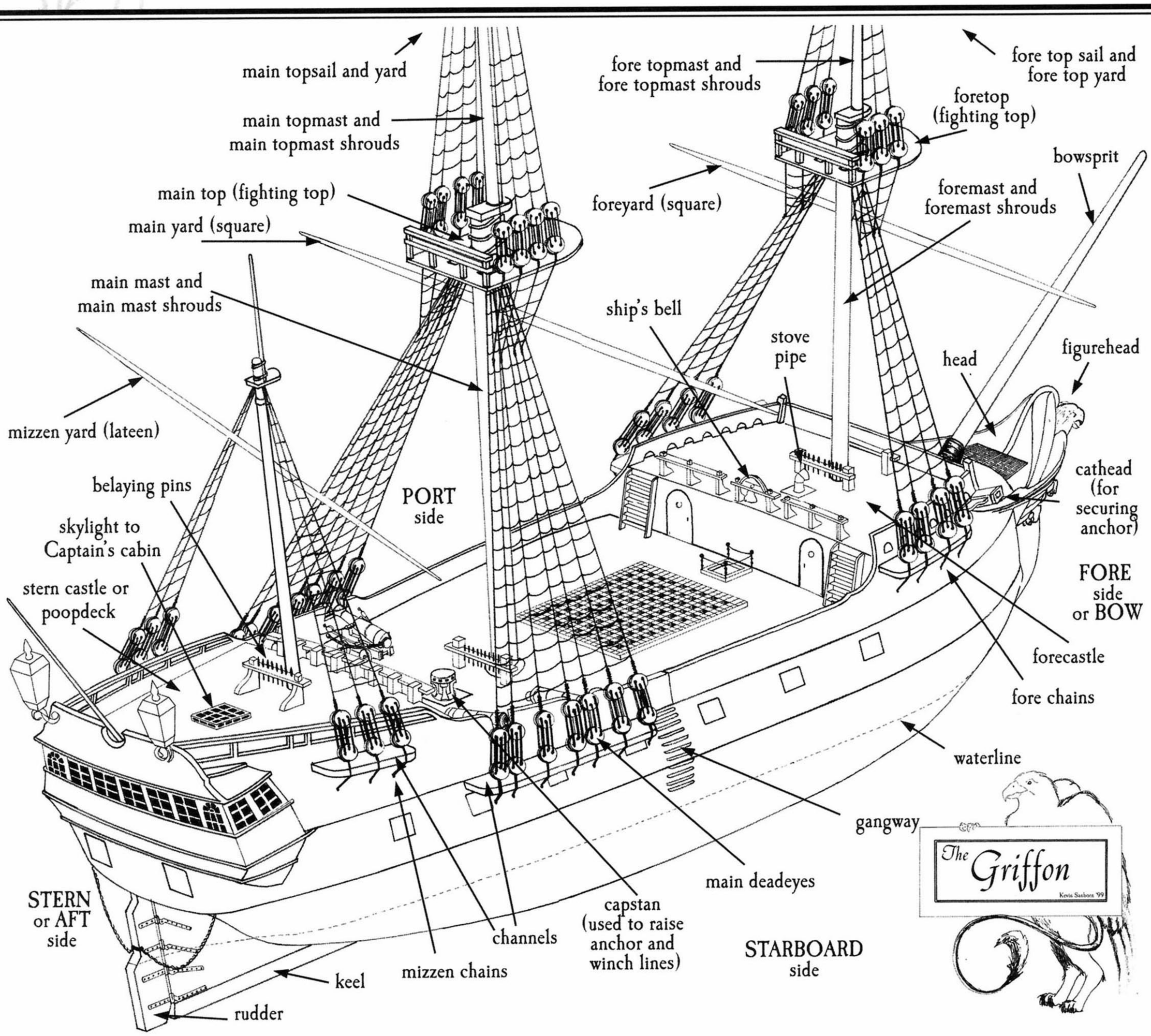
This is the sound everybody's familiar with. "Ahr!"

