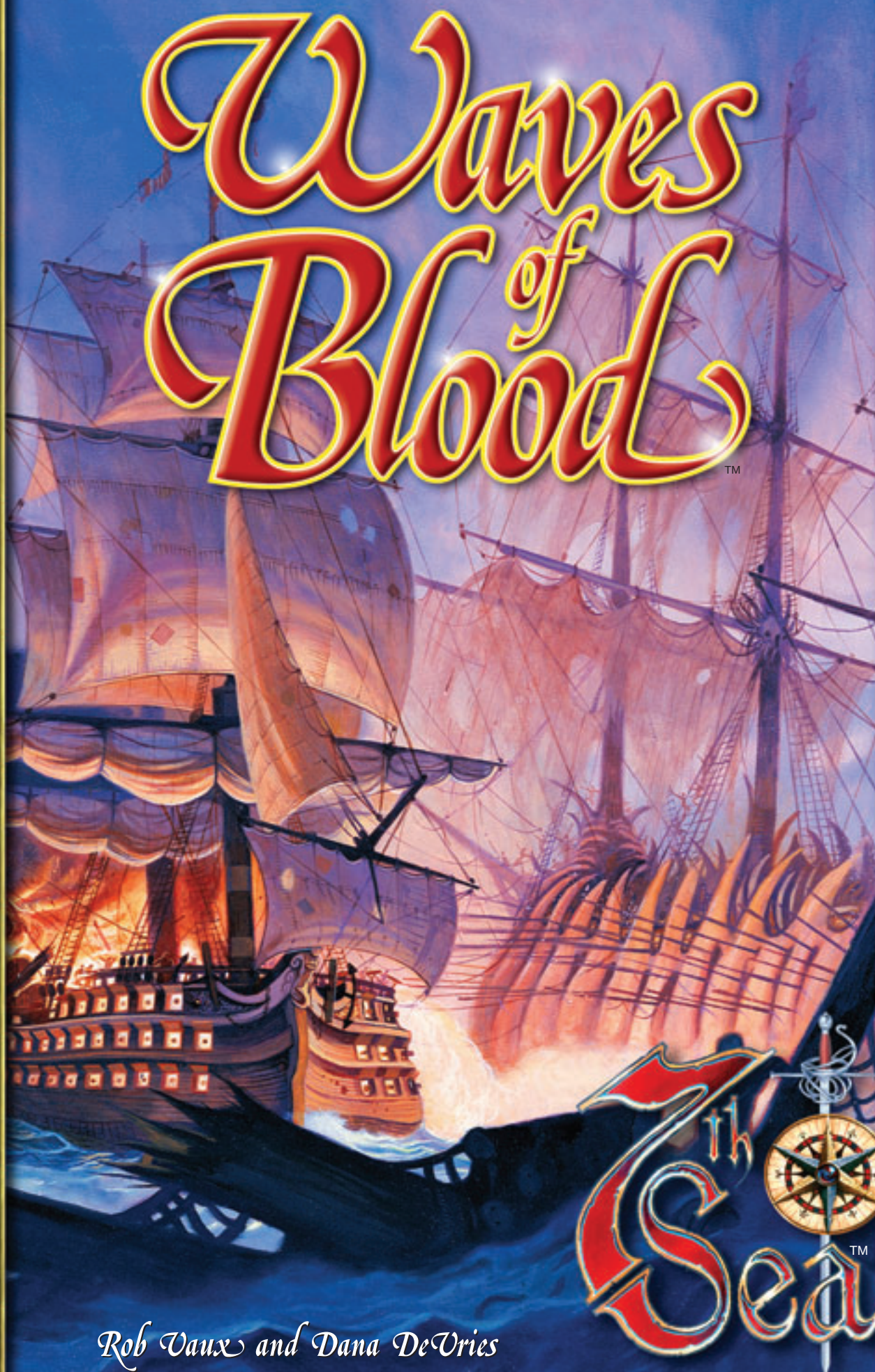


# Waves of Blood™



*Rob Vaux and Dana DeVries*



# Waves of Blood



*“What the sea wants, the sea will take.”*

— Traditional sailor proverb

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To all of the artists and playtesters who have contributed their blood and sweat to the *7th Sea* CCG over the last two years. You brought this world to life in ways we never could.

## *Dedication*

For Leticia Hayler, who showed us what it means to be strong.

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Welcome to *Waves of Blood*, the role-playing tie-in for the 7th Sea collectible card game. This volume was written as a comprehensive resource for CCG players, intended to answer any questions about the characters, stories, and locations from the basic set and the first seven expansions. But it was also intended for role-players to make use of the card game's resources — providing rules, statistics, and background material for running a campaign against the backdrop of Théah's turbulent oceans. We believe that both types of gamers will find plenty of useful material within these pages. With luck, *Waves of Blood* will be the first in a series of products intended to tie the two lines more closely together.

At its heart is a tale of the Théan seas. Pirates and scoundrels have plied the waterways for centuries, seeking plunder and gold in exchange for human blood. So too do brave men and women set sail to stop them, while searching for fortunes of their own amid the waves. The high seas contain all manner of secrets beneath their foamy caps. One such secret has lain at the sandy floor for untold millennia. By the time it is unearthed, it will have shaken the world to its core and launched a new age of wonder and adventure.

The book is divided into four chapters and two appendices. The first chapter contains an overview of the CCG storyline, as told by one of its most enigmatic participants. It recounts the events which lead up to the rise of Cabora and the final tournament at Gen Con™ 2001.

The second chapter is intended to help players portray RPG Heroes from the card game's various factions. It contains a plethora of information on the history, development, and *modus operandi* of Théah's most prominent seagoing powers, from Gosse's heroic Gentlemen to the bloodthirsty Crimson Rogers. It also includes tips on creating new crews, as well as ideas for tailoring your party to fit a given faction. In addition, it contains a

detailed description of the card game's most important locations, plus a look at the legendary Black Freighter.

The third chapter contains information intended for Game Masters only. It includes discussions on running campaigns based around various types of crew, plus adventure hooks involving items and artifacts from the CCG. It also contains the secrets of the dreaded Black Freighter, as well as ideas on integrating the haunted ship into your campaign. Finally, it covers the secrets of the Island of the Sunken Eye including its past, its purpose, and a detailed encounter chart for exploring its hidden depths.

The fourth chapter consists of new rules for players and GMs alike. Most importantly, it contains extensive guidelines on transforming your RPG Heroes into Crew cards for the CCG, allowing you to play your favorite home-grown characters in the card game. It also allows you to reverse the process, turning CCG crewmen into NPCs for the role-playing game. In addition, it contains reprints of popular rules from the *Pirate Nations* sourcebook, as well as a new advantages, new shipbuilding rules, and an advanced form of naval combat.

Finally, a pair of appendices provide an overview of the CCG timeline, and an extensive description of the game's most popular characters, including RPG stats and information on their vessels. The first appendix is rendered in a series of color plates, highlighting artwork from the game as well as the timeline.

Whether you're a bloodthirsty pirate or a noble Explorer, a heroic naval officer or a wily privateer, opportunities abound within the Théan seas — as do all manner of threats. We hope *Waves of Blood* serves as a useful guide to the allies, enemies, and wonders you may encounter there.



## Chapter One

# History

*The following manuscript was discovered floating in a bottle near the island prison of Talon by a Vodacce merchant trawler. It was dated Septimus, 1668.*

Greetings. I am the Kire. Nobleman. Pirate. Soldier of fortune and prisoner for more years than can be comfortably reckoned. No doubt you have heard the Kire's name before. It is well that you should. He has traveled far and seen much; he has watched good men die and new worlds emerge. He has observed the terrors hidden in the far corners of the world and the heights men can reach in the name of courage. The seas of Théah are of particular interest to him, for he has spent more time among the waves than he has upon land. Salt water flows in his veins; even now he can feel the pull of its siren song. The Kire has a tale of the Théan seas to tell, and he craves your indulgence as he attempts to recount it on this insufficient parchment.

He speaks now of Cabora, known to laymen as the Island of the Sunken Eye. Built by a long-dead civilization for some purpose known only to themselves, the Isle held more power than the richest Imperator — and more terrors than the Schwarzen Walden itself. Some say it holds the key to the 7th Sea. Others believe that it serves as the herald of the Fourth Prophet, signaling the end of the world. The Kire knows nothing for certain. All he knows is that some long-forgotten cataclysm sank it beneath the Théan sea known as the Mirror, hiding its secrets from the eyes of man.

For countless unhallowed centuries, the Isle kept its secrets hidden beneath kelp and sand. It took a pair of driven sailors to raise it from the ocean floor: two men hounded by demons of the most personal sort and willing to take any steps in order to silence them. Their twin quests ultimately merged as one and together, they

uncovered the long-forgotten Cabora... and threatened to unleash an apocalypse.

By now, all of Théah knows about the Isle, but few know of the events leading to its emergence. To understand Cabora, you must understand what took place before. The Kire's tale is not what happened after Cabora rose, but rather *how* it was lifted from the sea floor. It has a beginning without an ending; a start, but no conclusion. Many crews are involved in this story: the Avalon Sea Dogs, the mercenary General, the vicious pirates known as the Crimson Rogers, and others. Each had their own fate to pursue and yet each contributed — sometimes imperceptibly — to the fateful rise of Cabora. The threads are complex and become easily tangled, but the Kire will attempt to guide you through them as clearly as his humble skills allow.

## The Beginning

### Guy McCormick

The tale begins with a sea captain named Guy McCormick, who belonged to the Explorer's Society, a group of archaeologists and sailors dedicated to uncovering the mysteries of Théah. McCormick's wife Amanda was a member of the order as well and for many years, the two of them served diligently to further the Society's aims.

Amanda disappeared while on an Explorer's mission, taking an entire vessel with her. McCormick was despondent at the loss of his wife, but he knew the dangers she faced as an Explorer. He wept, he grieved, he built a monument in her honor, and then he went back to his work for the order, content that her soul rested in peace.

Until he learned what Amanda had been searching for when she vanished. She believed that she had found a passage to the 7th Sea, a semi-mythical place where the waters flow silver and time turns inside out. She confided her convictions in a diary, which Guy discovered long after he had consigned her to the grave. Her passionate belief in the 7th Sea was infectious, and Guy soon became convinced that she had not perished at all — that she had in fact succeeded in her quest. The notion became an obsession.

Soon he was pouring through the Society's archives, searching for any hint of the Sea's existence. His vessel, the *Discovery*, followed Amanda McCormick's wake, pursuing Syrneth artifacts and ancient manuscripts that spoke of the Sea. Were he not so driven, he might have missed the nebulous connections among the clues he gathered, and Cabora might yet be lying in its watery grave.

As it was, his efforts lead him to a startling discovery: a text describing a series of Syrneth "Switches," scattered in the far corners of the globe, along with the means to activate them. He believed that these Switches would lead to a gateway to the 7th Sea, and although the text made no mention of their exact location, he managed to find and activate the first of them with little difficulty. He did not know precisely what the Switches would do, only that triggering them might give him the answer to his wife's final fate.

### Kheired-Din

Guy McCormick was not the only seaman following the path to Cabora. From the Crescent Empire came a ruthless band of pirates and cutthroats, slavers who terrorized Théah with their brutality. They called themselves the Corsairs, led by a fanatical butcher named

Kheired-Din. He believed he was guided by a higher power, destined to bring an apocalyptic revelation to an unsuspecting Théah. He suffered from visions: angels and demons appeared before him and told him long-forgotten secrets. By following their words, he believed that he could remake the world into a better place... after destroying its present, flawed form.

In pursuit of his mad goal, Din had set about building a great fleet, searching for the means to bring about the end of the world. His vessels were powered by slave rowers, captured from coastal villages all along southern Théah. His crew used Syrneth devices and other horrors to strike down their enemies, and legends held that Din himself could not be killed by mortal hands. Every time he appeared to die he would rise again, seemingly unharmed. Convinced of his immortality, his crew obeyed his orders without question. Guided by his visions, the Corsairs had already located and activated one of the six great Switches — even as McCormick began his own search for them.

Among Din's crew was a Castillian pilot who called himself Espera. Captured and chained to the ship's great wheel, Espera endured countless petty torments while guiding the crew on its course. He remained a slave to the Corsairs, though it was doubtful he would leave even if he could. One of Din's followers — a fierce, exotic swordswoman named Dalia — had captured his heart, and he refused to leave her side, even though she clearly despised him. The Kire mentions him here because his love would have great repercussions for the Corsairs.

## Montaigne and Castille

Both the Explorers and the Corsairs set out on their quest with full knowledge of the dangers that awaited. The Théan seas are fraught with peril, and foolish is the sailor who plans on an easy trip. Horrifying monsters lurk beneath the waves, sirens and leviathans threaten the unwary, and enemies await in every port. Even a simple journey requires cunning and bravado, and both Din and McCormick were embarking on the quest of a lifetime.

Among the obstacles in their path was the royal navy of Montaigne, the proud armada of the world's most powerful nation. Montaigne's Empereur had invaded the western half of the nation of Castille, and placed a formidable blockade on its once-bountiful ports. The



Castillian armada had fallen on hard times following a disastrous attack on Avalon some years before, and lacked the leadership to challenge Montaigne's blockade.

As is typical of the Empereur, however, he did not feel that the blockade was enough. Even as his ships bottled their Castillian adversaries, he ordered his commander — an Eisen mercenary calling himself “The General” — to hunt down any pirates preying on Montaigne vessels (such foolishness to chase petty bandits in the midst of a protracted war! Perhaps *l'Empereur* is as mad as the stories say.) The General cared little for Montaigne's tactical position, however; he had no stake in their fight with Castille. As long as the Empereur paid him, he would do as the Empereur commanded, and so the Montaigne forces were split between blockading Castille and hunting down pirates who crossed their path.

The divided fleet gave Castille the opportunity it needed to prepare a counterattack. A brave admiral named Enrique Orduño had slowly rebuilt his nation's navy, preparing to retake the oceans that his country once ruled. He did not act at first, but rather waited for the Montaigne to show a sign of weakness. With their leader out chasing pirates, the invaders could only watch Orduño with growing unease.

## Scoundrels and Buccaneers

And what of those pirates whom the General had dedicated himself to eradicating? The Kire knows them well. Best among their number was the man known as Allende, also called the Pirate King. Allende led a nation of buccaneers based on the island of *la Bucca*, prisoners who recently freed themselves from their captors. After revolting and overpowering the guards, they proclaimed themselves “The Brotherhood of the Coast,” using the captured island prison as a base to launch raids against merchant shipping. Most of their attacks were directed against Montaigne shipping, and they seemed to avoid sinking Castillian ships.

Because of their tenacity, and Allende's clear preference for Montaigne targets, the General focused his initial efforts on capturing the Brotherhood's leader. Allende had a guardian angel looking out for him, however. His first mate was a strange Vodacce fate witch named Alesio. The pair met as prisoners on *la Bucca*, and Alesio remained close to the Pirate King ever since. Her



powerful Sorte magic helped him avoid the General's cunning traps, much to the dismay of the dogged Eisen mercenary.

While Allende hunted the southern Théan seas, another band of pirates hunted the north. The fearsome Vestenmannavjnar Raiders — primitive warriors who plied the oceans in fast-moving longboats — had grown increasingly bold in recent years. They mainly targeted their progressive countrymen, the Vendel, whose merchants and business dealings have made them rich (and catapulted their nation into the modern world). The Vestenmannavjnar believe that the Vendel have betrayed their collective birthright in exchange for profit, and have launched punitive attacks against both them and the nations who trade with them — nations like Montaigne.

The Raiders found a leader in the form of Yngvild Olafssdottir, a slight blonde rune mage whose size belied her fierceness. With the power of their ancestors and a fierceness born of desperation, she and her crew battled to preserve their people's traditions. Unbeknownst to Olafssdottir, however, a traitor lay within in her midst. The Vendel merchants managed to plant a mole aboard her ship, the *Revensj*, and waited only for the right opportunity for him to strike. He called himself Jorund Guttormson, and by all accounts he appeared to be a faithful Vesten Raider. Yngvild trusted Guttormson with her life and continued to hunt Vendel and Montaigne shipping with him at her back. All the while, he was seeking a proper place to plant a knife.

Olafssdottir was not the only vicious pirate to ply the Théan seas, nor the most fearsome. Even the General gave pause when considering the bloodthirsty crew of the Crimson Rogers. You have heard the tales, yes? The Kire can assure you, they are all true. The Rogers attacked without



warning, flying sails drenched scarlet in the blood of their victims. They left no survivors after their forays, sending those who opposed them to watery graves. They preyed on anyone who crossed their path, but paid particular attention to ships carrying Syrneth artifacts. The alien trinkets fetched a high price with certain Vodacce Princes, and the Rogers became rich raiding those foolish enough to carry them in their hold.

Their captain, known only as Reis, inspired mind-numbing terror in those he faced. He wielded a strange scythe forged by inhuman hands, and left a trail of blood across the waters of Théah. Legends hold that the man was over seven feet tall, a demon from the Pit made flesh. The Kire takes such tales for what they are worth, but he does know this: only one soul has ever crossed swords with Reis and lived to tell the tale.

That soul is “Bloody” Bonnie McGee, a Highland captain whose ship was destroyed some years ago by the Rogers. McGee escaped by the skin of her teeth and since served as a bosun with the privateers known as the Sea Dogs. These wily pirates worked for the island nation of Avalon, hunting the enemies of Queen Elaine in exchange for official sanction. Their leader, Jeremiah Berek had the cunning of a tiger, and seemed blessed with inhuman luck when pulling off his audacious schemes. It was his ingenuity which sank the Castillian armada in 1659, and gave the Sea Dogs an unsurpassed reputation for boldness. Some said that Berek gained his luck from the Glamour magic of the Sidhe. The Kire has had dealings with the damnable man in the past and cannot dispute such claims.

The fifth and final pirate to have a bearing on the Kire’s tale was a legend before the other four were even born. Philip Gosse, captain of the *Uncharted Course*, emerged from thirty years of self-imposed retirement for “one last adventure.”

Gosse was once a man of daring and honor; while he had earned a lengthy rest, the Kire cannot help but salute his decision to return. No true man of action wishes to die alone in his bed. A brave death, saving the innocent or thwarting some sinister scheme, fits one of Gosse’s courage. Would that the Kire could embrace such an end to his own life.

It is through these crews that McCormick and Kheired-Din plotted their treacherous course. Though each had their own destiny to pursue, their fates were inextricably woven together... and all would have an influence on the raising of Cabora.

## Thefts

Needless to say, crews such as these waste little time when pursuing their goals. Three bold acts of piracy marked the beginning of 1668, each reverberating far beyond a simple loss of goods. The Crimson Rogers struck first; departing from their usual haunts, they attacked and sank a Castillian ship on its way home from Vodacce. The ship contained numerous Vaticine treasures, including the famed Cross of the Vaticine Church, whose worth not even the Kire can contemplate. Captain Reis desired the Cross for his own purposes and did not fear sinking the vessel in Castillian waters. The Rogers killed all aboard, took the valuables, and burned the ship.

When the Church received word of the incident, they held Admiral Orduño accountable for the lost treasure. Orduño had focused his efforts on his Montaigne foe, leaving the prize ripe and unguarded for the plucking. The Admiral successfully argued that a Castillian victory meant more than such trinkets, but his standing within the Church declined significantly afterwards — a sign that priests can never and will never understand the harsh realities of war.

The Rogers thought they had little to worry about once they cleared the treasure. More the fools they. A confidence man in the employ of the Sea Dogs — “Lyin” John Fox by name — caught wind of the theft and reported it to Jeremiah Berek. Berek decided to test his luck yet again by stealing from the fearsome Rogers. He had Fox track the pirates to their lair, a hidden cove near the Vodacce border, and mark where they buried it. Once the Rogers departed, Berek arrived, and filched the Vaticine Cross from its hiding place.

(For more on this act of bravado, see the *Forbidden Cove* entry on pages 55–56.)

When Reis learned who had stolen the Cross, he vowed to hunt the reckless Sea Dog down as an example to all those who would challenge him. A pirate such as he lives and dies on his reputation, and Berek had dealt Reis a significant blow. Only when the Sea Dog's blood coated his sails could Reis rest easy again.

While the Dogs and Rogers sparred with each other, another theft was taking place on the far side of the sea. Captain Allende and his Brotherhood of the Coast received a commission from no less than the royal family of Ussura. The Gaius and his wife wished to retrieve several valuable heirlooms, stolen from their country by the marauding Montaigne. The Brotherhood tracked the items to a coastal Montaigne estate, whose owner had recently returned from the Ussuran front. In a daring midnight raid, Allende and his men entered the estate, overpowered the nobleman's guards, and made off with countless valuables, including those taken from the Ussurans.

Their path, however, took them far from home, giving the General an opportunity to engage them. Alerted to their activities through Porté messengers, the Eisen mercenary sprang a cunning trap, cutting the *Hanged Man* off before it could reach the safety of *la Bucca*. His vessel battered the *Hanged Man* with cannon and grapeshot, silencing the pirates' guns and destroying their ability to escape. As the deck of the *Hanged Man* caught fire, the General prepared to send boarders across, ready to clap the Pirate King in irons.

Allende had one hope to stop the General — the fate witch Alesio. By warping the threads of fate, Alesio could provide the Brotherhood with a means of escape. As the flames grew higher, the

fate witch began exactly that — only to be paralyzed by a shocking revelation. In the future she saw, she was destined to betray her captain, turning him over to his enemies. Even if she saved him from the General, she could do nothing to prevent her future treachery. The horrifying vision held her paralyzed as the General's men boarded the ship.

Allende's men fought back fiercely, using the fire and their own desperation to stave off the Montaigne sailors. Their efforts bought Alesio time to shake off her ominous premonition. Determined to overcome the hand fate dealt her, she called upon her magic to change the outcome of the battle. As the General waited on his vessel for news of Allende's capture, a Porté messenger appeared next to him with dire news. He was ordered to return to port immediately, forcing him to disengage from the *Hanged Man*. Howling with frustration, the General recalled his sailors and departed the scene, leaving the Brotherhood burning and stranded, but intact. Alesio had saved them, despite the dark prophecy which continued to pull at her soul.

## The Return of the Armada

What was this news that Alesio had conveniently conjured up? What event was dire enough to force an Eisen to abandon his prey? The answer was long anticipated, but even the canniest Montaigne could not have predicted its ferocity. Admiral Orduño had finally struck. Taking his fleet west from Castille, he struck a mighty blow against the Montaigne blockade, smashing the line and scattering its ships to the wind. With the Montaigne navy in tatters, the General was forced to set sail immediately, lest he and his ship be cut off from any friendly port. The Kire cannot fault him; in such circumstance, even a few minutes can mean the difference between safety and exile. The General returned to San Augustin in a high rage, disgusted by the turn of events.

It grew worse. When he reached port, he found a new commander waiting for him. Admiral Valoix Praise du Rachetisse III had assumed leadership of the Montaigne navy with the personal blessings of the Empereur himself. Léon XIV had one of his appalling changes of heart, and suddenly decided that the Castillian war was



worth more to him than the eradication of pirates. Unfortunately, it took the destruction of the blockade to convince him so. Naturally, he needed a scapegoat for the unfortunate turn of events, and the General fit his specifications.

Valoix stripped the Eisen of command, taking charge of the Montaigne navy. Loyal Montaigne sailors were ordered to leave the General's ship; only a skeleton crew of criminals and cast-offs remained. Valoix then gave the Eisen leave to "hunt pirates" with his lone vessel, leaving the rest of the navy to face Orduño's Castillians. Such is often the fate of the Kire's countrymen — they seek only to obey orders and end up serving as a sacrificial lamb to some foolish politician.

## Retribution and Glamour

While the General writhed beneath the heel of his employers, Jeremiah Berek was learning the price of his folly. The Crimson Rogers tracked his ship, the *Black Dawn*, with ruthless efficiency and engaged him before he could return to Avalon waters. Reis cared not so much about the stolen Cross as about crushing those who had taken it; his attack on the *Dawn* well matched such boundless fury.

The Rogers turned against the Sea Dogs with blind hatred, striking at their vessel like a thunderstorm from a blue sky. They had soon thrown boarding hooks and prepared to slaughter the entire crew like goats. Berek, sensing the rage of his foes, had no wish to place his men in danger. He ordered Bonnie McGee to flee with the *Black Dawn* while he leapt over to Reis's ship, counting on his extraordinary luck to spare him once again. Fate, however, had run out of patience with the Avalon. His swordsmanship was no match for Reis's unholy scythe and after a short

flurry of exchanges, Berek was defeated. He sustained several heavy cuts before tumbling overboard into siren-infested waters, his body vanishing in a wash of foamy blood.

His sacrifice was not in vain, however. Having faced the Rogers once before, Bonnie McGee knew better than to cross swords with them again. While Berek held Reis at bay, the other Sea Dogs drove the Rogers back and McGee cut the lines that bound the *Black Dawn*. By the time Reis had dispatched their captain, the remainder of the crew was free. As the *Dawn* sped away, he and Bonnie locked eyes and the pirate recognized her face — the face of a woman he thought long dead. Though Berek was gone, Reis now had a new target — the only person to ever face him and live.

For her part, McGee had no intention of letting Berek rest unavenged. Emboldened by the escape, she began to wonder if she were not *meant* to face Captain Reis. She had survived two consecutive meetings with the supposedly unstoppable Rogers. Was it blind luck? Or was it something else, something more tangible? Perhaps fate had decreed some special role for her. Perhaps she was the one to end their bloody reign. After mulling these questions over, she hatched an extraordinary plan.

Assuming command of the Sea Dogs, McGee lead Berek's crew to the isle of the Grey Queen, a mystic land said to link the mortal world of Terra with the færie land of Bryn Bresail. Though terrible in their power, the færie Sidhe love a brilliant story, and have the ability to grant a portion of their magic to those they find worthy. McGee arrived at the island with the intention of entering Bryn Bresail and bargaining with the Sidhe for the means to destroy Captain Reis.

After a private exchange, the Grey Queen allowed the Highland woman to pass through a magic mirror into the Sidhe realm. McGee returned but a few minutes later with a newfound resolve and a strange gleam in her eye. What bargains she struck with the Sidhe, what powers she gained, the Kire cannot say. He knows not what trust McGee gave the Grey Queen nor what forces she entreated on the other side of the gate. All he knows is that when she emerged from the Queen's mirror, she had aged three years from when she had entered.

As McGee struck her bargain, Reis began his hunt anew, searching sea-side ports and run-down taverns for signs of the Highland woman. In the process, the Rogers killed dozens of sailors, but



could uncover no sign of their prey. McGee proved a more practical captain than Berek. She did not tempt fate by mocking his abilities, nor did she have any intention of confronting him before she was ready. The Dogs managed to avoid Reis's wrath... and the Rogers grew all the more obsessed because of it.

## The Third Switch

As these clashes and rivalries were playing themselves out, the search for hidden Cabora continued. Guy McCormick and his Explorers managed to find their way to another of the island's six Switches, despite holding but a handful of cryptic clues. They are aided in their endeavor by the discovery of a huge æther compass — larger than any yet found — which McCormick used to help guide him to the site.

The Third Switch lay on a particularly inhospitable stretch of Montaigne coastline, surrounded by rocky cliffs and abandoned by all save the sea birds. The Explorers believed that no human being had ever laid eyes on it before... until they found that another crew who had reached it before them. Kheired-Din's Corsairs had somehow transported themselves to the site using some strange form of Synchron technology. The two crews arrived at the same time, each convinced that they alone knew of the place, they alone held the secret to its power.

For a moment, it looked as if the scene would descend into bloodshed. The two sides eyed each other warily, weapons drawn on the sand below the switch. A single twitch, a wrong word, and the battle would begin. Then suddenly, Kheired-Din caught sight of an Explorer crewman named Maggie Malone, skittering backward after losing her footing. The Explorers had found Malone on a Synchron island, in a state of deep amnesia, and allowed her to join their crew. Her presence may have saved their lives. Din noticed a strange set of tattoos on Malone's feet, tattoos whose markings matched those in his holy visions. Calling them "the sign of the Lightbringer," he arranged for a hasty truce, pulling his Corsairs back before their violent instincts took over.

An impromptu negotiating session ensued, each captain sizing up the other. Though McCormick disliked the notion of working with slavers, he realized that he could not complete his quest while fighting the Corsairs at every turn. Similarly, Kheired-Din was awed by the marks on



Maggie's feet, and had no wish to discard such an overt sign from the Prophet. After a heated discussion, the two arrived at an agreement. Both crews would work together to activate the remaining switches. The Explorers would travel to the Fourth Switch — located somewhere in the Midnight Archipelago — while the Corsairs would find the Fifth hidden near the Corridors of Flame. The two crews would then meet at the sixth and final Switch, and share the rewards of whatever came afterwards. Thus in agreement, the Explorers and Corsairs activated the Third Switch, then departed to continue their now-mutual quest.

Though he bargained in good faith, Guy McCormick didn't trust the Crescent Corsairs. He had no intention of spending his life in a slaver's hold and feared that Kheired-Din might turn on him after the Switches were activated. In order to avoid this, he sent one of his most trusted crewmen — a sailor named Jacob Faust — to follow Kheired-Din discreetly and keep a close eye on the Corsairs.

## Guttormson's Betrayal

While McCormick merely prepared for possible treachery, the Vesten Raiders had a very real traitor to contend with. Jorund Guttormson, implicitly trusted by his captain, had laid the seeds of a deadly trap. He revealed the course of an under-manned merchant ship to the Raiders and admonished Yngvild Olafssdottir to attack it. The "merchant ship," however, was actually a war vessel, laden with mercenaries disguised as Vendel merchants.

At the appointed time, the *Revensj* closed with the other ship, using weather magic to disable it, then boarded with little resistance. As the Vesten

lined the other crew up, however, Guttormson took the moment to strike. He drew a flintlock from his belt and fired it into Yngvild's second mate, Hoskuld Hardrada. With that sign, the "merchants" produced hidden weapons and turned upon their would-be captors.

The battle which followed was vicious in the extreme. The Vendel struck without mercy, shooting to kill and trying to force their way to the *Revensj* so they could sink it. The element of surprise favored them and they took no chances when pressing their important advantage. Vestenmannavjnar don't die easily, however. With the fierceness of cornered animals, Yngvild and her crew fought back against their would-be killers. Weather magic rocked the vessel with waves and lightning, while howling warriors stormed their way back to the *Revensj*. The Raiders managed to reach their ship and sail away, having lost about a third of their crew in the attack. The Vendel lost almost half of their men, and Yngvild's Lærdom ensured that they could not pursue the Raiders.

Jorund Guttormson remained on board the Vendel ship, his task incomplete. Yngvild Olafssdottir yet lived, and until he could destroy her, the Raiders would be a threat to Vendel and her allies. The trap could not be sprung again; he needed to find another way to capture his quarry.



## The Black Freighter

Of all the crews involved in the Kire's tale, Gosse's Gentlemen would appear the least afflicted by such conflict. Philip Gosse kept his reputation as a noble robber, plundering vessels with the cheer of a prosperous innkeeper. His crew behaved with charm and good grace, and their escapades earned them a fresh bloom of fame. They even came to the rescue of the Brotherhood of the Coast, helping them repair their vessel after the attack by the General.

Then something began to change. As their "final" voyage continued, Gosse found himself haunted by nightmares of a time long past. Visions of his wife, slain by a sadistic Montaigne some twenty years earlier, troubled his sleep nightly. Initially, he tried to ignore it, citing the excitement of the voyage. But as the dreams increased in frequency and intensity, they began to affect his composure. He slowly transformed from a kind-hearted gentleman pirate into a grim, brooding old man. His escapades lost their charm and his crew began to wonder silently whether his "last adventure" was one too many.

In the midst of these troubles, Gosse received a terrible blow. His nephew Thomas, who had served as ship's topman on their journey, drowned while saving another member of the Gentlemen. The circumstances of his death filled Gosse with an unnameable dread. A storm had blown up, quite unexpectedly, catching Thomas and a small band of men in a rickety rowboat far from land. The weather vanished almost as soon as the boat sank beneath the waves — almost as if it had purposely set out to drown him.

Though Philip did not know it at the time, similar fates had befallen members of other crews. Dalia, the Corsair swordswoman beloved of their captive pilot, vanished during a mission away from the ship. William Toss, a member of the Sea Dogs, fell during their battle with Reis and his body could not be found. All across Théah crewmen such as these disappeared or died bloody deaths. Their seemingly unconnected circumstances all had the same dark source, however. Devastated by the death of his nephew and driven by his ever-increasing nightmares, Philip Gosse resolved to discover the cause of such woes.

He did not have to wait long. In the distant Mirror, the *Uncharted Course* came across something out of living nightmare: The Black

Freighter. Yes, you read the Kire's words correctly. The Black Freighter — the fearful vessel guided by the hands of the dead — had returned. Even now, the Kire writes the name with trembling hands, for what use is human courage against a vessel of such exquisite evil? Drowned men from countless Théan pirate crews crowded her decks — Dalia, Toss, and many others — all bound in unholy servitude to its undead captain.

And what sort of man would helm such a vessel? To Gosse's unending horror, it was none other than Comte Robert Méchant, the Montaigne butcher who had murdered his wife. Gosse had slain the man twenty years before, but as the Freighter rose up before him, he could see the vicious countenance, could hear the high-pitched giggle as it rose through the air. Méchant had returned from the grave itself, now calling himself "Captain Necros" and commanding a legion of undead pirates.

But that was not the worst of it. As Gosse watched, his eyes caught sight of a solitary figure in the Freighter's crow's nest — Thomas Gosse, his own nephew, now an undead servant to his greatest enemy.

Before Philip could encompass the impact or begin to engage the Freighter, it vanished from sight, swept aside in the storms and lightning which always accompanied it. Necros, it seemed, wanted to draw out his revenge. He gave Gosse a taste of fear — a brief hint of the nightmares ahead — and then disappeared. The mystery of Philip's nightmares had ended. And his "final adventure" now had a concrete purpose — to rid the Théan seas of that unholy abomination.

## A Single Shot

Meanwhile, the undead were far from the mind of the General, though his own demons offered him their share of torments. Burning with the shame of his failure and seething at his Montaigne employers, he struggled to gather himself in the port town of San Augustin. He had long ago renounced all sense of honor or virtue, working only for coins and the creature comforts they could purchase. With the combined loss of the *Hanged Man* and command of the Montaigne fleet, even those comforts had turned to ash.

In this gloomy state of mind, the General received an unexpected visit from the Castillian Inquisition, those vile harbingers of human misery who mask their cruelty beneath words of



virtue. With the blockade smashed and Castillian morale rising, they wished to play a role in the apparent deliverance of their country, and felt that a show trial of captured Montaigne "privateers" would be perfect. They wished to use the General's crew as the victims in this scheme and offer him a deal. At a prearranged time the General would meet with Admiral Orduño and fire a single shot into the air. Orduño would board the General's vessel and arrest the crew, then leave the Eisen with a handsome reward. As a show of good faith, they provided the General with half of the money up front. Stung by Valoix's dismissal of him, the Eisen agreed to their terms.

Conscience, however, has a strange way of working on a man. Orduño agreed to take part in the Inquisition's plan in order to erase the blot of the lost Vaticine Cross, but his sense of honor gave him grave misgivings about the mission. The General, too, found himself perturbed by pangs of doubt as the appointed time grew closer. He never liked his crew, and his anger at the Montaigne grew every day, but something felt *wrong* about betraying them. His mercenary philosophy — the pursuit of any goal as long as the price was right — could not account for his feelings of remorse. His doubts continued to gnaw at him, even as he set sail for the rendezvous point.

At the sight of Orduño's sails, the General made a fateful decision. He could not abandon his crew to the Inquisition, not for all the money in Vendel. When the time came to signal the other vessel, he responded by firing the requisite single shot — containing not a cannonball but the guilders the Inquisition had paid him. He told his men to prepare for boarding, convinced that Orduño would take his ship by force. To his surprise, the Castillian vessel did not engage him. Touched by the General's gesture — and by the honor which it displayed — Admiral Orduño

refused to board the Montaigne ship. He ordered his own crew to stand down until the General had peacefully departed. Incensed by his temerity, the Inquisitors onboard his ship immediately arrested Orduño on charges of heresy.

Even now, the Vaticine's foolishness fills the Kire with anger. Their effort to reap the benefits of Castille's newfound strength resulted in nothing more than lost funds and renewed humiliation. When it failed, they chose to blame the very architect of the victory they wished to share. Without Orduño's leadership, the Castillian fleet lost the ability to capitalize on the smashed Montaigne blockade. They drifted about aimlessly while their leader was clapped in chains and placed under arrest.

It was at that moment that Valoix decided to strike.

The Montaigne admiral launched a devastating attack on the eastern Castillian peninsula, burning numerous ports and harbors to the ground. Deprived of their leader, the Castillians lacked the ability to launch a counterattack, and Valoix inflicted heavy damage on Castille's logistical support. The naval war, which seemed to be turning Castille's way, was suddenly very much in doubt. All because the cloistered peacocks of the Vaticine Inquisition could not stay out of the way.

## *Pulled From the Sea*

The Brotherhood of the Coast had remained largely silent since their near-fatal encounter with the General, a fact which aided Valoix's cause immeasurably. The Brotherhood, as it turned out, had problems of its own. After repairing the *Hanged Man* (with some timely help from Philip Gosse), they promptly set sail for a remote location in the Forbidden Sea — an empty spot of ocean with no land for hundreds of miles. Captain Allende had ordered the course on the advice of Alesio, who had not forgotten her prophecy of betrayal. She begged the Pirate King to take them to that remote locale, claiming that if they didn't, the Brotherhood would be destroyed. Perplexed, but frightened by her fervor, Allende piloted the *Hanged Man* out to the spot she described.

When they reached the coordinates, they were greeted by a most unexpected sight — clinging to a broken figurehead, gravely wounded, and delirious from thirst and exposure, but alive. Jeremiah Berek, the Sea Dogs' leader, had survived

the odds and an attack from the bloodiest killer in Théah. His extraordinary luck had been pushed to the limits, perhaps lost forever, but thanks to Alesio's foresight, he lived. The *Hanged Man* brought him on board and allowed him to recuperate in their hold.

But Alesio had more than simple altruism on her mind when she sent the Brotherhood out to that desolate patch of ocean. She knew that she was destined to betray Allende — nothing she did or said would prevent it — but she did not know what would happen *after* her treachery. The threads said that Allende would suffer and the Brotherhood would die, but they were not set the way her betrayal was. If she could find some way to change it — if she could set the threads to ultimately undo her inevitable treachery — then she would embrace the future with open arms. Jeremiah Berek was the key to her plan.

Soon enough, her efforts bore fruit. Berek recovered rapidly enough to accompany the Brotherhood to the Castillian port of San Felipe — there to resupply and learn news of the war. On the streets, Alesio was accosted by a trio of fate witches working for the Vodacce Prince, Vincenzo Caligari. They had been pursuing her ever since she left Vodacce and now demanded a price for “abandoning her roots.” She would produce her captain for them and allow the rest of her crew to be destroyed. Alesio knew better than to fight their proclamation.

She led Allende to a dingy room above a wharfside inn, where the witches were waiting for him. Using their Sorte, they snipped his fate threads like a puppet's strings, rendering him helpless and subdued. As a reward for her betrayal, the witches turned their shears against Alesio, leaving her broken and dying on the floor.



Allende was spirited off to Caligari's island, there to await some unspeakable fate.

But all was not lost. As Alesio had anticipated, Jeremiah Berek found her just minutes after Allende disappeared. With her dying breaths, she admonished him to undo what destiny had wrought and save Allende from his captors. Emboldened by her words, he returned to the *Hanged Man*, just in time to rescue the crew from a mysterious blaze. Somehow, the ship's stores had caught fire and spread through the ship with unnatural speed. By keeping his head, Berek provided an escape from the fire and led the crew to safety in the nearby town. The *Hanged Man* burned to the timbers, but not a single sailor perished.