Inversion

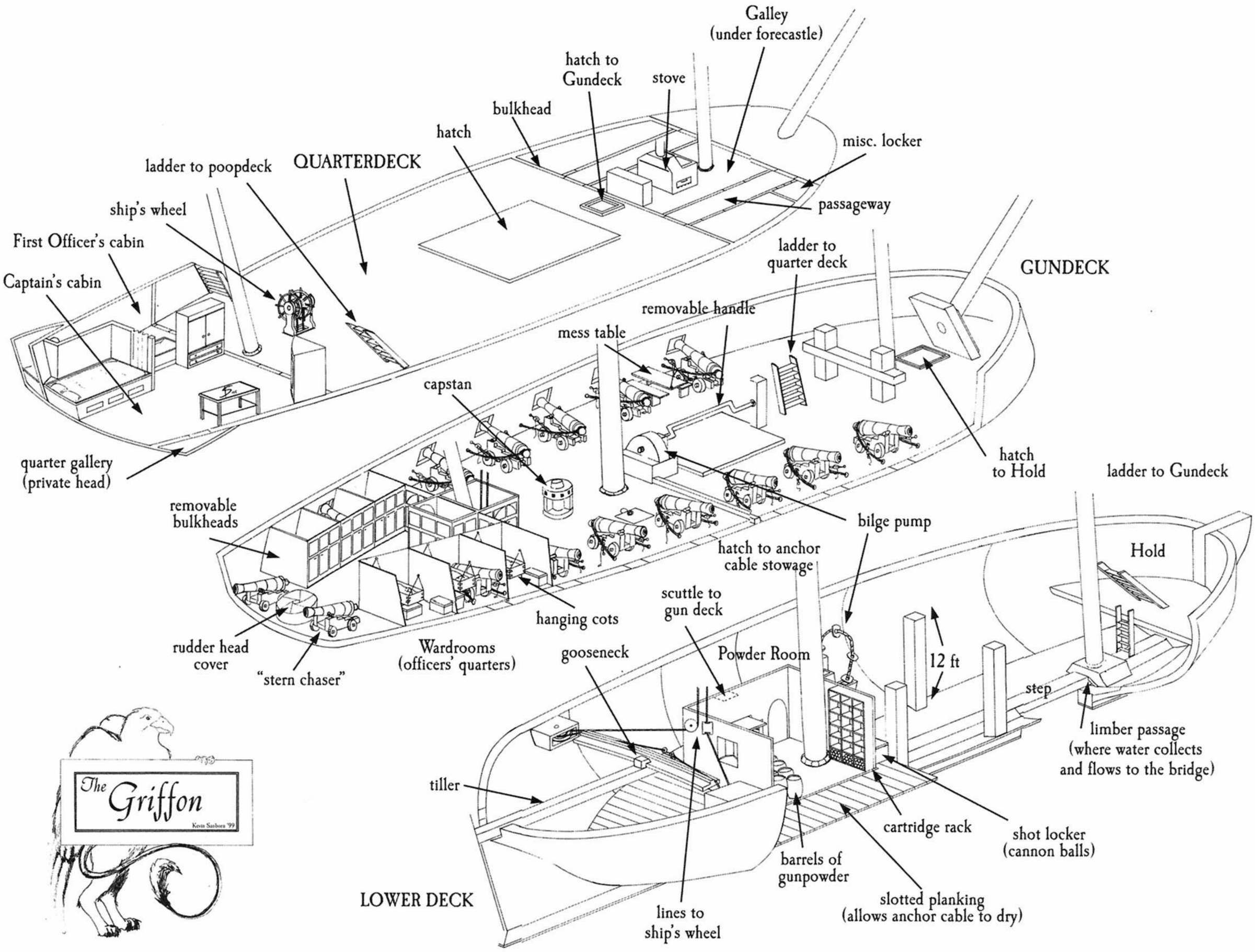
Here's a technique for players who've mastered the sounds. Modern English puts its nouns in front of its verbs: "I do," "he does," etc. If you really want to master Pirate-ese, put your verbs in front of your nouns. The best way to learn this technique is to listen to Yoda. "Wise you must be," "Great is Vader," and "To Obi-Wan do you listen!"