Nor were they helpless. Under Berek's leadership, the still-intact Brotherhood seized another ship, the *Falcon's Roost*, using stealth and cunning to overwhelm its crew without alerting the authorities. They slipped out of San Felipe before anyone could raise the alarm and set sail for the open sea. Some of the crew voted to return to *la Bucca*, but the majority stayed with Berek, and set out in search of their missing captain. Allende had been betrayed, Alesio lay dying... but the threads of Fate could still be undone.

## McGee and the Nibelungen

Unaware of Berek's miraculous survival, his former companions in the Sea Dogs continued on their quest to avenge him. Empowered by her journey to Bryn Bresail, Bonnie McGee left the Grey Queen's isle for the nation of Eisen, there to make a most unusual request. The mysterious Nibelungen blacksmiths have forged dracheneisen weapons for countless millennia — but only for those of Eisen birth. Bonnie intended to ask them for new blades, an unheard-of honor for an Avalon. After locating a Nibelungen forge, she recounted her tale to the enigmatic smiths. Intrigued at the story (and her audacity), they agreed to help her... for a price.

The smiths always demand a quest from those who would wield their weapons — something courageous and daring, befitting the recipient of dracheneisen. Because McGee was a foreigner, they set her a task which they considered nearly impossible: to bring them the lost chapter of Queen Eleanor's book from the land of Bryn Bresail (for more on Queen Eleanor, see pages 15-16 of the Avalon sourcebook). McGee listened to their



terms, then gave them a strange, knowing smile before producing the very chapter they had asked for from the folds of her dress. It was as if she knew their price — as if the Sidhe told her what the Nibelungen would require long before she arrived in Eisen. So shocked were the smiths that they agreed to forge a new pair of knives for her immediately.

Meanwhile, Reis and his Rogers were growing increasingly vexed. Unable to find any sign of McGee or her crew, they turned their frustrations against any available target. They slaughtered entire villages, mostly in the Dogs' home nation of Avalon. Their vessel did battle with several other Sea Dogs ships, but of their true quarry, they found no sign. Though he said nothing to his crew, Reis showed signs of worry. The price on his head was astronomical, and he would hang in any country on Théah. If McGee escaped his clutches, other sailors might grow bolder... and the Crimson Rogers might find themselves in a great deal of trouble.

## The Spear of the West Wind

Like Captain Reis, Philip Gosse had someone he needed to find. The Black Freighter had taken his nephew, and clearly intended to destroy him as well. Unless he could confront Captain Necros and undo the source of his power, the Freighter would move unchecked across the Théan seas. Already, he had heard stories of grave atrocities — towns slaughtered by legions of undead sailors and ships sent to the bottom by the Freighter's unholy might. As long as Necros sailed, Gosse



would consider himself responsible for such atrocities.

The circumstances of Thomas' death gave the gentleman pirate some pause. The gale which drowned him came up too quickly and departed too rapidly; Gosse became convinced that Necros had arranged it somehow. But tales of the Freighter attributed no such abilities to those who rode it — though surrounded by storms, it could not command the weather with such power or accuracy. Something else must have allowed his enemy to strike in that manner; he had to find out what.

His path led him to the Spear of the West Wind, an ancient island reservoir of Lærdom energy. Long abandoned by the Vesten who built it, it supposedly gave whoever controlled it uncontested power over the wind and waves. After learning of its power, Gosse became convinced that it had been corrupted by the Black Freighter: that Necros used it to drown Thomas. He set the *Uncharted Course* to find the Spear, even though he had little idea where it lay.

At first he attempted to follow a map he had acquired, but it was divided into several pieces and Necros thwarted him by destroying a vital section before he could locate it. Without the map, he turned to a Syrneath artifact known as the Eye of Reason. There, too, Necros attempted to stop him, laying an ambush at the site where the artifact lay. But thanks to Gosse's courage and the resources of his crew, he was able to thwart the undead captain and claim the Eye.

In the meantime, other crews had learned of the Spear as well. Yngvild Olafssdottir had increased her depredations since Jorund's betrayal; many believed that she was using the Spear as a weapon. The Vendel guilds had posted a reward for finding it, and other parties showed

interest as well. A furious search began, and by the time the *Uncharted Course* reached the Trade Sea, some dozen vessels had converged on the area. Gosse and his crew fought several crews of brigands and fortune hunters — some serving foreign crowns, some serving only themselves — before finally locating their prize. Necros was gone, having departed on some mission of carnage, and the island was theirs for the taking.

Once they had the Spear in their possession, Gosse made a shocking decision. He ordered his cannon crews to open fire upon it, destroying its power forever. Why did he do such a thing? Because he did not wish to take the risk that Necros would return. He would not divide his forces by guarding the island, and even if the Black Freighter did not come back, the local seas teemed with sirens. Since he could not fully utilize the Spear, he denied its power to his enemy. The *Uncharted Course* opened fire, reducing the Spear to smoking rock and breaking a part of Necros's strength.

Even without such power, however, the Black Freighter still had the ability to harm its foe. Soon after the destruction of the Spear, Necros sent Thomas Gosse after his uncle. He knew that the undead boy could not kill his rival, but he did know what pain Philip would endure by having to slay him. Thomas came upon his uncle as the *Uncharted Course* was resupplying, bringing with him a small band of undead. Gosse fought back, tears in his eyes as he drove the skeletons from his ship. He sliced Thomas' head from his shoulders, silencing the boy's anguished howls even as his own heat wept with the pain of it. The ploy worked: Necros lost a but few underlings in the engagement, while Gosse lost a piece of his soul.

Nor was the dread captain finished. Ever eager to increase his power, Necros sent out his minions in search of more sites such as the Spear. He didn't have to wait long. One evening, in his cabin, the undead swordswoman Dalia told him about Kheired-Din and the island of Cabora. Believing that he could use it to unleash a massive army of undead, he immediately set sail, leaving a wide swath of destruction for Gosse to follow. Still burning from the death of Thomas, the gentleman pirate could do little but pursue his enemy and search desperately for some means to destroy him.



## Slave Revolt

Across the seas from Gosse's hunt, the Corsairs found themselves in equally difficult straits. They had lost Dalia to the Black Freighter, and as they made their way to the next switch, an even greater calamity befell them. The pilot Espera, driven by love and eager to find the dashing swordswoman, launched a desperate bid to escape. In the process, he revealed a stunning secret: he was a skilled practitioner in the Castillian fire magic *El Fuego Adentro*. Using his powers and the relative freedom he enjoyed as ship's pilot, he and a small band of slaves managed to flee Kheired-Din's vessel in a longboat. In the process, they killed many members of Din's crew and severely damaged his ship. Another Corsairs vessel attempted to intercept them, but they overpowered the crew — again, through Espera's fire magic — and seized the vessel for themselves. The freed Castillian then set out in search of his love, leaving Kheired-Din foundering with a decimated crew and a crippled ship.



As the Corsairs struggled to recover from this devastating blow, their partners were having a considerably easier time. Shortly after departing the third switch, Guy McCormick ran across a strange man with a knowing smile and a hand made of Synchronic clockwork. He called himself "Mumblety-Peg," and claimed to know all about their quest. He offered to help them find the remaining switches, as well as how to make full use of their æther compass. McCormick would have dismissed him save for one detail.

Mumblety-Peg wore a vest belonging to his missing wife.

With such a tantalizing clue before him, McCormick allowed the stranger to join his crew without a second thought. The Explorer's desire to find Amanda had begun to cloud his reason. His crew saw it in other things as well. He began taking greater risks; his underlings seemed almost expendable to him. All other considerations vanished beneath the drive for the switches and the answers they would unlock. Though they continued to follow his orders, a pall of mistrust began to settle around them.

Despite these misgivings, Mumblety-Peg guided them true and clear. They easily located the fourth switch, located on a tropical island in the Midnight Archipelago. Though the island's natives gave them a fierce fight, Mumblety-Peg's uncanny knowledge and McCormick's increasingly ruthless bravado allowed them to activate the switch and retreat back to the *Discovery* unscathed.

## The Vision of the Isle

With four of the six switches now activated, Cabora began to make its presence felt across Théah. It affected those of a sensitive temperament — seers, mystics, and the like — and manifested in fearsome dreams of the island beneath the waves. It came to a head on the date of Corantine 1, 1668, when over a hundred people across Théah awoke screaming with the same vision of Cabora in their heads. A vision of doom. A vision of apocalypse. A vision of alien powers eclipsing the rule of men.

Among their number was Gjævning Asbjornsson, ruler of the Vestenmannavjnar. Not only did he see signs of the coming apocalypse before any other, but his vision included images of the Raider Yngvild Olafssdottir, whose drive against the Vendel had continued unabated. Following Guttormson's aborted betrayal, the *Revensj* had sunk almost half a dozen Vendel ships. No quarter was given, and the Raiders did not allow a single survivor to escape. Between these attacks, they pressed for news of the treacherous Guttormson and prayed to their pagan gods for a chance at revenge.

By the time the vision arrived, however, the tide had begun to turn. Yngvild realized that the Raiders could not hope to destroy the Vendel nation merely by sinking ships. They were too numerous, too successful, too strong. If they truly



wished to rid the world of their nemeses, they would need a much more radical plan.

Returning to Vestenmannavjnar, Yngvild soon caught word of her High King's vision. Though few knew Asbjornsson's identity and fewer still the nature of his dreams, somehow she received the news. Taking this as a sign from the gods, she tracked the King to the cave where he resided and asked him to help her. In a shuddering voice, he described the island to her, told her of the powers it would unleash, and explained how she could channel them against her enemies. Believing the Isle to be the gates of Valhalla, Yngvild set sail for the Mirror, intending to unleash the power of her ancestors against the Vendel.

Jorund Guttormson had not forgotten his former captain, however. While Olafsdottir hatched her monstrous plan, he had commissioned a warship — complete with a contingent of Eisen mercenaries and other soldiers — for the express purpose of sinking the *Revensj*. As the Raiders set out on their apocalyptic mission, Guttormson had already caught scent of them, and was following their trail. It was only a question of whether he could reach the *Revensj* before it completed its task.

### Reis and the Isle

Yngvild wasn't the only captain to receive word of Cabora. The Crimson Rogers, still searching for Bonnie McGee, had learned of it as well. Javier de Bejarano, a minor Castillian scholar who had joined the Rogers to study the Syrneth artifacts they acquired, had been conducting secretive research during his time onboard Reis' ship. He had found a secret which he believed would render him immortal — a secret previously held only by a select few. On the island of Cabora lay a Syrneth machine which had the power to grant

ageless invulnerability to whoever used it. Javier's research convinced him that the island would soon rise, and gave some indication of its probable location as well.

The Castillian approached Reis in his cabin one evening and explained his plan. He offered to lead the Rogers there if they would allow him to use the machine. When he was done, Reis could then use it render himself safe from Bloody Bonnie McGee. He told Reis where the machine was located, and produced the key required to activate it. Reis listened intently to his underling, paid close attention to the words he said, and then stabbed him through the heart with his infernal scythe. Javier trusted his captain with too much information... and Reis wanted no one to claim that he was afraid of Bonnie McGee. With knowledge of Cabora, he no longer needed to hunt down his adversary. He simply needed to send her the proper messages, then reach the island before McGee reached him.

A fortuitous betrayal onboard the Sea Dogs ship gave him the opportunity he needed. Shortly after departing the Eisen shores, "Lyin" John Fox engaged another Sea Dog crewmen in brief, fierce combat. The Kire does not know the cause of their dispute, but a man like Fox holds many dark secrets. Perhaps one finally caught up with him. The skirmish ended with Fox fleeing the Sea Dog's ship in a rowboat. He reached the shore safely and attempted to hide himself from pursuit, convinced that the Dogs would hunt him down. He had little to worry about... from them at least.

Reis found "Lyin" John in a tavern somewhere in southern Montaigne. Alone and bereft of allies, he was no match for the bestial pirate. What tortures he endured, the Kire cannot say, but when the Rogers were finished, they left his corpse in a gibbet, hanging from the docks at Carleon. His face was frozen in permanent fear, and his body held countless injuries administered by a consummate torturer. The Rogers had tacked a message to his lifeless body — "On the Island of the Sunken Eye" — intended for Captain McGee.

The Sea Dogs discovered Fox's body a short time later, and after a hurried conversation with the Queen's seer, Derwyddon — who had visions of the Isle along with all of his temperament — set sail for the Mirror. There were now seven crews in search of Cabora, each for their own purposes. More would be added before the final switch was thrown.

## Orduño's Rescue

One sailor with no inkling of the Isle was Enrique Orduño, who had far more pressing matters on his mind. Arrested by the Inquisition, he soon found himself on trial for heresy: ridiculous charges which he could not refute. After a routine condemnation, Orduño was sentenced to burn at the stake for the crime of being a soldier.

At first, his wife and first mate Margaretta was prepared to burn with him. Overcome with grief at his treatment, she readied herself to condemn the Inquisition publically and pay the price. But during a tearful meeting in Enrique's cell, the former Admiral managed to convince her to take a different course. He could not bear the thought of both of them dying, he said. He begged her to abandon him, to sign a letter denouncing him as a heretic and live on, so that their union would not perish. After hours of arguing, he convinced her to honor his wishes. The sobbing Margaretta signed a letter of condemnation and left him to be burned.

But she did not abandon him.

Through her naval connections, Margaretta learned the site of her husband's execution: the fearsome river fortress of El Morro. Originally, she intended to rescue him herself, but Fate would not permit it. Still suspicious of her motives, the Inquisition attached an "advisor" to her, who would watch for any suspicious actions. Though she retained command of a single Castillian vessel, she could do nothing as long as the Inquisition watched.

But she was far from helpless. She had ways to find help beyond the Inquisition's reach... and knew of men who still retained some semblance of honor. The General — who had refused to turn his crew over to the Castillians — had rediscovered who he was, and might be persuaded to lend his aid. Margaretta prayed it was so. She penned a letter, telling the Eisen mercenary what had occurred and begging him to help. She entrusted the letter to her fencing instructor, Felipé José de Granjero, and urged him to find the Eisen quickly.

The General, meanwhile, had returned to the land of his birth, ready to reclaim his lost heritage. He retrieved his armor from the field where he had buried it, and admonished his remaining crew to stay with him. He was joined by a small band of former followers who were gladdened by their

leader's return. The General received further heartening news in the city of Stårke. Horrified by Admiral Valoix's persecution of Castillian civilians, a large number of his former Montaigne crew rejoined him, preferring to desert than engage in a campaign of brutality.

When he heard of Orduño's plight, the General promised to save him from the flames. With a reformed crew and the assistance of Granjero, he hatched upon a bold plan to snatch Orduño from the largest and most heavily-guarded fortress in the world. His first mate, Timothy le Beau, was a potent Porté mage, and knew others with similar powers. Together, he and his comrades would provide the fulcrum for the General's plan.

It began with a perilous journey up the Rio de Delia. The river formed the border of the Montaigne-Castille war — ringed with fortresses and nearly impassable to river traffic. But the General was bold and his vessel fast. His crew had a renewed sense of purpose, and their actions defied the dangers they faced. Though bombarded with Castillian shells, the ship deftly navigated the gauntlet between the river mouth and El Morro.

They arrived in the nick of time. Orduño's execution was imminent; the Inquisition had tied him to a stake in the central courtyard and was preparing to set the timber alight. The General drew close enough to the imposing edifice for his sniper to fire a single coin over the wall — a coin smeared with his first mate's blood. The vessel then retreated to a safe distance while le Beau teleported a small band into the fortress.

They arrived in the middle of the courtyard, surrounded by Castillian soldiers. Orduño's pyre was quickly lit, even as the gunfire rose and the General and his crew fought their way towards him. They reached the stake just as the flames





began to catch and teleported Orduño away before the Castellians could overwhelm them. Once safely back onboard the ship they beat a hasty retreat, their prize alive and intact.

But their travails were not over. Every Castellian fortress on the river had been alerted to their presence, and now stood ready to shell them into oblivion. Further, two Castellian galleons had witnessed the General's arrival and quickly offered chase. The grapeshot flew thick around the Eisen's small vessel, and for a time, it looked as if his mission would end in fire and bloodshed.

Again, the crafty mercenary had prepared. While he and his crew were rescuing Orduño, the other Porté mages in his crew were preparing an escape. In an calm tributary of El Río de Delia, they readied a gigantic Porté hole — one large enough for the General's entire ship to pass through. The mate had readied an exit at the mouth of the river, allowing them to bypass the Castellian fortresses completely.

The galleons chased the General's ship into the tributary, thinking they had the vessel captured. They watched in disbelief as their prize slid effortlessly into the Porté hole and vanished from sight. Two of the mages who created the hold were killed by the effort; the others were racked with pain and one went irretrievably mad. But the General had done it.

Or they would have were it not for one small detail. They never emerged from the Porté hole as they had intended. Whatever void they passed through prevented them from emerging out the other side. The General, Orduño, the crew, and the entire vessel had simply vanished — disappearing from the face of Théah.

### Valoix's Gambit

Admiral Valoix heard news of Orduño's rescue as he was readying another blow at his enemy. Castille had been battered and demoralized by his earlier strikes, but he resolved to end the conflict once and for all. He intended to destroy the very heart of Castille: San Cristóbal, the effective capital and nerve center for the country's war effort. If he could bring the city to the ground, the army would lose its direction, leaving them ripe to be overrun. Valoix launched a daring assault against the coastal town, using an elite arm of the Montaigne fleet and the finest cannons *l'Empereur's* funds could buy. The attack took place but a few days after the General's disappearance.

The Castellian fleet was far from helpless, but remained uncoordinated without Orduño at their head. Valoix had dispersed the rest of his fleet to engage the Castellians, thus preventing them from closing on San Cristóbal. His elite ships easily battered aside the harbor defenses and began shelling the town.

One Castellian vessel stood capable of dispersing Valoix's attack: the ship captained by Margaretta Orduño. But she would not come to her capital's defense. Burning with anger at the Inquisition's treatment of her husband, she wrestled with her conscience as Valoix's ships attacked. She would not defend those who had taken her husband from her, she would not save them from their folly, and yet, she felt that she could not simply abandon her nation to a foreigner's depredation. She contemplated the decision for some time... and all the while, Valoix's cannons continued to pound at San Cristóbal.

### Mutiny

But this is not the place to speak of the Montaigne-Castellian war; we are speaking of Cabora, and the time was drawing near when it would rise. Kheired-Din and his Corsairs had been devastated by Espera's revolt, but they were not yet defeated. Guided by his mystic visions, the Crescent slaver sought out his partner, Guy McCormick, who was already sailing towards the penultimate switch. Kheired-Din arrived onboard and immediately demanded possession of the "lightbringer," Maggie Malone. He would need the girl to complete their bargain, he said, for only she could guide him to the fifth switch. Without

Espera's sure hand to lead them through the treacherous waters, it would take someone with a mystic connection to reach it safely.

To the horror of his crew, McCormick agreed to turn the girl over to the slavers. So intense was his desire to find his wife that he was willing to sacrifice Maggie to do so. But the Explorers would not simply stand by while one of their own was turned over to a bloodthirsty slaver. Led by Cosette, McCormick's first mate, they launched a spontaneous mutiny against their captain. They opened fire on the *Strange Skies* in an effort to sink it, while trying to take Maggie back from Kheired-Din's clutches. The Crescent fought his way off their ship, however, aided by McCormick who sought to escape himself, and Mumblety-Peg, who remained loyal to his captain. Together, the trio escaped the *Discovery*, with Malone in tow and quickly fled the site.

With the Lightbringer to guide them, the Corsairs located the Fifth Switch south of the Corridors of Flame somewhere in the Mirror. Kheired-Din forced Maggie to activate the switch — and endure the agonizing pain which accompanied it. The powers were growing close now: only one final barrier held the sunken isle in place. Sensing the proximity of their prize, the *Strange Skies* set out for the final switch.

They never arrived. Cosette and the mutinous Explorers had not forgotten Malone, but rather than futilely chase the *Strange Skies* across the seas, they waited for the Corsairs to arrive at the Sixth Switch. The *Discovery* caught the Corsairs in the heart of the Forbidden Sea, laying into it with broadsides and launching a boarding party to rescue their wayward comrade. Outnumbered and surprised, the Corsairs were no match for Cosette and her men. They were forced to flee again,



abandoning Malone to her comrades and unable to reach the final Switch. They would have perished were it not for the unique Syrneth device which allowed them to escape yet again. The device opened a funnel hole to the 7th Sea — a huge waterspout that lead to that mystic realm. Kheired-Din had used it to move across the oceans in the blink of an eye, and now he used it to complete his escape. He and the *Strange Skies* left the Sixth Switch behind and journeyed to the site of Cabora — trusting in others to complete their mission.

### The Sixth Switch

Both Kheired-Din and McCormick were reluctant to abandon the Sixth Switch, but both had agents in place to succeed where they had failed. Several weeks before, the Corsairs had dispatched one of their own — a warrior named Shala — to prepare the way for them. McCormick, too had resources. Jacob Faust had tracked the Corsairs steadily, but lost sight of them following Espera's revolt. He proceeded to the Sixth Switch in an effort to catch up with them, and arrived some time before his compatriots did.

And what of this Sixth Switch, the last barrier between Cabora and the world? Unlike the previous five, it was not hidden in some remote locale, unknown to civilized man. Indeed, it lay at the heart of one of the most populous cities in Théah: Reinasceineza, the bustling metropolis atop Caligari's island in Vodacce. Prince Vincenzo Caligari had spent decades hoarding and studying Syrneth artifacts, and kept the greatest at the heart of his capital city.

The Sixth Switch, the great Syrneth engine keeping Cabora hidden, was currently being used to support Caligari's island. The Switch had never been activated; rather, its power had been diverted upward, keeping an entire land mass from sinking beneath the waves. A great Syrneth watercraft had been used to divert the energy, channeling it through its machinery and into the island above. For a thousand generations, it had maintained the Caligari family's strength, providing them with abundant power and an island bastion to protect them against their enemies.

The Corsair Shala discovered the Switch first, hidden deep in a cavern beneath the city. She had no desire to risk capture, however, so rather than toy with it herself, she quietly guided Jacob Faust to it instead. Faust found the Syrneth vessel after following her clues, and even had some idea how to remove it (which would effectively activate the

Switch). Unfortunately, he had alerted Caligari's guards to his presence. They fell on him as he attempted to enter the watercraft, and quickly subdued him. He was placed in a high prison tower, chained to the wall to await the prince's justice.

He was not alone in his confinement, however. A second prisoner occupied that tower cell as well: Allende, the captured pirate king. Since his capture, Allende had endured weeks of torture in an effort to break his spirit. He remained strong, however, and with addition of Faust to his cell, he saw an opportunity for escape. The two began plotting in between interrogation sessions, searching for some way to escape their confinement.

Further help was on the way. Lead by Jeremiah Berek, Allende's crew from the Brotherhood had searched night and day for some signs of his whereabouts. They received aid from a pair of unusual sources — a fate witch named Lucrezia, who joined the Brotherhood for reasons of her own, and the mysterious vigilante known as El Vago. With the clues they provided, Berek successfully deduced Allende's location. He and the Brotherhood broke into the cell, freeing both the Pirate King and his newfound companion.

Still mindful of his obligation to McCormick, Faust convinced his rescuers to let him lead them to freedom. Using a set of sewage pipes, he took them down to the hidden cave, where the Syrnych watercraft awaited. He urged them onboard and began activating its power source. The ship rumbled to life, moving for the first time in thousands of years. As Faust activated the vessel, the island above them groaned; the power that had held it up was being diverted away, across the sea towards Cabora. At Faust's direction, Allende flipped a switch, and the ship slowly pulled out of the cavern into the open sea. Behind it, Caligari's island sank helplessly into the ocean.

With that, the Sixth Switch had been triggered. The barriers were free, the locks all broken. In the heart of the Mirror, Cabora stirred, rising from its depths towards the surface. The great island stirred to life once more, unearthing its secrets for the brave (or the foolish) to find. Its gateway lay exposed, its power within the grasp of those who sought it. The Island of the Sunken Eye had risen... and Théah would never be the same.

## Conclusion

What happened next? How did these crews resolve their conflicts? Who finally seized the island and what did they do with such power? I pray your pardon gentle reader, for the Kire does not know. Its conclusion is beyond his ability to decipher, at least for now. The Kire never promised an ending. Only a beginning. But he can tell you a few things.

He knows that Captain Reis and Bonnie McGee met one final time on the isle, their feud silenced by blood and dark bargains. Neither left Cabora, and yet they both did. He knows that Margareta Orduño found a way to honor her missing husband. He knows that the *Revensj* met its destiny in the midst of the Mirror while Philip Gosse confronted the Black Freighter one final time. Espera found his lady love, the Brotherhood found their captain, the Corsairs found their destiny...

...and Guy McCormick found his wife.

These things the Kire knows. And soon enough, you will know how their story ends far better than he would. Meanwhile, the Kire must set his pen down. He has his own story to tell, and has waited far too long to complete it. He thanks you for your patience and hopes to meet you someday again, where the seas are warm and the air is sweet.

He knows that he will find you there safely.



## Chapter Two

# *Factions and Places*

The following section details each of the factions which comprise the 7th Sea CCG. It includes information on their history, organization, methods, tactics, and motivations, as well as guidelines for creating your own ships and Heroes from their ranks. They are arranged alphabetically according to their title. The most unique faction is left for the end, since it follows its own set of rules. This information reflects developments as of the *Horizon's Edge* expansion set, approximately Septimus 1, 1668.



When one thinks of piracy in Théah, the Brotherhood of the Coast is the first group which comes to mind — a nation of outlaws, buccaneers, and thieves who call no man their master. Based on the island of *la Bucca*, they have forged the beginnings of a democratic government: the first their world has ever seen. Unbound by status, culture, or race, they consider themselves the only free men in the world. The Brotherhood follows its own destiny; its members bow to no king, acknowledge no laws save their own, and live according to their own whims. They have also become a scourge of the La Boca sea, smuggling Church-embargoed goods and preying on

Montaigne and Vodacce shipping. Thanks to their nearby impregnable island fortress, they have the means to defend their notion of freedom indefinitely.

### **History**

For all its boldness and innovation, the Brotherhood had a very ignominious beginning. It started with the island of *la Palabra de Dios*, a semi-tropical landmass in the middle of la Boca. Though *la Palabra* had sufficient natural resources, Castille could never make colonizing it worthwhile. The peasants who lived there grew vegetables and farmed pigs, which were exported at great cost to the mainland. The seas around the island were full of reefs and leviathans, making shipping a risky proposition. The island's swampy environment became a breeding ground for disease, while its presence in the middle of "the Castillian lake" made any military structures superfluous at best. By the 1550s, the island held nothing more than a few struggling villages and the occasional hermit.

At the same time, a Vaticine Cardinal named Alfonso Orduñez was conducting a survey on the state of prisons in Castille. His findings were appalling: overcrowding, filthy conditions, inhumane tortures among inmates and guards alike. There had to be a better way to punish wrongdoers. A way that would bring them closer to redemption and perhaps even purify them in the eyes of Theus. He proposed building a new prison: an island prison with no bars, no walls, and no guards. It would be far from civilization, to keep the populace safe, and would be big enough to hold every prisoner in the nation. *La Palabra de Dios* was the perfect location for such a prison. With the Hierophant's blessing, Orduñez moved



the peasants off the isle and began transforming it into a new penal colony.

The island received its first inmates in 1563. They had no guards, no laws, and no supplies; only the natural resources around them with which to survive. They would have to fish and hunt, farm the land and construct buildings for shelter. “By creating their own civilization,” Orduñez reasoned, “they will grow to appreciate its blessings.” Unfortunately, the prisoners didn’t agree. Over half were rescued by pirates in the first few months of their captivity. The rest preferred to fight among themselves rather than work together, and life on the island quickly deteriorated to skirmishes between warring “tribes” of rival prisoners.

In 1571, Orduñez acknowledged that further steps needed to be taken, and commissioned the construction of walls around the prison. “Not to keep the inmates in,” he rationalized, “but to keep civilization out.” The walls were anchored by large fortresses armed with cannon and mortar pointing out to sea. Anyone attempting an escape would now have to face Castilian soldiers, while the “tribal” inmates would have to behave themselves lest their jailers wipe them all out.

For a time, the presence of guards kept things under control. All escape attempts ended in failure, and the inmates slowly turned their resources towards more productive ends. Under the stewardship of their guards, they began proper farming, constructed permanent buildings, and even exported smoked pork to the mainland. This last activity led one Montaigne wag to dub the

island “la Bucca,” in reference to the greenwood grill they used to cure the meat.

Still, life on the island was hardly the paradise Orduñez envisioned. Conditions remained harsh and the prisoners showed little inclination to renounce their wicked ways. Vicious gangs would war for territory or resources, while the guards seemed to view their charges as little more than animals. Political prisoners mixed with cutthroats and murderers, and the terminally insane were often sent to the island as well. The term “Buccaneer” — referring to the inmates — soon became a universal catch phrase for “criminal.”

With so many brutal men living in such terrible conditions, an explosion was only a matter of time. In 1600, the prisoners — now numbering over a thousand — launched a vicious revolt against their jailers. Using weapons fashioned from wood and stone, they stormed the fortresses in a desperate effort to overwhelm the guards and seize control of the island. The cannons on the walls all pointed out to sea, forcing the guards to use small arms against an enemy that outnumbered them ten to one. In the ensuing struggle, over nine-tenths of the inmates were killed, along with one third of the guards. The prisoners were ultimately repulsed, and the Castilian army sent troops to bolster the garrison. As far as the world was concerned, Orduñez’s experiment had ended in ghastly failure. Castille now viewed *la Bucca* as a holding pen for the irretrievably damned — an island exile for those too wicked to live within civilization.

So it remained until 1666, when *la Bucca*’s guards found a man dead at the gates of the south wall. When the guards reported his death to the resident Vaticine priest, the monsignor went pale with fear. The prisoner had died of the White Plague. The island’s commander immediately quarantined those who had been in contact with the body. When symptoms began springing up among other prisoners, he issued evacuation orders to the guards. The island was to be abandoned, the prisoners left to the mercy of the Plague.

Word spread quickly, and the evacuation took place in a near-panic. The soldiers piled madly into the waiting ships, trampling each other with

fear while the rioting prisoners screamed for help from outside the gates. In their haste to escape, they didn't even take the time to spike all of the cannons, and left several well-stocked powder rooms intact. It wasn't until they had left the island behind that they realized they had been tricked.

The prisoners had faked the Plague, disguising a corpse and mimicking symptoms to send the guards into a panic. A clever inmate named Allende had orchestrated the affair, obtaining the proper supplies from an anonymous outside source. The incident was timed to coincide with the arrival of two supply ships there to restock the garrison several days hence. When the ships arrived, prisoners would approach the docks dressed in fake uniforms and seize the vessels, thus providing them with a means of escape.

Unfortunately, bad luck almost ended the revolt before it could succeed. The supply ships arrived two days early... just as the guards were fleeing the island. The nervous prisoners watched helplessly as the guards signaled the approaching merchants, trying to warn them of the Plague. The fates smiled, however, and by the time the merchants saw them, their ships had docked and the prisoners had taken them. (Later, Allende learned that the fate witch Alesio had kept the merchants from seeing the signal. See her entry in Appendix Two for more details.)

As they watched Allende and his men swarm aboard the vessels, the guards realized that the "outbreak" had all been a ruse. After a quick debate, they turned back to *la Bucca* in an attempt to sink the ships before the prisoners could claim them. Allende was ready, however; as the guards approached, the fortress guns opened fire and rapidly sunk two of the three ships. The last retreated to Castille, bearing news of the revolt.

After such a brilliant coup, the prisoners were ready to follow Allende into Legion's Pit itself. But rather than take the leadership they offered, he announced a radical idea. He proposed a nation of men bound by an agreement, free of the fetters of religion, culture, or nationality. They would *all* rule as one; no man would be held higher than any other. Those who did not want a part of this brotherhood could leave in peace, but those who remained would become citizens of a new nation, one that offered them more opportunities than they had ever dreamed. Exulted by their victory, most of the prisoners agreed, and the Brotherhood of the Coast was born.

Since then, the former prisoners have been responsible for countless acts of pillaging off the coast of Montaigne and Vodacce, as well as the capture of several prominent ships. They seem to focus their activities on enemies of Castille, targeting vessels which threaten Castillian safety. The Montaigne navy has had a difficult time containing their depredations, and even the Sea Dogs have crossed swords with them a few times, though such incidents are rare. They have also worked to fulfill Allende's idealistic notions. The more selfish prisoners have long-since departed, leaving a core of men and women who strongly believe in the Brotherhood. Under them, true democracy has begun to flourish — and their coffers have swollen with stolen gold.

### **Organization and Methods**

When it comes to organization, the Brotherhood are an odd paradox. On one hand, they believe fervently in personal freedom, but they are also bound by a sacred promise, which they take when they first join. The Brotherhood's rules detail a strict code of conduct followed by every person aboard ship. Almost every pertinent question (for both officers and sailors) can be answered by the charter. It contains an order of list (the length of watches), forbids gambling on the ship, orders the crew to clean their weapons regularly, and even gives a method for solving quarrels among crew members. Brotherhood sailors will not take life unless absolutely necessary, and all spoils are divided evenly between them. Sailors who meet a ship flying a Brotherhood flag know that if they give up without a fight, they will not be harmed; they often surrender rather than face the Buccaneers.

Perhaps the most important article in the charter dictates that Brotherhood crew must stay together until certain conditions are met (usually the acquisition of a set amount of plunder), at which time, they may divide the profits and do as they please. The charter also gives recompense to those who are injured or maimed in the line of duty, an unheard of concession in 17th century Théah. Rumor has it that the Vendel Sailor's Guild based their "innovative" pension rules on the Brotherhood's charter.

Almost half of the island's inhabitants were pirates or privateers, with the knowledge to rebuild the two captured ships as war vessels. The Brotherhood currently boasts eight ships, an eclectic lot consisting of cutters, galleons, and modified merchant ships. A small group of

Invisible College scientists has helped them make improvements on the vessels' original designs (see *The Invisible College*, page 55, for more information). Allende commanded his own ship, the *Hanged Man*, but had no authority over the remaining seven. As long as they adhere to the Brotherhood's charter (every sailor must take an oath to uphold it before being allowed onboard), the Brotherhood captains may act as they please. Allende concentrates his pillaging along the coast of Montaigne, while the other ships prey on Montaigne, Vodacce, and occasionally Castillian vessels.

The Brotherhood gives every ship they encounter the opportunity to surrender, and never harms any crew who give up without a fight. Should they meet resistance, however, they can attack with the ferocity of sharks. The Brotherhood holds some of the most experienced seaman in Théah, and captains like Allende seem born for tactical command. They know what imprisonment means, and most Buccaneers will fight to the death rather than risk capture.

While each Brotherhood ship fights for its own, some have hired themselves out as privateers on occasion. The Brotherhood has few allies (although rumors persist of a connection with El Vago), and a solid commission can make them new friends in high places. Certain Brotherhood ships have performed tasks for Queen Elaine, and the Vendel League occasionally employs them against Vodacce merchant traders.

### Protocols and Crew

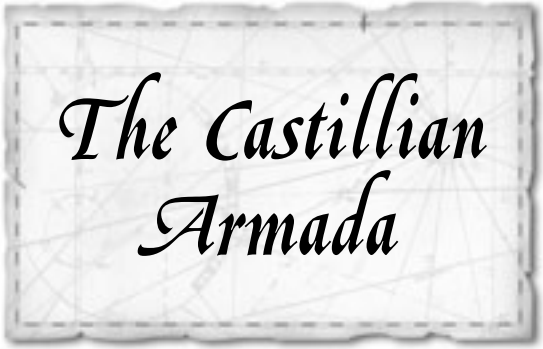
Each Brotherhood ship has its own command structure and ranks, depending on the crew at hand. Brotherhood crews can vary from voyage to voyage, and it's not uncommon to have two or three officers serving the same basic position. Command structure rarely matters on a Brotherhood ship. Each crewman is allowed to vote on any decision made: the ship's course, which navies to terrorize, and where to rest and recuperate. Once the vote is cast, the crew falls back on a more traditional command structure, but any important decision during a voyage must go before the entire crew. The only exception to this is during combat: then the captain assumes unquestioned command and keeps it until the danger has passed.

Punishment on a Brotherhood ship is rarely necessary; Buccaneers are motivated by personal profit rather than fear of punishment. Discipline usually involves extra duties or unpleasant tasks

rather than lashings or the like. As ex-prisoners, they have already endured enough physical punishment to last a lifetime.

The Brotherhood constitutes an eclectic mix of nationalities and backgrounds. The majority hail from Castille, but their ranks hold members from nearly every country in Théah. Step onboard a Brotherhood ship, and you're likely to find Vendel smugglers, Avalon thieves and Vodacce pirates working side by side with their Castillian brethren. Most members once served as prisoners on la Bucca, and participated in the ensuing revolt. The experience has bound them together, transcending their national origins. A few other members have since migrated to their banner, but the pirate nation is still in its infancy and hasn't had time to attract many recruits from outside.

Players creating Heroes from the Brotherhood should consider when and how they joined the pirate nation. If they were imprisoned, they need to invent a backstory about their innocence or guilt, the crime they were accused of, and the circumstances surrounding their imprisonment. If they joined the Brotherhood after the revolt, they need to explain how they made contact with Allende or those beneath him, and why they would want to throw their lot in with such an organization.



## The Castillian Armada

1668 has been a rough year for the former masters of the Théan Seas. Things began well enough, as Admiral Orduño rallied his nation's navy and broke the Montaigne blockade. Since then, however, an ill wind has blown for the grand Armada. Now, the most powerful fleet in all of Théah teeters on the brink of disaster. If they recover, the Castillian Navy could turn the tide of the war. But if they fail, it could mean the very end of Castille.

Now more than ever, the Armada needs heroes.

### **History**

As far back as historical records go, the Castillians have made much of their living from the sea. The nation's long shoreline and huge rivers have made sailing second nature to them, facilitating fishing, trading and travel. Sailors say that if you see a Castillian wrestling with a siren, bet on the Castillian. The many rebellions of Castille's history have made use of their nautical affiliation, and more than one freedom fighter hid for a lifetime in La Boca de Cielo.

After the Hieros Wars of the 11th century, with Castille a truly united and free nation for the first time, the creation of a strong fleet to protect itself seemed only natural. Indeed, their need for protection may well have led to Théah's brief Age of Exploration, when Castille looked outward for the first time in its history. Their supremacy on the waves might have heartened the High Kings who sponsored men like Cristobal Gallegos and those who dared to sail into the far western sea. Castille was among the first nations to discover the Midnight Archipelago, and those islands' treasures made Castille the envy of all of Théah. Pirates preyed on Castillian ships routinely, necessitating the expansion of the fleet even further. Their defensive nature and xenophobia prompted Castille to support more military vessels, allowing them to properly protect their shoreline. Slowly, their navy grew until it dominated every other entity on the seas.

### *No Peace Beyond the Horizon*

Castille's naval might bothered other nations, and Castillian explorers found many sources of wealth before Gallegos' disappearance curtailed their efforts. Thus, Castillian galleons were popular targets for pirates and privateers. The Vatican Church's decree that all land in the Frothing Sea and La Boca belonged to Castille rankled other nations, who tested Castillian vessels at every opportunity. Even when another nation signed a treaty with Castille, they commonly only extended the agreement to the water that could be seen unaided from Castillian shores. Thus was born the Castillian phrase, "there is no peace beyond the horizon." This only increased Castille's natural xenophobia, and prodded Castillian kings to increase the size of the navy. By the dawn of the 17th century, the Castillian Armada was without equal on the Théan seas. It took Avalon's dramatic return and the colossal errors of Hernando Orduño to end their supremacy. The oceans formerly dominated by Castille became fair game.