50' Sloop - Exterior View



50' Sloop - Interior View



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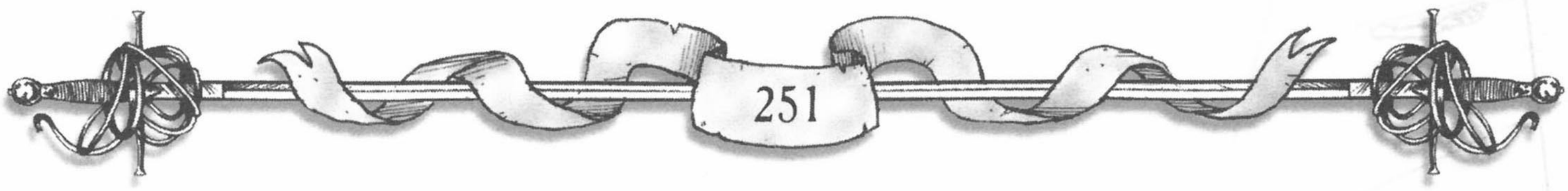
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Sign Up for The 7th Sea Society

The *7th Sea Society* is an organization of *7th Sea* players and Game Masters who have an important voice in Théah's destiny. Through contests, tournaments – and even weekly roleplaying sessions – these players' decisions and actions will have a direct influence on the outcome of the *7th Sea* storyline.
An annual membership includes:

- Four issues of the *7th Sea* newsletter
- Four *No Quarter* (the *7th Sea* CCG) cards available only to Society members
- *No Quarter* National Rankings for tournaments
- Letters updating you on changes in Théah
- Membership card
- Discounts on direct purchase products
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c/o Alderac Entertainment Group
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Joining a Secret Society

Part of joining the *7th Sea Society* is choosing a side. Members who join one of Théah's clandestine organizations (below) will become part of the shadow war that rages across Théah.

Faction Affiliation (choose one):

❑ *die Kreuzritter* (The Knights of the Cross)
❑ Explorer Society
❑ Invisible College
❑ Knights of the Rose and Cross
❑ *Los Vagos* (El Vago League)

Traits

Brawn	○○○○○	○○
Finesse	○○○○○	○○
Wits	○○○○○	○○
Resolve	○○○○○	○○
Panache	○○○○○	○○

Defense Knacks

Name	Passive	Active

Wounds

Flesh Wounds	Dramatic Wounds
Wound Check:	Crippled: Knocked Out:

Martial Skills

Skill

	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	

Skill

	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	

Skill

	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	

Skill

	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	

Skill

	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	

Skill

	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	
	○○○○○ ○	

Weapons

Type	To Hit	DR	Range	Short/Long Mods.		Reload

Special Abilities/Advantages

Action Dice



Traits: 8, Skills: 2, Basic Knacks: 1, Advanced Knacks: 3

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Traits

Brawn	○○○○○ ○○
Finesse	○○○○○ ○○
Wits	○○○○○ ○○
Resolve	○○○○○ ○○
Panache	○○○○○ ○○

Defense Knacks

Name	Passive	Active

Wounds

Flesh Wounds	Dramatic Wounds
Wound Check:	Crippled: Knocked Out:

Martial Skills

Swordsman School

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Mastery ○○○

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Swordsman School

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Mastery ○○○

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Weapons

Type	To Hit	DR	Range	Short/Long Mods.	Reload

Special Abilities/Advantages

Action Dice



Traits: 8, Skills: 2, Basic Knacks: 1, Advanced Knacks: 3, Local Swordsman School: 25, Other Nation's Swordsman School: 35

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Traits

Brawn ○○○○○ ○○
Finesse ○○○○○ ○○
Wits ○○○○○ ○○
Resolve ○○○○○ ○○
Panache ○○○○○ ○○

Character Information

Name _____
Player _____
Nationality _____
Profession _____
Memberships _____
Experience _____

Backgrounds

_____
_____
_____
_____

Arcana _____

Advantages

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reputation

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Total Dice

Civil Skills

Sorcerous Heritage

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Mastery ○○○

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Sorcerous Heritage

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Mastery ○○○

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

Skill

_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____
_____ ○○○○○ ○ _____

7th Sea™

Equipment

_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____

Traits: 8, Skills: 2, Basic Knacks: 1, Advanced Knacks: 3, Virtue: 10, Hubris: –10, Backgrounds: 1-3, Full Blooded: 40, Half Blooded : 20

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