### *The Price of Honor*

The war with Montaigne has put a fine point to the Armada's fervor to prove itself once again. And it was proving itself quite well, for a time. Under the command of Admiral Enrique Orduño, it rediscovered its sense of fire and purpose. Orduño used his influence and the desperate need created by the war to rebuild the Armada to heights undreamt of before 1659. He shattered the blockade in a daring series of attacks that put Montaigne on the defensive. Their offensive ended when Admiral Valoix took command of the Montaigne fleet, but Orduño was unworried. The Montaigne were holding their own with a combination of misdirection and daring raids on Castille, but the Armada would smash them the moment Orduño could force a full engagement. Castille had the numbers, the manpower, and the force of history on their side.

Unfortunately, Fate dealt him a different hand.

The Inquisition ordered Admiral Orduño to arrest the General after he refused to betray his crew to the Inquisition. Orduño, impressed by the General's change of heart and disgusted with the Inquisition, refused. He was arrested, imprisoned in El Morro, convicted of heresy, and sentenced to be burned at the stake. They allowed his wife Margaretta to take command of his flagship after signing a condemnation of her husband, but she was a swordsman, not an admiral. Worse, the Inquisition doesn't entirely trust her willingness to condemn her own husband, and watches her very closely.

Even so, the situation isn't hopeless. The restored Armada is larger than ever. Over two hundred ships defend Castille from her aggressors. The only question remaining is who will take hold of the rudder. Margaretta might theoretically take command, but her inexperience and the Inquisition's attentions reduce her effectiveness while Valoix raids the Castillian coast with virtual impunity. The Church may sponsor another Admiral, but they had best do so soon, and their choice will have staggering consequences one way or the other. Another Enrique will mean victory, while a second Hernando will spell disaster. Theus may know the future, but Castillian sailors know only this: there is still no peace beyond the horizon.

### **Structure**

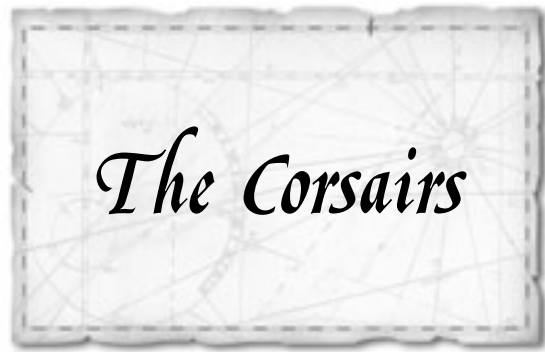
It should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Castille that the Armada is arguably the most organized and disciplined navy on the

seas. Though foreigners may see a dichotomy between Castillians' heated passions and cool scholarship, the average sailor serving in the Armada is passionate about efficiency. Rank is clearly defined and understood by all aboard. While the crew of an Armada ship might seem lazy to someone watching them at siesta time, anyone foolish enough to engage a galleon on equal terms will discover that when the time comes, her crew can and will operate like a single flawless machine.

While most ships are willing to get by with whatever command structure they can fill, an Armada ship tends to have a full complement of officers as described on pages 72-74 of the *Players' Guide*. (Typically, however, the captain will have only one lieutenant.) As Castillian ships tend to the large, this is an entirely logical decision. A complete chain of command means that conditions will be orderly for as long as possible.

One officer position unique to the Armada is that of Ship's Priest. Though few ships sail without some sort of holy person, Castillian naval protocols dictate an official Vaticine presence. The Ship's Priest is part of the chain of command, ranking immediately after the boatswain and able to give orders like any other officer. An unfortunate side effect of Admiral Orduño's arrest is that many sailors no longer trust their Ship's Priest. The Inquisition has a few spies scattered throughout the Armada, but the vast majority of priests serving the navy are as disgusted with Orduño's arrest as every other sailor in the fleet.

Life on board an Armada ship is far more relaxed than one would expect on an official naval vessel. Although many duties simply cannot wait until tomorrow, as long as everyone does their jobs, the officers are usually content to let the ship run itself. The siesta is honored during calm periods, and things tend to move at a leisurely pace. All this changes, of course, if the ship has to move quickly or attack an enemy vessel. The crew immediately goes into action, and when many other sailors would be losing their heads, Armada sailors have confidence in the strength of their commanders. In game terms, Armada ships are more likely to have the Well Trained Crew modification and less likely to have the Poorly Trained Crew flaw. One side effect of this training, as well as of Castillian education, is that Castillian sailors tend to be less superstitious than those of other nations. Of course, on Théah, this only means that a Castillian sailor is more likely to be able to tell a "false" tale of the supernatural from a "true" one.



The Corsairs are driven by a single man's vision. Twenty years ago, Kheired-Din landed a trireme upon the shore of a small Vodacce island in the middle of the night. His crew moved silently into place and attacked with complete surprise. Before dawn, the island's inhabitants were all rounded up. For the next few weeks, they were beaten, starved, forced to tear down their homes, cut down trees and build another trireme. When the new boat was finally ready, Kheired-Din's crew split between the two boats as the officers. The captives were chained to the ship's oars and forced to row the boat back to the Crescent Empire where they were sold into slavery. The proceeds went towards buying a more powerful trireme. The crew reunited and boarded it to head out on another raid.

That first attack set the pattern for the next twenty years. Capturing the inhabitants of western Théah, building boats, selling the goods and slaves in the Crescent Empire and setting out again have been the focus of the Corsairs ever since. They have also explored a number of ruins and found some powerful artifacts to aid them in their course. These tactics have allowed Kheired-Din to raid dozens of times and to expand the Corsairs fleet to over sixty vessels. And all of this for one reason. Kheired-Din's prophetic visions lead him along his current path. They show a gateway opening to release the angels of the Second Prophet who will scour the evil from the world. Then a blessed peace shall descend upon all humanity. For the sake of that vision, Kheired-Din has murdered, slaved, and tortured people throughout southern Théah. Every Corsair ship follows his orders in an effort to fulfill his apocalyptic prophecy.

Another of his visions showed Kheired-Din that the gateway cannot open until a Lightbringer was found upon an island in western Théah. Most of his raids have been part of his search for that person who will signal the approach of his

destiny. He does not know what this person looks like, only that he will know him or her by a mark on the body. As he searched for the Lightbringer, he has scoured villages for texts of scientific or historical knowledge concerning the gateway.

He also began exploring Syrnych ruins hoping to find evidence himself. He believes that the Syrnych are angels of Theus, and will help guide him to his destiny. Eventually, he became convinced that the sunken island of Cabora held the gateway, and that he would need to seek out six separate switches in order to reach it. When he realized that the task of searching all of Théah was too much for one man, he appointed one of his most trusted men to take a second trireme and raid separately. Over the years, he has continued to increase the size of his fleet until it now numbers almost sixty ships.



### **Tactics**

Kheired-Din created the Corsairs to allow him to search western Théah for signs of the Switches and the Lightbringer. He knows that both will be found upon the shore somewhere. Consequently, he has no interest in fighting upon the waves. When forced to battle other naval ships, the Corsairs try to finish the battle as quickly as possible. The captives are forced to move cannons into place and load them while the loyal crew fires. Since there are so many captives, the crew can fire a gun as quickly as it can be whipped into place. If boarded, the Corsairs usually drive slaves forward to overwhelm the boarders with sheer numbers. The slaves are unarmed and too malnourished to be a true threat individually, but they are capable of bogging down the attackers while the loyal crew use pistols and crossbows to kill them at a distance (the Corsairs covet sharpshooters among their crew for this purpose). Many of the slaves are near-madmen with a bloodthirsty anger which can easily be directed at any available target. Too often a would-be boarder must simply hack through frenzied slaves in an effort to reach their captors. When the battle is over, the dead slaves are replaced by the survivors of the Corsairs' vicious tactics.

When on shore, the Corsairs currently have enough vessels that they usually sail with a

number of openings in their rowers' benches. They simply attack villages and herd the prisoners and loot aboard. Most sorcerers and priests are immediately put to death to prevent their heresy against the Second Prophet from spreading. Any Syrnych artifacts or books dealing with them, and anyone with strange markings on their bodies are immediately brought to Kheired-Din to be examined.

### **The Crew**

The Corsair captains are all chosen by Kheired-Din himself. He selects men completely loyal to him, each a devoted follower of the Second Prophet. However the captains of the various Corsairs vessels are more than simple robots under his control. Each sails for different reasons. Most are simply interested in enriching themselves by seizing the treasures of the southern nations. Others concern themselves with vengeance against enemies of the Crescent Empire. There are even a few who want only to trade peacefully with their neighbors but are forced by the Vaticine's trade restrictions to raid for the goods they desire. One captain only serves because it allows him to seize the vintage wine that he prizes above all else. But each of them is unswervingly loyal to Kheired-Din and his prophecies. He provides each of the captains with a vessel and a core crew of officers and slaves. He also gives them a powerful secret: the ability to



move through a fog bound corridor of sea. This path allows them to move across the face of Théah in a matter of hours.

Any crew who are not slaves chained to their posts are officers in the Corsair fleet. Almost all if them are drawn from the ranks of the Crescent Empire. They must all swear allegiance to Kheired-Din, though some are simply sadistic brutes who see a chance to enrich themselves at the expense of others. They are ill-trained and ill-treated; even the captains despise many of their officers as needlessly brutish and vile. However, the officers keep the captives in line and that is the only criteria by which they are measured.

A few of the officers are truly devoted to the cause of bringing about a better world. They seek to spread belief in the Second Prophet's words of hope and peace. That they serve upon a slave galley is an irony which they see all too well. They try to teach the captives that only through a life of service to others and obedience to the Second Prophet's teachings can Théah be saved. Kheired-Din ensures that there are a few men of this type aboard each vessel to keep an eye upon the other officers and report any infractions of his rules. However, these crewmembers are held to the same guidelines as the others. Every man must use a strict hand with the captives, and maintain loyalty and obedience to Kheired-Din regardless of religious beliefs.

As for the slaves, they are captured from islands across southern Théah, chained in the hold and ordered to row. No difference is made between men, women or children; all are expected to work. The stronger rowers are fed more. The weaker ones receive less food and grow weaker. Anyone who cannot work is thrown to the mermaids. A Corsair rower's lot is long hours rowing followed by little food or water, daily beatings, and utter disdain from their masters. Order is maintained with lashes, food deprivation and violence. The officers simply do not see the slaves as human, merely animals to be driven to work.

There are a number of spies operating in the Corsair fleet, both among the officers and the captives. However, these spies are disorganized and have no contact with the outside world, so they cannot act upon the information they obtain. Still they look for opportunities to destroy Kheired-Din and his threat forever.

### Organization

Certain rules and customs are universal among the entire Corsair fleet. Anyone breaking the orders that Kheired-Din has set will be destroyed, be they captain or slave. Aboard any Corsair vessel, blasphemy and drinking alcohol is strictly forbidden. Heresy against the Second Prophet is grounds for having your tongue cut out or worse. Betrayal or revealing the secrets which Kheired-Din has revealed to a crewmember is grounds for death. Assault upon a superior results in lashes, if not death. Escape attempts are rewarded with lashes until the man is unable to move. If he recovers, he is put back on the rower's bench. If he doesn't, the captive is thrown overboard. The captive rowers are treated as chattel and abused daily.

The officers and keepers of slaves have things little better. They must maintain merciless discipline at all times; the slaves despise them and outnumber them forty to one. Any failure or shortcoming can easily result in a mutiny which. Because of that, the officers are extremely critical of each other and severely punish any infractions.

The worst punishment for any officer is to be chained to the rower's bench. Most would prefer death.

Mutinies aboard Corsair ships are rare. When the slaves overpower their captors, it usually leads to the death of every officer on board. Even if they survive, Kheired-Din will have them killed as a warning to the other Corsairs. He abhors this (it siphons resources away from his holy quest), but it must be done to keep the fleet in line.

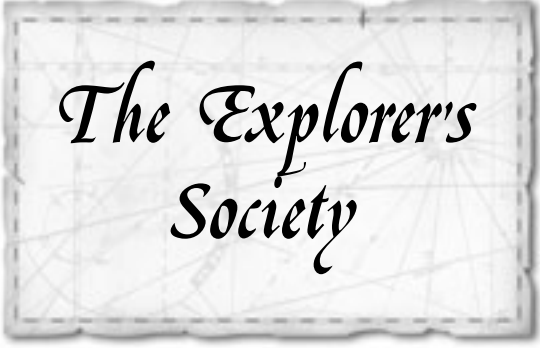
### **The Ships**

The *Strange Skies*, the Corsair flagship represents a fairly typical fleet vessel. The enormous trireme has two short masts, but mainly uses banks of chained rowers to propel the ship. There are private cabins for the senior officers while junior officers share cabins. The slaves never leave their benches for any purpose. They sleep and eat there.

While the *Skies* only carries a few cannons, those are far larger than those on typical naval ships. It takes close to forty slaves to maneuver one of the cannons into place and load it, but manpower has never been a problem for the Corsairs. The ship's slight draft and huge number of rowers negate much of the ship's mass and allow it turn and move quickly. The *Strange Skies* also mounts a strange artifact that fires lightning at opposing ships. Kheired-Din discovered the cannon at some forgotten Syrneth site; it is his vessel's primary means of attack.

Other Corsair ships follow much the same pattern. Kheired-Din forces newly captured slaves to build ships for him, all following the same design as the *Skies*. Corsairs captains often use the Syrneth artifacts they discover... after Kheired-Din takes the pick of their find of course.

A few Corsair ships use different designs. They act mostly as couriers, ferrying messages and artifacts back and forth between vessels. The most notable of these is the *Prophet's Breath*, which was used by Kheired-Din himself to maintain contact with his fleet. It was berthed in the vicinity of the *Strange Skies* when Ernesto "Espera" Castillus escaped and he seized it for his own. He renamed it *Freedom's Key* and is using it in his search for his lost love, Dalia. His crew are all freed slaves from the *Strange Skies*. They have agreed to follow Castillus to the gates of Legion in exchange for freeing them. While Kheired-Din has ordered Castillus' death, he has not personally pursued his former navigator as of yet.



## *The Explorer's Society*

"With all due respect, Headmaster, McCormick has taken hostage one of his own," Staver Mikochov said, his voice quavering with forced calm. "One of our own. The *Discovery* has already set out after him. Must we divert more Explorers ships to hunt down this... this renegade?"

Vincent Bernvadore frowned. Brenden Stafford, the Head of Sea Exploration, wanted Guy's head on a pike and was ready to hire every privateer on the Théan Seas to do it. He'd hoped that the Head Shieldman would resist, but Staver was being amazingly stubborn on the issue.

They don't know, Vincent thought sadly. They can't. Still, for all his sympathy for Guy, he knew they were right. Whatever his reasons, McCormick had betrayed the Society the minute he turned his crewman over to Kheired-Din. Brenden looked at Vincent with eyes like cold fire.

Vincent sighed. "Done." He stamped Stafford's writ with a bit more force than he'd intended. "Here's your bounty. Hire whomever you please. I want this over with, and the Society's focus back where it belongs, in short order."

Stafford nodded silently, taking the scroll from Vincent's hand. "Don't worry. Kheired-Din may come back from the bottom, but McCormick won't. I'll have Maggie back in two months."

The Explorer's Society is unlike any other sea-going force on Théah. While navies fight to defend their nations (and attack their nations' enemies), pirates steal what they can, and merchants trade for profit, the Explorers have no interest in conflict or wealth. Society ships need money to keep running, of course, and any ship without guns will soon find itself at the mercy of pirates, but their goals remain lofty: knowledge, discovery, exploration.

Because of that, Explorers often have the wildest adventures on the Seven Seas. Quests for the mysteries of the Syrneth and ancient civilizations are fraught with peril, and there are

many interested parties who either covet what the Explorers find or don't want them to succeed. Many Explorer expeditions never return. Explorer's Society teams that survive and succeed at more than a few missions, however, become heroes renowned throughout Théah.



### Current Events

The Explorer's Society has had a fleet longer than it has had a Society, starting with Cameron McCormick's personal vessel back in 1586. But it wasn't until Brendon Stafford became the Head of Sea Exploration in 1659 that the Explorer's Society truly developed a fleet. Under his direction, the fleet expanded greatly. Before then, Explorer ships numbers only five, donated by a few wealthy members or purchased at great cost. Stafford immediately launched an ambitious expansion plan, buying derelict vessels and refurbishing them at the Carleon docks. Less than ten years later, the fleet has expanded to nineteen vessels with more on the way.

The ships permitted the Society to launch expeditions without compromising their security by hiring independent vessels. They have also allowed a larger number of sailors to join their ranks and permitted nautical-minded Explorers to shift their duties into new areas. The past year has been a little busier than usual for the Explorer's Society, but not noticeably so. Digs proceed apace throughout the known world, and while rumors abound about some unbelievably powerful Syrneth machine in Vodacce, there have been no major events involving the Society (at least none that anyone knows about).

McCormick's alliance with Kheired-Din has unleashed something that might change all of Terra. If what a few suspect comes to pass, neither the Society nor the world will ever be the same. In the meantime, Explorer teams investigate the Midnight Archipelago and search the Seven Seas, unaware that the nature of exploration may soon change forever.

### Structure

The Society's nautical efforts have little real structure. Brenden Stafford is the Head of Sea Exploration, with the individual captains beneath him. Each captain runs his or her ship more or less independently, so long as they are pursuing

the Society's goals and not taking foolish risks. Stafford doesn't suffer fools gladly, and while he understands that exploration on Théah is extremely dangerous, he has been known to relieve captains instantly and emphatically. He threw one captain off his own ship for ignoring the storm warnings of his Ship's Master. Explorer captains who don't want to be responsible to Brenden Stafford find their own ships and hire their own crews. Most follow his lead. Aside from being fiercely loyal to his people, he's one of the best shipwrights who ever lived.

From there, the command structure on an Explorer ship is dependent on the captain. Some run their ships like clockwork, with a rigid and well-defined command structure and carefully planned expeditions. Others have a more fluid system of command, where those with the expertise take over in situations involving their knowledge. Explorers run the gamut between these two extremes, operating under the philosophy of "do whatever works."

For all that, life on an Explorer ship is quite familiar to old sea hands. The days are long, sleep is at a premium, food quality is a hit-or-miss proposition, and voyages can be murderously boring at times. Things change when the true exploration begins. The exact nature of Syrneth science and/or sorcery is unknown, and the waters surrounding a Syrneth island can be a trap. Ancient sorcerous powers can muster bizarre forces all their own, the Numans had impressive technology, and not all ruin monsters live on the land. Just reaching an uncharted island can be an adventure.

Once there, a thousand things in every imaginable form can threaten the crew. Even if they escape with their lives, transporting certain artifacts can be dangerous, and an Explorer team can expect someone to take an interest in their activities. *L'Empereur*, Prince Caligari and the Inquisition all have an interest in Syrneth artifacts in one way or another, and any one of them can use their vast resources to waylay an Explorer ship. None of their methods are likely to be gentle. Worse, it's said that Captain Reis can smell a Syrneth artifact from half a sea away, and it's certain that he has an interest in them. Even if he doesn't, plenty of other pirates are willing to pick up the slack. Time spent returning to a friendly port is never boring.

More on the Explorer's Society can be found in the *Erebus Cross* trilogy and in their upcoming sourcebook.



This section covers all of those ships which follow no nation, belong to no organization, and obey no code except their own. For all the massive navies and privateer bands roaming the Théan seas, the lone pirate ship remains a common sight. Individual vessels prey upon shipping lanes with alarming regularity, taking what they wish and departing before any naval ships arrive. They are the lone wolves of the waves, bound only to their crewmates and their treacherous lifestyle. Pirates lead a tenacious and dangerous existence, but the freedom of the open sea often makes the risks worthwhile. At least that's what they tell themselves.

A "pirate" is defined as any sailor who makes a living by robbing or sinking other vessels, and who does so for personal (rather than national or philosophical) gain. Individual pirates are as varied and unique as the ships they sail, and no one crew looks quite like any other. Pirate Heroes can belong to any nationality, come from nearly any background, and pilot almost any ship capable of floating.

Of course, the phrase "Pirate Hero" can be a little difficult to define. Most pirates make their living by robbing other vessels and murdering their crews, hardly the actions of righteous men. People turn to piracy out of desperation, when they have nothing left to lose. Many go to sea to avoid arrest or imprisonment, and their miserable lives aboard ship usually destroys what flickering humanity they have left.

Luckily, players need not descend to these depths to portray pirate Heroes. All it takes is a little forethought and adherence to a few ground rules, which you can establish in the initial stages of the campaign.



## *Creating Heroic Pirates*

As always, motivation plays a key factor in creating a given Hero. Heroic pirates must have a reason to be where they are, and a justification for doing what they do. Most pirates just stumble into the role, but a few have other motives. Perhaps your crew sees itself as "noble" robbers, stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. Perhaps they act out of defiance of unjust laws, such as smuggling items from the Crescent Empire. Or perhaps they use piracy to obliquely attack even greater evils, such as sinking the vessels of a corrupt Vodacce Prince. Whatever the case, your Heroes' motivation should place their piracy in context, making high seas robbery a justifiable means of making a living.

### **Codes of Conduct**

Having established a solid motivation, the players should sit down and develop a code of conduct to which the crew will adhere. This is hardly unusual; almost every pirate crew creates rules of behavior, though usually to prevent them from killing each other than any altruistic motives. With a code in place (along with appropriate punishments for those who break it), the crew can proceed without worrying about crossing any moral lines. Most pirate codes focus on the acquisition and distribution of loot, delineation of duties while on board, command structure, combat protocols, and disciplinary measures. Moral stipulations (for example, "no crewman shall take a human life unless his own life is in danger") can easily be inserted as well, giving your rogues a reasonable moral compass.

In addition to a code, you should have a general overview of the types of activities which your pirate Heroes engage in. Who do they rob and how do they go about it? Do they prefer attacking Vendel ships, or is Vodacce their favorite target? What sort of cargo do they covet? Do they have a means of turning their ill-got gains into a profit? Finally, do they concern themselves solely with piracy, or do other activities take up their time as well? Smuggling, treasure hunting, and the like can reap a profit just as well. Many pirate crews even perform quasi-legitimate work — safeguarding merchant vessels, transporting precious valuables, or even hunting other pirate vessels. A good sense of such "preferred activities" can help your GM plan better adventures, as well as helping you to establish your Hero's morality.

### Tactics

Experienced pirate ships know when and where to engage their foes, and how to reach their goals without getting sunk. Those who don't never last long enough to learn. Smart pirates try to take plunder without engaging in combat, either by stealing it unobserved (in the case of buried treasure) or by cowing target ships into submission. Boarding can get ugly and many merchant vessels have strong contingents of marines to repel pirates. If you can convince the other crew that you could sink them easily, or that they will not be harmed if they comply, you can end the fight before it begins. (Both Gosse and the Brotherhood practice this policy rigorously.)

A broadside bristling with cannon barrels is the easiest way to intimidate other ships, but clever pirates can find other ways to lower their opponents' guard. Good talkers can persuade them to give up without a struggle, as can strong displays of sorcery (especially flashy ones like Glamour or Lærdom). If the target vessel has a particularly cruel captain, you could simply encourage the crew to mutiny, thus gaining new members as well as a vessel full of booty. Of course, there are those who relish a good fight, and eagerly unleash cannon and boarding parties in an effort to subdue their victims. But the wise ones know that such activities take a harsh toll on ships and men alike.



Finally, every crew needs a safe port in which to dock. Damaged vessels must be repaired, food supplies restocked, and lost crewmen replaced. Plunder needs to be exchanged — preferably somewhere away from the authorities — and even the saltiest sailor wants to feel the land beneath his feet every now and again. For pirates, safe ports can be exceedingly difficult to come by. Wanted criminals cannot simply pull up to any dock they please, and “civilized” port cities can mean death to the wrong crew. Pirate Heroes should know which ports are open to them, and which should be avoided. A reliable bolt hole to rest and resupply could mean the difference between life and death.

### Gosse's Gentlemen

One of the most famous pirates to ever sail the seas was Philip Gosse, the gentleman plunderer whose legend lives on today. His exploits form a template for all “heroic” pirate crews, and his story is provided here as an example upon which players can base their own Heroes.

### History

The name of Philip Gosse was incredibly famous thirty years ago. He and his men were known as the Gentlemen Pirates, due to their chivalrous code and innate sense of fair play. They hurt as few people as possible, never stole personal possessions, and always left their targets with enough stores to make it to port. In fact, they would often throw drunken parties with their “victims” before departing with one final toast farewell. Their ship, the *Uncharted Course*, was known in every port; naval vessels refused to engage them, preferring to focus on less honorable foes. They had rivals to be sure and even a few enemies, but never in any numbers. Even those who they robbed earned some measure of fame; merchants would brag about the good they lost to Gosse and his crew. Then,

after years of fame, they vanished utterly, never to be seen again. That was thirty years ago.

Gosse retired when he fell in love with a beautiful woman named Clarissa Nevermoore. Many of his men already had wives in various ports, and they were getting tired of the dangerous life they led. They looked around for an appropriate place, and came across an uninhabited tropical island that had plenty of food and fresh water. The island was so close to paradise that they named it Utopia, and settled down there to live out their lives away from the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, the rest of the world wasn't quite finished with them. A vicious scoundrel, Comte Robert Méchant, had crossed swords with Gosse on numerous occasions, and had no intention of letting his rival sail off into the sunset. Ten years after Gosse's retirement, Méchant managed to locate Utopia and kidnap his wife Clarissa. The *Uncharted Course* located Méchant within a fortnight, and forced his vessel to surrender after a brief exchange of cannonfire. What happened next is unclear; none of those present at the time will speak of it. But the *Course* left the scene with Clarissa's dead body aboard and Méchant's ship burning to the keel in siren-infested waters. Neither Méchant nor any of his crew were seen again.

Since then, Gosse and his men have dwelt on Utopia, raising their families and living off the bounty of the island. Though troubled by the loss of his wife, Gosse took solace in his young daughter Melinda, and after a time managed to restore a measure of his old cheer. He and his men didn't have many modern comforts on the island, but disputes were few and far between, and there was no one to tell them what to do. For twenty more years, their lives were as close to perfect as they could imagine.

It was the younger generation that forced them out of retirement. They were bored, and had heard the tales of the wild things the older generation had done in their younger days. So they decided to refurbish their old ship and go out pirating. Some of the original crew went along with them to keep them out of too much trouble and to give them the benefit of their experience. Gosse himself, now an old man, agreed to captain the vessel, citing the need for "one last adventure" before he died. In the two years since, several merchant vessels have reported being robbed by Gosse's Gentleman — breathing new life into the old legends.



### Organization and Methods

Gosse's crew hasn't got a written agreement, per se. They're pretty much all old friends, and they know they can count on each other to do their jobs. A blank page known as The Unwritten Rules adorns Gosse's cabin. Everyone who joins the crew presumably understands how to behave under his command, and doesn't need instructions. Punishment is usually pretty light on the *Uncharted Course*. Melinda Gosse (Philip's daughter) might scold one of the crewmen for not doing their job, but the lash is never used. The worst punishment is setting a crewman ashore in some foreign port and sailing off without him.

When it comes to taking other ships, the Gentlemen have reaped quite a reward from Gosse's reputation. They generally fire a warning shot across the bow, and then call for the other ship's surrender, making sure to drop Gosse's name. Most crews are at least amenable to negotiating with a living legend. Usually, Gosse's crew winds up with a portion of the ship's cargo, and the other crew winds up with cooked meals and pleasant company for several days. Best of all, they avoid unnecessary bloodshed. If forced, Gosse's crew are able swordsmen, and can disarm most other fighters without hurting them. Of course, should one of their own get killed in the general melee, things can turn ugly very fast.

Most of Gosse's crew have watched each other grow up over the years. The ship has the feel of a family-owned business. The rules aren't strictly enforced, but everyone still gets their job done. This attitude has its drawbacks, but it makes for a very close and cooperative crew at the same time. Parties wishing to crew a pirate ship in *7th Sea* would do well to follow their example.



## The Montaigne Navy

After the Castillians, the Montaigne Navy is the most powerful organized navy in the world, and one of the most uniform. Some twenty years ago, during an inspection of the naval facilities by King Leon, Admiral Sices du Sices boasted that Montaigne would soon have the largest navy upon the face of Théah. Leon nodded and his bodyguard whispered to the Admiral that failure to achieve this prediction would have long lasting and excessive repercussions. In a panic, the Admiral transferred all naval production to small, fast frigates in an effort to reduce construction times. Within a year, half of the Montaigne Navy consisted of frigates. As the fleet grew, that number has steadily increased until Montaigne now boasts largest number of frigates of any nation. Currently the Navy consists of over 225 vessels, 150 of which are frigates. The rapid increase has caused two crises: usage and officers.

### **Ships**

The first crisis was how to use this enormous number of vessels. While a galleon brings overwhelming size and firepower to bear at a ponderous pace, frigates are smaller and quicker, so they can act as scouts and patrol vessels. But their smaller size means that they cannot stand up to concentrated cannon fire. A frigate's speed and maneuverability enables her to spot an enemy and flee, but toe-to-toe fighting is quite difficult.

Or rather, it was. When the Montaigne diverted production from galleons and larger warships to frigates, they changed all of that. Their new ships already had the reinforced hull, the braces, the more numerous gun ports and cannons of a ship much larger than itself. They could take a much greater pounding and still be capable of returning a staggering amount of firepower, while maintaining a frigate's quickness and maneuverability. These new ships were capable of destroying anything of their size or smaller and still fared well against foes even much

larger than themselves. And when a single vessel encountered a force too great to handle alone, she could summon other ships to assist her.

The Montaigne's large navy allowed her to overwhelm resistance and cover an enormous area. Until recently, Montaigne was simultaneously engaged in a blockade of Castille, escorting numerous merchant vessels and hunting down the Sea Dogs, Vesten Raiders and Brotherhood of the Coast ships. When Orduño broke the blockade, they were forced to focus almost entirely upon Castille, but the numbers involved in such widespread operations were impressive indeed.

### **Sailors**

The second question generated by the large number of vessels built was what to do about officers. The Montaigne officer positions have traditionally been filled by nobles while commoners work in the more dangerous and less honorable positions. However, with the huge increase in vessels, there were simply not enough willing nobles to fill all of the available officer positions. Since promoting commoners was distasteful to the Admirals in charge, another solution had to be found.

It came in the form of an Imperial decree stating that any Montaigne who volunteered to serve aboard a naval vessel for three years would be free from any taxation for ten years following his service. Any Porté Mage serving for three years would be exempt from taxes for his lifetime. Although Montaigne commoners already paid the bulk of taxes, the promise of complete exemption for a short service caused a stampede of Montaigne nobility to enlist, far more than was needed. This enabled the Navy to staff each boat with an enormous number of officers.

Montaigne officer ranks closely follow the system outlined on pages 72–74 and 132 of the *7th Sea Player's Guide*. Porté mages are usually assigned a rank of Lieutenant. While it is theoretically possible for a commoner to rise through the ranks to any position, in practice the highest rank a commoner could expect to reach was Midshipman.

The noble officers bring a number of advantages to the navy. The nobility has been trained to command from birth and can direct their men with assured confidence. Most of them have trained in fencing and many have hunting skills as well. Given the smaller crew sizes, an officer's combat ability is absolutely vital. The

nobles have connections to important people ashore, which can be invaluable when the ships are required to reprovision or interact with non-naval personnel.

Most importantly, many officers have *Porté* magic which enable instantaneous communication with every vessel in the fleet. The importance of this fact cannot be underestimated. Any sighting of an enemy vessel can quickly result in the convergence of enough firepower to overwhelm it. Men are available to bring captured prize vessels to port, and mutinies are easier to quash when reinforcements can arrive within minutes. *Porté* magic allows the officers to summon blooded clocks from the naval headquarters for instant chronological readings. This gave the Montaigne the greatest navigational tool possible: accurate positioning. (The temporal difference between the ship and the naval headquarters can determine the ship's longitude.) The Montaigne navy has the fastest communication network in the world and the intelligence to use it well.

Each officer is provided with at least one servant and a salary to maintain more if desired. They also each receive a small stateroom, measuring only six feet to a side, but affording privacy and dignity. They may purchase food and bring it aboard via *Porté*, which also allows a unique perk known as duty rosters. Duty rosters on Montaigne vessels mention three categories: on duty, off duty, and off station time. As long as he is on board ship during on and off duty, an officer may spend his off station time anywhere he sees fit. Often nobles travel by *Portal* to spend this time at court, fine parties on land or more intimate meetings.

In return for this pampered treatment, the navy expects excellence from its officers. Gunners must have the finest aim and topmen are expected to outsail any possible foes. Marine commanders practice constantly with marksmen tests and swordsman drills. Every officer is required to maintain a tailored uniform out of his own pocket, and wear it while on duty or off station. The uniform alone is an enormous expense, but the sight of it guarantees excellent service from almost any shop or government office in Montaigne. Naval officers often consider



themselves the “Musketeers of the waves,” and anyone who cannot meet these high standards ends up serving aboard transport ships or transferred to shore duty where they will not receive the tax break. The social stigmata of losing a luxurious position aboard a true fighting frigate is enormous.

### **Crew**

In contrast to the officers, the crew of the vessels are often obtained by press gangs and rough recruitment. Since they do not volunteer, these men are still subject to taxation. In fact, the navy usually refuses peasant volunteers, who are often beaten for their impudence. Most sailors come from merchant ships or other navies, but it is not unknown to impress any commoner, be he banker or farmer, to serve aboard a naval vessel. The Vendel Sailors Guild has objected to this on several occasions, but the Montaigne authorities disregard these objections.

Although the pay is good aboard a Montaigne ship, the conditions are atrocious. Twelve men squeeze into hammocks hanging between the below-decks cannons. By naval order, all food must be of good quality and supplemented with fresh vegetables obtained via *Porté Portal*. However, since the naval treasury pays for goods, dishonest officers often buy rotting or poor quality food and keep the remainder of the money for themselves. This is an acceptable practice because it only affects the commoners aboard the ship.

Montaigne crews wear whatever rags and scraps they can find. Officers sometimes give crew members worn or outdated uniforms, but such outfits are often divided between a dozen different sailors. The crew works long shifts and can be roused awake at any moment for additional work. There is no special training given to the men, but shoddy work is sure to catch the captain's eye. Every day in dozens of small ways the nobles and commoners remind each other that they are not alike.

Luckily, the men generally consider themselves some of the finest sailors in the word. The simple truth of this fact heals part of the sting of the social inequities found on all Montaigne vessels and helps keep the crew more or less satisfied with their lot.

### Discipline

The Montaigne Navy has a list of standing orders, to which both officers and men must adhere. All Montaigne sailors are expected to show respect to their superiors, and follow orders regardless of personal feelings. No sailor may strike a woman while onboard ship, even if she belongs to the crew. Montaigne vessels are expected to help any "ship in need" in the Frothing Sea (which is considered Montaigne territory by *l'Empereur*). Of course, the definition of a ship in need varies from captain to captain. Finally, all sailors — even the seamen — are expected to maintain a certain level of cleanliness while onboard. They are Montaigne, after all; it wouldn't do to appear unseemly.

Montaigne vessels follow a vigorous chain of command and must maintain discipline at all times. An officer who is too familiar with the crew or who cannot enforce proper disciplinary measures maybe found unfit for service. Flogging is a serious punishment and theoretically requires notifying the captain. In practice, however, any noble can whip any seaman to death and receive little more than a spoken reprimand as punishment. If an officer or noble is whipped, he usually hires a swordsman to challenge his attacker to a duel. Thus officers are rarely whipped. In fact any punishment imposed upon one of his noble subordinates must be handled delicately because of the strong political power most nobles hold. More than one captain has been cashiered because they assigned an Admiral's son an undesirable position.



## The Sea Dogs

### History

Twenty years ago, the Sea Dogs didn't exist. The kingdom of Avalon saw little need for an organized navy; it petitioned Montaigne for protection, which was enough to fend off depredations from Castille and the odd attack by Vesten renegades. All of that changed, however, when Elaine announced her nation's formal independence in 1658. With Avalon out of their sphere of influence, the Montaigne no longer felt obligated to protect her shores. To make matters worse, the Vaticine Church had declared Elaine heretical and the King of Castille swore to destroy the upstart queen. Castille was the largest naval power in the world at the time, and any fleet from her shores would spell doom to the fledgling nation.

Lacking the resources to form a proper navy, Elaine sent out a call for loyal sea captains to turn their vessels towards service of the crown. The first to answer the call was Jeremiah Berek, a minor noble who saw an opportunity for rapid advancement. He outfitted his merchant ship with cannon and mortar, renamed it the *Black Dawn*, and presented himself to Elaine. The bemused Queen issued him a letter of marque, giving him plunder rights to any "enemy ships" he sunk in Avalon waters. Other captains soon followed Berek and in no time, Avalon had developed a rough privateer navy.

Their efforts came just in time. In 1659, reports rose from Barcino of a huge Castillian armada heading towards Avalon's shores. Elaine immediately placed Berek in charge of her "navy" and ordered him to defend Avalon at all costs. The former idle nobleman found himself commanding a rag-tag fleet of modified fishing vessels against the greatest fleet Théah had ever seen.

Though inexperienced in nautical ways, Berek was no fool. He knew that the Castillian galleons would have difficulty maneuvering through the shallow Avalon waters, which his own vessels

could traverse with ease. He quickly requisitioned additional ships — sometimes no more than rowboats with boarding cannons attached — and waited until the Armada was within sight of Avalon's shores before attacking. He was aided by a sortie of Vendel irregulars, who harassed the Castillians ceaselessly from Barcino to Carleon, and by a thick fog bank which descended on the Armada the morning of the battle.

Weakened by poor planning and bad luck, the Castillians numbered less than one hundred ships when they finally reached Avalon, while Berek had over twice that number. Realizing their folly, the Castillians attempted to retreat, but the shallow waters and speedy Avalon ships made short work of them. The ferocious battle lasted most of the day. Over sixty Castillian vessels were sent to the bottom before they finally escaped; Avalon lost less than twenty. The stunning victory made Berek a national hero and brought untold glory to the sailors under his command.

Since then, Avalon has depended upon privateers as her naval power. Dubbed the "Sea Dogs" after an incident involving the Castillian ambassador, they act as the Queen's sanctioned pirates, launching raids against Avalon's enemies. Each vessel is privately owned, but swears allegiance to Elaine in exchange for a letter of marque and reprisal. They keep a hefty percentage of the booty they seize, giving the rest to the crown in exchange for safe harbor and tacit legitimacy. The Avalon populace has romanticized their exploits, and the "gentleman sailor" has become a desired title for up-and-coming nobles looking to make their names. Under the loose guidance of Jeremiah Berek, the Sea Dogs are now one of the pre-eminent powers on the Théan seas. Even his recent disappearance has not dimmed their reputation for daring bravado.

### Organization and Methods

The Sea Dogs currently number about eighty vessels, although they can expand that number in dire circumstances. Each is privately owned and has no official connection to Avalon or Queen Elaine. Instead, they receive a letter of marque and reprisal — essentially a contract with the Avalon government — which stipulates a set of vague duties in exchange for legal sanction. Most Sea Dogs vessels are expected to defend the shores of Avalon from attack and to protect all those who sail within her waters — usually Avalon merchants and traders. They may also launch attacks on "enemies of the crown," which usually



### "What exactly is marque and reprisal?"

Letters of marque and reprisal are official sanctions issued by governments to privateers as a legal excuse for their activities. A letter of *marque* is usually issued during times of war, and allows a privately financed warship to legally attack enemy ships. Its peacetime counterpart, a letter of *reprisal*, gives merchants the right to pursue recompense when pirates have stolen their goods. A letter of marque and reprisal is simply a combination of those two distinctions.

Needless to say, these letters are remarkably vague, and open the door to all kinds of abuse. "Enemy ships" could translate as any vessel not directly aligned to the crown, while merchants could feasibly "pursue recompense" against any vessel which came along. While Berek and certain other captains try to adhere to a rough code of honor, numerous privateers use their vague authority to commit all sorts of mischief.

translates into any nation not actively aligned with Avalon. Castille and Montaigne often find themselves targeted by Sea Dog attacks, though they're not above raiding "neutral" ships trading with those nations. In essence, they're very much like pirates. If captured outside of Avalon, they will hang just like any other criminal.

The Sea Dogs rely on small, fast vessels to strike and fade away before their targets can retaliate. In the years since the Armada, Jeremiah Berek made a reputation for daring, almost foolhardy attacks: diving into certain danger and relying on luck and bravado to see him through. Other Sea Dogs use similarly bold tactics. They attack when their opponents least expect it, using their speed to close with the enemy and inflict heavy damage very quickly. They have an extensive knowledge of reefs and shallows, and use it to plot ingenious escapes when things turn sour. While Berek relies (or rather relied) on his uncanny luck, other Sea Dog captains use cunning and speed to see them through their missions. Their tactics have been remarkably successful, swelling the Queen's coffers with Castillian gold, Montaigne trade goods, and even Syrneath artifacts.



### Other Privateers

Nautical Heroes who don't wish to join Sea Dogs can still find plenty of privateering opportunities elsewhere. Any existing government can issue letters of marque and reprisal, and many do. Privateers sail under every national banner in Théah, selling their dubious services for safe haven and plunder rights. Montaigne and Castillian privateers have become more numerous since the war began, and the Vendel Merchant Marines follow many of the same patterns that the Dogs do. Even individual nobles may hire out private vessels, granting the crews protection or influence in court in exchange for pursuing some particular agenda. Most privateers never command more than a handful of ships and stay fairly close to whichever nation sponsors them. Their letters of marque and reprisal vary wildly, and can often be revoked on a whim; the life of a privateer can be quite risky.

Captain Berek theoretically commands all of the Sea Dogs, although he funnels his authority through the Avalon Office of the Admiralty, which grants letters of marque and reprisal, and collects the required funds from licensed ships. Berek (and the Office) has the power to revoke a ship's authority at any time, but other than that, has no legal binding power to affect individual captains. Because of this, many Sea Dog ships are free to pursue more esoteric duties — the search for lost treasure, for example, or private commissions from nobles or merchants. With Berek's recent loss to the Crimson Rogers, other Sea Dogs have had even greater leeway in the execution of their duties.

Despite this lack of organization, the Sea Dogs remain remarkably unified. Berek's natural charisma and leadership abilities prompted many Sea Dogs captains to follow his orders regardless. Berek's successor, "Bloody" Bonnie McGee, has parlayed that loyalty in her quest for revenge, using numerous Sea Dogs ships to help track the Rogers. Though loosely organized, the Dogs still maintain a rough sense of unity. A blow against one ship is a blow against them all.

### Protocols

The Sea Dogs have few protocols and even fewer rules of conduct. As privately-owned vessels, they answer to no legal authority, and can technically act as they please. Each vessel has its own chain of command and its own rules of behavior. Some are strict, pseudo-military vessels, others freewheeling gangs of disorganized rogues. It all depends on who's in charge.

In order to join the Sea Dogs, one must first petition the Office of the Admiralty in Carleon. Theoretically, Captain Berek holds this post, but since he wouldn't be caught dead in some musty office, the job falls to "Admiral" Thomas Middleton, a retired sailor who served with the Montaigne in the years before Elaine's rise. Middleton inspects any prospective Sea Dogs vessel, and conducts a thorough investigation of their owner and/or captain. Criminal activity matters little to him; loyalty to Avalon does. As long as the vessel can be relied upon to support Queen Elaine, he doesn't care a whit for the crew's background.

Once Middleton is satisfied, he issues a letter of marque and reprisal, to be carried onboard the vessel at all times. He then stipulates a certain percentage of cargo to be turned over to the crown (usually 50%, although the number can be adjusted); the rest belongs to the ship which acquired it, and may be divvied up in any way the captain or crew sees fit. Every new captain receives a Sea Dogs flag, which they must fly above any others, and a journal to be kept in the captain's cabin. All Sea Dogs vessels must detail any naval encounters and document all cargo seized. The journals may be edited, of course, but most captains keep them accurately as a gesture of loyalty to Queen Elaine.

Besides turning over a percentage of acquired goods, the Sea Dogs have only one stipulated duty — to defend Avalon from her enemies. Currently, that means harassing the Montaigne and Castillian navies, monitoring Avalon's waters for unauthorized pirate activity, and ensuring merchant vessels reach port safely. They must refrain from attacking Avalon ships, as well as those actively allied to Avalon (i.e., the Vendel League). In times of great emergency (such as another seaborne invasion of the Isles), the Dogs are expected to assume a more typical command structure and do whatever is necessary to protect the crown. Because of their decentralized nature, they may have a hard time working efficiently in such circumstances.

In exchange for their loyalty (and the rather heavy tithes), Sea Dog ships may safely dock at any port in the Triple Kingdoms. They can call upon assistance from any ship flying the Avalon flag, and fellow Sea Dogs will come to their aid if necessary. In addition, all crewmen receive the title “gentleman sailor,” and technically rank as Knights of Elaine (though they do not gain any of the benefits that “true” Knights do). The rank instills a strong sense of honor among most Sea Dogs. Though rascals and criminals, they comport themselves with a certain dignity and try to avoid loss of life in their endeavors. A few have even taken to wearing spurs onboard ship, and use their vessels to protect innocent seafarers from harm. (Spurs are usually limited to ship’s officers, since most crewmen go about barefoot.)

### **Ships and Crews**

Sea Dog ships tend to be on the small and maneuverable side. They prefer cutters, sloops, and the like: swift vessels with a shallow draft that can easily operate near the coastline. One of Berek’s favorite tactics is to draw heavier ships into the shallows, then attack them when they bottom out. Other Dogs favor vessels which can facilitate similar trickery.

Most Sea Dogs ships have humble origins. Many are merchant ships or fishing boats which have been upgraded and fitted with cannons. In the last ten years, a few proper fighting ships have been commissioned, and the Dogs have captured several Castillian galleons for their own use.

Obviously, the vast majority of Sea Dogs come from the Glamour Isles, with Inish and Highland sailors swelling the ranks of native Avalons. Recently, members of other nationalities have begun to appear on their ships as well: expatriate Castillian pilots — some on the run from the Inquisition — and the occasional Vestenmannavnjar. Berek quietly encouraged the presence of both Glamour mages and Lærdom skalds onboard Sea Dogs ships, adding magical power to their arsenal.

In addition to standard crewmen (bosuns, quartermasters, etc.), most Sea Dogs vessels maintain a small contingent of boarding marines. These sailors often have little nautical experience (and perform only the most basic duties away from battle), but can fire a pistol or wield a rapier extremely well. They earn their keep during attacks on other ships, using their swift boarding tactics to overwhelm a crew before they can organize much resistance. Sea Dog crews also

employ “leg men” who move surreptitiously through foreign harbors and ports in search of promising targets. Finally, all Sea Dog ships have at least one shantyman on board, who tells stories and sings songs to entertain the other sailors. Berek knows that fame feeds Glamour magic; tales of the Sea Dogs generate interest from the Sidhe, which in turn generates more sorcerous power for the privateers to use.



## *Vendel and Vestenmannavnjar*

### *The Vendel Merchant Marines*

The Vendel Merchant Marines are a recent development spurred by the growing number of pirate attacks in the Trade Sea. Until a few months ago, the Vendel League left the protection of merchant ships to their respective owners and captains. While the Sailor’s Guild and the Merchant Guild opposed this view, the other Guilds had little interest in their problems. However, with the increase in pirate attacks around Kirk and Montaigne naval forces being shifted further south, shipping prices have skyrocketed and all of the Guilds are now calling for drastic action.

Allen Trel, Guildmaster of the Sailor’s Guild has answered that call. He offered to strike against the pirates who accosted the shipping lanes if he was put in charge and his expenses were covered. The other Guildmasters agreed and almost a dozen vessels put to sea within a month. Fitted with concealed gunports and compartments hiding Eisen mercenaries, these ships sailed slowly through the waters of the worst pirates. When the pirates attacked, their “prey’s” hidden guns would open fire and reduce the marauders to splinters. If that weren’t enough, the Vendel

planted moles in several pirate crews, who could turn on their compatriots on a moment's notice.

Over the next few weeks, six of the most powerful pirate vessels were attacked from without and within. Five of them were destroyed by Trel's fleet. Unfortunately, the one he most wanted, Olafssdottir's *Revensj*, fought with a fierce determination and defeated Trel's men, despite the betrayal of Jorund Guttormson. Jorund and the merchantman escaped with heavy casualties while Olafssdottir's Raiders repaired their ship.

### **Ships and Crew**

Since that day, Trel has increased the size of his fleet so that they now number almost sixty vessels. They are all converted merchantmen which have traded cargo space for guns and more crew. Although slow, they have enormous crews and strike with absolute surprise. They also have the full backing of the Vendel Guilds and all of the resources that goes with that. One pirate captain discovered that the price upon his head was enough to convince his own crew to attack him.

Jorund Guttormson is the closest the fleet has to a commander, pursuing the *Revensj* (in Trel's name) from his vessel, the *Sea Lion*. This large galleon has fewer guns than other Merchant Marine vessels and is fairly slow to turn, but it holds an entire contingent of the Iron Claw, a group of Eisen mercenaries, and five turncoat Lærdom rune mages. Working their magic in concert, they are able to seize control of the weather from the Vestenmannavnjar and turn it against them. Their opponents quickly find themselves overwhelmed by stalemated weather and a huge contingent of boarders.

As for the crews, they are drawn from across Théah. Mercenary companies, deserters from other navies, and former pirates have all crowded the decks of the Vendel Merchant Marines for

their share of the Guild's money. They act to protect Vendel shipping and destroy the Vesten Raiders by any means necessary. Each captain picks his own crew and establishes whatever rules he can enforce. One iron clad rule which Trel insists upon is that all crewmen must join a guild, preferably the Sailors Guild. This has led to a dramatic increase in the size of his Guild and his personal power among the Vendel Seats. Other than that, the captains are lords of their domain. As long as they do their jobs, Trel will pay them well and give them a free hand to act as they see fit.

Such an eclectic mixture of men and officers creates its own share of problems. The mercenary companies choose their own officers while the sailors rarely obey anyone other than the Master of the Tops. The gunners obey the Master Gunner and the Captain has authority only when the other officers concur with his orders. The cacophony of conflicting orders during battle can deafening. Only sheer strength of will and threats of violence allow the captains to impose orders upon their men. These threats, the tight quarters and the brutal nature of many of the crew make the ships of the Merchant Marines a powder keg waiting to blow. Despite this, the strength and skill of the best that Vendel guilders can buy have prevailed against their opponents.

### **Tactics**

To the delight of the Vendel, the Merchant Marines have succeeded in reducing pirate attacks considerably. They currently spend most of their time escorting Vendel shipments to Montaigne and Eisen Ports. These short runs keep the Marines close to the hunting grounds of the Vesten Raiders which is where the Vendel Guilds want them to be.

From time to time, Trel gives specific orders in line with his overall plans, such as ordering ships to escort important shipments or sanctioning attacks upon Vestenmannavnjar villages. Originally envisioned as simple strikes to seize naval supplies, the raids sometimes devolve into violence and brutal slaughter. Trel has expressed regret at the uglier incidents, but continues to sanction the raids.

The Marines vessels carry enormous crews crammed into tight quarters originally meant to store grain and other goods. They come out in waves of killers with short tempers, making their attack savage in the extreme. Even the highly trained and disciplined Eisen mercenaries have



trouble keeping order amongst their men. Some claim that Vestenmannavnjar sorcery is to blame. But the truth is that unpunished lawless behavior by their fellow Marines is beginning to rub off on even the most orderly troops. Worst of all, their patron, Allen Trel, has done little to discourage this sort of behavior. The Merchant Marines have been very effective thus far, but their growing lawlessness may someday tear them apart.

These massacres are creating doubts in the minds of some members of the Vendel Guilds, and some Marines as well. They wonder whether it was wise to give carte blanche to Master Trel. It is doubtful that anything will happen as long as pirate attacks remain in check. But if the Raiders grow strong again or any of the Merchant Marines ships mutiny, the entire project is likely to blow up in Trel's face. To prevent that, he has announced that any ship which mutinies will be hunted down destroyed and all men aboard it will be killed. There will be no exceptions. This has done nothing to alleviate the stress upon the tightly strung men of the Merchant Marines.

### Vesten Raiders

*Further information on the Vestenmannavnjar can be found in the Vendel•Vesten sourcebook.*

The Vestenmannavnjar have launched attacks on other Théan nations for centuries. Recently, they have focused their efforts on their Vendel cousins, and on those nations allied with Vendel, such as Montaigne. While certain Montaigne merchants decry this new threat to open trade, the Vendel know that the Raiders are actually continuing a tradition set by their ancestors generations ago. The Vestenmannavnjar launch raids to prove their strength and skill, to provide their families with essentials and luxuries, and as a way to keep their warrior culture alive and strong. Now, another ancient tradition is coming to the forefront: a tradition of justice and vengeance.

The Vestenmannavnjar have operated with a firm set of laws since the time of the gods. However under their laws, punishment of the crime is up to the victim and his family. If the victim cannot inflict the punishment, the criminal goes free. This tradition strengthens the families of the Vestenmannavnjar, allowing them to remain loyal to each other over a single strong government or an individual. It also keeps court cases to a minimum, for when a crime is committed, the victim may immediately act against the criminal. For example



if a warrior is stabbed by another man, he may immediately kill his attacker rather than wait for a court of law. This often leads into an escalating vendetta until the original crime is lost and only their hatred remains, but that is the Vestenmannavnjar tradition.

Today, the Vesten look around, and see their entire world crumbling. The Vendel League has stolen their lands, desecrated their holy places by renaming them, and persecuted those who live in the traditional manner. Their way of life has been attacked and they feel perfectly justified in avenging themselves upon those responsible. They see their raids as an act of justice, not of piracy. If the assault upon a warrior can be dealt with by killing his attacker, how much blood must be spilt to avenge the destruction of his way of life? That is why the Vestenmannavnjar Raiders have begun to attack shipping, kill Vendel merchants and sailors, and foster open warfare.

#### Crew

A ship of Vesten Raiders usually consists of the warrior of one village who band together when danger threatens their village. They pursue their lives as farmers, woodsmen or fishermen until the captain summons them together. Occasionally the Vestenmannavnjar will allow an outsider to join them: usually Inishmen, but it is not unheard of for Eisen or Ussuran to join a ship as well.

Each crewmember pledges their lives to the captain as a political, military and religious leader.

Although every crewman may voice his opinion, the captain is ultimately responsible for choosing their targets, leading them into battle and keeping an eye on the omens. Many of the captains are rune mages or nobleborn. If the crew ever loses faith in him or her, they may select another crewman as a replacement. Faith in one's leader is an absolute necessity. The Vestenmannavnjar cannot function if they do not have a captain they can trust completely.

The captain typically appoints a first mate and bosun to assist him in running the ship. The first mate is responsible for carrying out the captain's orders and the bosun is responsible for the actions of the crew. The rest of the crew serves as their skills warrant. Everyone must take their turns at the oars, led by a few permanent rowers who set the pace. Topmen and gunners (generally armed with ballistae) train to take part in boarding actions as well. A Vestenmannavnjar Raider is expected to row all night, sail during the day, and take part in any boarding actions that occur.

This strenuous regimen would not work were the Vesten not among the strongest and doughtiest fighters in the world. Long winter nights and generations of conflict have strengthened the Vesten so that today, few can stand up to one of them in close combat. This is essential to the Vestenmannavnjar because their style of fighting relies on man to man combat. Tactics in a boarding attack are almost completely devoted to giving each warrior enough space to work and not interfering with each other.

Most Vesten ships are organized around one village or location. The crew generally know each other and rarely need more of an organizational structure or a battle plan beyond that. While ships were known to sail in fleets against foes in the past, this level of command has not existed since the death of the last High King. (Yngvild Olafssdottir and the crew of the *Revensj* serves as examples for other Raiders, but they do not truly lead.) This lack of coordination is all that has kept the Raiders from overwhelming the Vendel forces. Although the new mercenaries that the Vendel have hired may change that, the Vestenmannavnjar were never the types to refuse a challenge.

### Tactics

There are many Vesten Raiders; most are simply acting to protect themselves and maintain their lifestyle. Because of the poor quality of their lands, the Vestenmannavnjar often cannot eke out a living by simply farming or fishing. So they

must conduct lightning raids upon their neighbors — Eisen, Avalon, Montaigne, and now Vendel — for food and clothing. In these raids, the Vestenmannavnjar attack small communities, but they do not act like thieves. They arouse the native populations and fight them, rather than sneaking away with their goods. While the Vestenmannavnjar respect open warfare and a fair fight, stealing has no honor amongst them because it does not put the thief at risk. This does not mean that they attack large armed forces though; they select targets which present a suitable challenge, not impossible odds. As the skald says, "A brave man fights a wolf. A stupid man fights a wolf pack."

When not raiding, the Vesten Raiders concern themselves solely with protecting their people, usually against the Vendel, who have attacked Vestenmannavnjar villages with increasing frequency. Unfortunately, the cycle of vengeance requires the warriors to raid back to redress the Vendel attack, which leads into a never ending cycle of escalating atrocities until one side is destroyed or exhausted. Considering that the Vendel/Vesten conflict involves an entire nation, the results could be catastrophic.

Yet the Vendel are not the Vestenmannavnjar's only enemy. Their lands and waters have long been home to a number of creatures which can be seen in no other place. Fierce leviathans and sea serpents prowl the waters for fishermen, giant wolves hunt the hunters and other more mysterious creatures always loom nearby. The Vesten Raiders are often called upon to rid the seas of these creatures, leading to epic quests and dangerous acts of courage. The skald holds an honored place amongst Vesten crews because he can help the warriors find the ancient weakness of such monsters — and then remember their deeds for all time.

Yngvild Olafssdottir has undertaken a new mission as well. She has discovered that by opening a gateway in the Mirror, she can bring the Vesten ancestors back from Valhalla. She does not appear to have many details, but she is pursuing this mission with the full support of her crew. With the ancestors on her side, Olafssdottir believes that she can instigate Ragnarok... and wipe the entire Vendel nation from the face of Terra.

### Ships

The typical Raider boat is an extension of the Vestenmannavnjar longboats of old. Powered by sail and oars, these long low boats have few

luxuries, but are extremely quick and capable of long journeys. The Raiders typically use them for short strikes upon close targets. The smallest of these vessels only holds thirty warriors, while the largest can easily carry several hundred. Because the boat uses sails and oars, it is very maneuverable under the worst of weather conditions.

The ship's prow ram is a deadly tool which surprises many opponents. Tipped with steel and often enhanced by Lærdom runes, it can tear great holes into any enemy vessel. Rune mages ride aboard almost every Raider ship, using weather magic and enhanced steel to weaken their enemies. And of course, every member of a Raider crew is a capable warrior, and will fight to the death in defense of his vessel. Most Raider tactics concern themselves with closing quickly so that the crew can board as soon as possible. Once they have destroyed the vessel, they escape using weather magic to cover their tracks.



Scarovese once wrote that “the sole aim of a ruler must be to advance his own power and destroy that of his rivals.” The Vodacce Princes accept this maxim wholeheartedly. So they work to ensure that their trade grows while that of their neighbors suffers. Georgio Caligari was the first noble to outfit his merchant ships with extra cannons and prey upon the shipping of the Bianco family. The Biancos retaliated in kind and soon the practice spread to the rest of Vodacce. Since that time their fleet has become less merchant vessels than predatory mercenary ships.

All of the Princes have declared that they will not tolerate piracy in their waters; on the other hand each Prince defines piracy as anyone who preys upon his shipping. The Princes have also made no commitment to preventing pirates from using their harbors, shops and sailors. So long as their shipping is unharmed, they allow pirates to dock at their wharfs.

Most Vodacce vessels operate both as merchant ships and pirates, depending upon the vagaries of fortune. When they cannot find a cargo, many captains put to sea looking for another ship to plunder. This makes any meeting between vessels in Vodacce waters an exercise in uncertainty. If both ships have full cargo holds, they may pass each other peacefully. However, either ship is likely to raise the Jolly Roger and attack without warning if the other ship looks like it might contain anything more valuable than their own cargo. Luckily, sailors take care to learn the name and bearing of every vessel in Vodacce waters. When faced with a superior force, an informed Vodacce captain will flee or surrender his cargo to save his ship. In return, most of the pirates will not harm surrendering ships or crews since they themselves are merchants. Wholesale carnage is bad for business.

One extremely important factor when dealing with the Mercenary ships is which Prince they serve. Each Prince has his own agenda and plans which affect the sorts of actions he will allow. Vincenzo Caligari directs his men to seize any and all Sryneth artifacts. He pays well for anyone who can bring him such artifacts and asks no questions about how they obtained it. Donello Falisci, on the other hand, has declared that his ships will not take part in any act of piracy upon Vodacce vessels. He does reward anyone who sinks “northern pirates,” a term he uses to include all Vendel ships. Gespucci Bernoulli, whose monopoly on trade with the Crescent Empire has won him a fortune, concentrates on curtailing smugglers from other Princes. With such a wide range of orders and missions, determining a vessel's intent can be tricky. The first question a Vodacce captain asks when encountering another ship is “what flag does she fly?”

#### **Ships and Crew**

The crew on board a Vodacce vessel has been described by a Montaigne officer as “a mongrel lot without couth or culture.” That isn't far from the truth. Vodacce vessels recruit sailors from whatever port they are in, bringing Castillians, Montaigne, Eisen and Avalons to the southern waters. Any man who can work amid the convoluted rigging of the Vodacce ships will find a well-paying position for himself.

However, many northerners dislike working on Vodacce vessels because of the absolute power that the captain holds. Captains act as minor versions of Princes. They are solely responsible



for deciding the course and major decisions of their vessel; they receive the lion's share of the profits and may do anything to the crew under their command. Many use cruelty as a threat hanging over the heads of their men, although the threat is seldom used for fear of triggering a mutiny. The merchants and princes who own the boats do not care who controls their ships, as long as they deliver the cargo and pay their taxes.

Officers upon a Vodacce vessel are well paid and receive a great deal of authority. However, they are very few in number when compared to ships from other nations. The Captain, Master of the Tops, Master Gunner, and First Mate are about the extent of officers although many vessels do have other positions for certain crew. This includes skilled gunners or sailors with strong contacts in port. The captain often rewards them for their skills by giving them a greater share in the ship's profits without any authority.

A typical Vodacce vessel is a wide bellied galleon fitted with enormous cargo space and numerous guns. Given the increased weight, mobility is rarely the strong point of these galleons; instead they depend upon size and mass. She carries enough guns to make taking her on a challenge and enough bulk to make smaller ships leery of attacking her.

The rigging of a Vodacce vessel has been known to give northern sailors fits. To counteract the tendency towards sluggishness, she is rigged with as many sails as possible. This includes stringing sails between the mainmast and mizzenmast, across decking space and on

outriggers. The effect is a mass of ropes spreading across the ship in every direction like the product of a deranged spider. During combat, the crew drops these extra sails to ensure that they are not damaged by cannon fire. But afterwards, they must each be restrung in an effort to coax every whiff of wind.

Some merchants with time-sensitive cargos use smaller ships. However, these give up firepower for speed at their peril. The bottom of the Forbidden Sea is littered with the ships that thought they could outrun their foes. Often the smaller vessels will travel in small fleets to bring more force to bear on any larger vessel. More often however, they

scatter at the first sign of trouble. A pirate can only catch one of them before the others have disappeared beyond the horizon.

Even the larger vessels often travel in numbers to provide support for each other. However, they must constantly be alert for a double-cross between rival factions. Unfortunately for the safety of the shipping lanes, these small fleets turn pirate just as often as a single ship.

## The Crimson Rogers

The most famous Vodacce mercenary ship is the *Crimson Roger*. Her captain is known only as Reis. Nothing is known of his past until he came aboard a pirate ship ten years ago. He was shown to the captain's cabin; moments later, a horrible scream arose. Reis came back out and declared that the captain had turned the boat over to him. The crew shrugged and accepted his story.

Since that time, the *Crimson Rogers* have plagued the shipping lanes of the five seas. They take no prisoners and allow no survivors other than those who can impress Reis with their fighting skills. Those are allowed to join the crew. Rumors of Reis' activities and tales told by his men when on shore leave have created a legend of bloodthirsty violence and evil. Grown men are known to cry when they hear that the *Crimson Roger* has been sighted.

Currently Reis is hunting for the only known person to ever escape him, Bonnie McGee of the

Sea Dogs. He has hunted for her in Avalon, ravaging the coast and anyone who got in his way. Now he sails for the Mirror, where Javier de Bejarano claims to have discovered the secret of immortality. More information can be found on page 18 and in Javier and Reis' entry in Appendix Two.

Although not a native Vodacce, Reis signed a contract with Vincenzo Caligari to sell Synchron artifacts to the Prince. In return, Caligari sold him the *Crimson Roger*, an older galleon fully stocked with the finest cannons money could buy. Reis immediately cut new gun ports and added over a twenty more cannons. The *Roger* has very little cargo space, but the Synchron artifacts he deals in do not take up much space. Recently, Reis has hired extra crew and ordered their hammocks hung above the cargo. One of these crewmen refused, complaining that he couldn't stretch out. Reis turned him over to the bosun Riant Gaucher, who chopped off both of the crewman's feet as punishment for not obeying the captain's orders. He fits into his hammock just fine now.

The *Roger's* topmen have set up three main masts and several outrigger masts in an effort to catch the wind more efficiently. Her massive weight of cannon requires skilled topmen for even the simplest of maneuvers, but Reis has hired the best.

### The Crew

There are only three officers onboard the *Crimson Roger*. Captain Reis is the first, last, and only authority. Every major decision is solely his, but he implements most of them through his first mate or bosun. Joern Keitelsson acts as the first mate; he carries out Reis' orders and ensures that the crew fulfills the day-to-day functions of the ship. While his men fear his explosive anger, they prefer it to the cold calculating scourge of the bosun, Riant Gaucher. Gaucher punishes wayward crewmen and his love of his job is apparent in the way he strokes his cat o' nine tails while thinking.

The only other person of authority aboard the *Roger* is Julius Caligari. Julius acts on his cousin Vincenzo's behalf and ensures that Reis "looks out for Caligari interests." While he has no official duties, he commands respect and obedience from most of the crew.

Reis is extremely fair in one way. He does not discriminate against anyone. He kills everyone aboard every ship he encounters regardless of nationality and he will hire any scabrous killer

who can hold off his own men for long enough. His men quickly dispense with any morals they have or they feel the taste of Riant's whips. Anyone who attempts to betray Reis or abandon his post is killed. Most of the crew intend to work until they have enough riches to retire; the longer they stay on board, the more likely their captain will kill them over some slight.

While Reis will hire anyone who can hold off his men, that does not mean that person does not need skills to remain with the crew. Everyone aboard the *Crimson Roger* must know how to operate the cannon. Those who cannot quickly learn that the penalty for stupidity is death. One of the common teaching methods is to light a long fuse and tell swabbies to load the cannon. If it's not loaded properly when it goes off, they're in for a whipping. If they're still loading it when it goes off... the whipping won't matter.

Despite all of this, a number of sailors actually hire onto the *Crimson Roger*. The pay is exorbitant and the infamous reputation they gain makes the threat to life and limb worth it. Some join just because they have no other choice; their vessels were attacked by the Rogers, and joining the crew is the only way to stave off death. These crew members simply try to survive day to day and find a way to get away from the killers of the *Crimson Rogers*. They know that anyone who flees from Reis will be hunted down like a dog and anyone who asks permission to leave is liable to be cut down immediately. So they bide their time and pray for escape.

### Missions

Reis primarily preys upon the Explorers and other adventurers who gather Synchron artifacts from ruins. The artifacts are compact, easy to transport and extremely profitable. Prince Caligari pays well for Reis' services. However, Reis will attack anything that moves upon the seas. He has attacked Castillian merchant ships, Vendel merchants, Montaigne naval vessels, or Eisen troop transports. While Caligari's other ships are safe from attack, they may be the only ones in Théah. Reis's tactics are always the same. He fires barrage after barrage until all resistance is destroyed. Then he moves in close and fires boarding guns to clear off whatever remains of her crew. The Rogers quickly board and grab as much booty as they can before the shattered vessel sinks. Anyone who has survived the assault so far is thrown to the sirens, who follow Reis' bloody course across Théah.

## Legendary Ships

### The Black Freighter

No sailor ever mentions it. Few even dare breathe its name. Stories circulate in darkened taverns and late-night watches, each more terrifying than the last. They call it the Black Freighter, the haunted vessel which carries the souls of a thousand dead sailors in its hold. Few have seen it. Fewer still have lived to tell the tale.

The Freighter appears amid storm-wracked seas, a rotting clipper crewed by a legion of the damned. Its moldy sails swell from unseen winds, while skeletal hands guide its tiller. Its bow has slowly moldered away, leaving the white bone of its keel exposed to the elements. Those who have seen it say the ship almost seems organic — like a great rotting beast brought to life.

The ship's past has been the subject of countless stories, each describing a different origin for the vessel. The most reliable involves a ship captain named Upham, who lived some two

hundred years ago. Upham hated his vessel's merchant owners and hated his crew even more. So he conspired with a group of wreckers to destroy the ship. He piloted the vessel, laden with valuable cargo, into a stormy sea, and deliberately ploughed it into a reef. The ship lost its front end, and every man aboard was killed except the captain who escaped in a dinghy. He met up with the wreckers on a nearby sandbar, and together they plundered the ship of all its valuables.

Years later, one of the wreckers was found dead in his rooms. He had apparently drowned, though there was no water in the vicinity. His body was swollen and bloated, as if it had lain on the bottom of the ocean for months, and seaweed festooned the entire room. One by one, his companions suffered the same fate: discovered in their quarters, covered with rotting kelp and drowned as if at sea.

The treacherous Captain Upham was the last to go. He disappeared one night after holing up in a seaside inn, raving about being pursued by ghosts. The innkeeper was awakened to a bloodcurdling scream from Upham's room; he broke down the door, only to find Upham gone and the wind whipping through the open window. From his vantage point, the innkeeper could see a ghostly ship — the same ship Upham and his colleagues had sunk — sailing amid turbulent waters far out to sea. Walking corpses manned its sides, and although the innkeeper could not possibly have been close enough, he swore he saw Upham's broken body being lashed to the prow as a figurehead.

Or so the story goes.

Whatever its origins, the Freighter has become a boogeyman of the Théan Seas. Every sailor knows a tale involving it, but few ever speak of it directly for fear of drawing its attention. It has spawned a host of superstitions designed to keep it at bay. For example, bosuns never strike the sixth bell, since Upham's vessel supposedly struck the reef at that moment. Those who die aboard ship are interred quickly before the Freighter can find their souls, and some crews blindfold their figurehead before entering a storm, lest it spot the Freighter and sink out of fright.

Its purpose varies according to the speaker. Some say it appears to avenge past wrongs, while others maintain that it harvests wicked souls to join its crew. A few believe that it has no purpose save to spread misery and death. Its undead crew consists of murderers, mutineers, and criminals killed at sea, all doomed to serve aboard the



Freighter as punishment for their sins. They supposedly seek out fellow evildoers to join their ranks, but innocent souls sometimes appear on its decks as well. Sailors say that those who die at sea without proper funeral rites become targets for the vessel, as do those whose bodies cannot be recovered. The darkest legends say that there is no defense against the Freighter — that it simply takes who it wishes, innocent and guilty alike.

Sightings of the Freighter have recently increased. Ships have sunk without a trace, and coastal villages in Montaigne and Castille have been wiped out. Surviving witnesses from those villages report bands of skeletons roving at will through the streets, lead by a howling corpse who speaks with a Montaigne accent and answers to the name “Necros.” The Knights of the Rose and Cross have investigated the reports, as have *l'Empereur's* Musketeers, but they have as yet found nothing. Théah's sailors have begun praying nightly for redemption, lest the truth behind these stories find them...



The following locales appear prominently in the *7th Sea* CCG — seedy taverns, hidden coves, mysterious Syrneth sites, and foreboding islands full of buried treasure. Such locations are the bread and butter of any self-respecting pirate crew, and can form the basis for numerous exciting adventures.

### *The Broken Compass Inn*

**(Canguine, Avalon)**

The Broken Compass Inn in Canguine is one of the places the Sea Dogs call home. This lively tavern almost always has some sort of activity going on, whether it be sung chantey, drunkards dancing upon tables or silly games in the corner. From the outside, the tavern looks like any other

pub in Canguine. The place is bright and cheery, with large windows open to allow the sea air to come in. Songs drift out across the night sky, beckoning sailors to enter.

Inside, the roaring fireplace dominates one end of the room. Stools and comfortable chairs ring the fire and someone is almost always standing in the middle of the circle telling a story or singing a song. Serving wenches spend their time running back and forth to the bar and the large kitchen, where a large stern Ussuran cook dispenses food. He cannot speak a word of Avalon other than the names of its dishes.

The infamous Broken Compass hangs upon one wall. Piety Morhead, the widowed owner of the Inn, is happy to tell the tale of her husband, Terry Morhead. He was a midshipman upon the privateer *Glory* when the captain captured a Montaigne freighter called *Swampscot*. The captain put Terry in charge of a skeleton crew on the *Swampscot* with orders to bring her back to Canguine and sell her. The captured ship ran into a storm that lasted for nine days. When it finally blew over, it was pitch black, but Terry could make out the lights of a small harbor just ahead. With no idea of where they were, he decided to land in a longboat to catch his bearings. If they were in hostile territory, they could be out of the area before dawn brought discovery.

Terry landed quickly upon an empty dock and began looking for some sign of where they were. The first man they came across was a well dressed and bearded Avalon, slinking towards the harbor with a large bulky sack. The Avalon begged them to take him with them on the longboat. Sounds of a mob not far behind convinced Terry and his men this was a good time to leave and brought the man back to the *Swampscot* after he promised to help them find their way back to the Avalon Isles.

Back on board, Terry demanded to know where they were and how to get back to Avalon. The oily gentleman offered to sell Terry a fabulous Syrneth artifact that would point him in the correct direction. Terry agreed and the man pulled out a chitinous green disk about four feet in diameter. He then took out a pen and drew the letters N E S W clockwise around the edge of the disk and an enormous needle. The man told him to hold it with the N straight up, which caused the needle to swing to the floor. Terry began shouting until the man said “I declare as my name is John Fox, that compass needle is pointing straight towards Avalon.” Terry called the man a liar, to which Fox replied, “You’re in Avalon now, good sir.” After a



moment of disbelief as he stared at the arrow pointing towards his feet, Terry finally laughed at man's audacity.

The two returned to Canguine where the money from the sale of the *Swampscot* made them a very tidy sum. Terry left the crew to marry his sweetheart, Piety, and buy a tavern. Piety insisted that the Broken Compass was the perfect name for the Inn and hung Fox's disk upon the wall. Fox joined the Sea Dogs and often visited the Inn while on shore leave, along with the other Sea Dogs who enjoyed its festive atmosphere. In time, it became a favorite watering hole amongst Avalon's privateers.

Terry's story also started a famous tradition at the Broken Compass Inn. Only days after opening the Inn, Terry died in a bar brawl. The tavern almost went out of business that day, but Piety wouldn't have his dream die with him. Even so, only the patronage of Terry's former companions kept the tavern afloat for the first month and it looked like even that would not be enough. Then one night John Fox insisted upon a story contest to liven up the place with the house buying the drinks of whomever could tell the best tale. Each of the patrons told a far-fetched story of daring and seamanship. Halfway through the night, Piety stepped up to the fireplace and told the tale of how Terry and Fox met. When a newcomer asked the young widow where Terry was now, she quietly answered that he had died.

A pall fell over the room until Fox stepped up and told the story of how he got the strange disk by trading a cask of lantern oil for it with a group of Castillians soldiers by telling them it was fine

whiskey. The soldiers had chased him for days before finally catching him. He paused. One of the listeners asked what happened next. He shrugged and replied that he died. The room fell silent for a moment before breaking into peals of laughter. Every story for the rest of the night ended with the death of the teller. As dawn broke, John asked the room who had told the finest story. The Sea Dogs were ready and all declared that Piety's story was the best and all of them insisted on paying for their drinks. Since that night at the end of every story, the patron asks "didja die?" If the teller doesn't agree, then they boo and pelt him with drinks.

The money from that one night was enough to put the Inn back on solid financial footing. Sea Dogs can be found here in droves every night. They cluster around the fireplace and challenge all comers to storytelling or drinking contests. Many of the sailors who visit Canguine feel the need to match wits with the famous privateers at least once during their stay. Piety Morhead encourages these contests as sure ways to increase her profits. And usually Piety can be counted on to challenge the winner to a contest of her own. No one has ever outdrank the pretty blonde although many have tried.

When it comes to the singing, the tavern's staff can hold its own with the best of them. The innkeep, Skipjack Martin, and his son Nipperjack have the strongest voices in all of Canguine... and a larger repertoire of bawdy drinking songs than any bard in Avalon. Nipperjack usually manages to win the attention of the ladies, while his father can only collect their winnings. But no one takes his grumbling seriously.

That is the indisputable truth of the Broken Compass Inn: a sailor's life is not generally safe or pleasant, so enjoy what you have while you can. Even the recent news of Berek's death brought not sadness, but a contest for who could tell the best tale concerning the Sea Dogs former leader. The drinks flowed freely, the tales were far-fetched, and the party lasted all night long. The town guard turned out to investigate the disturbance and themselves raised a glass to the spirit of that Avalon hero. Piety declared afterwards that Berek would have proclaimed it the best wake he'd desired. Everyone present agreed.

## *Cabora*

### **(The Mirror)**

Few Théans had ever heard of Cabora before it rose from the Mirror's floor. A few ancient texts mention it and the *Fhideli* of Ussura have legends, but to the vast majority of the populace, it may as well have never existed. That is, until its reappearance turned Théah on its ear.

Cabora is a Syrneth island in the center of the Mirror — an artificial landmass constructed thousands of years before the rise of man. It resembles a huge clockwork engine, the buildings and passageways interconnecting to form a colossal mechanical structure. Giant gears of brass-like metal link with strange crystalline spans, creating level upon level of impossibly complex machinery. Some chambers form control rooms or laboratories; scholars have speculated that the entire island originally housed a great experiment, though no one can say exactly what. The power coursing through it was earth-shattering, however: strong enough to flatten a continent.

Cabora's original inhabitants are long-since dead. Before they abandoned the site, they took steps to hide it from prying eyes. They established a network of six great Switches (tremendous engines in their own right which tapped into the magnetic power of the planet's crust) which forced the island beneath the waves. Thus the secrets it held were secure, keeping its power out of the wrong hands. All of that happened long before the beginning of human history — perhaps before humanity existed at all.

Despite such elaborate precautions, knowledge of Cabora has quietly leaked out in the millennia since. Its energies have a subtle effect on sensitive human minds, appearing as dreams to Théan seers and mystics. They see images of its past, hazy impressions of the work performed there, and a strong sense of its current status on the sea floor. Affected persons complain of tasting salt water, or of hearing the hum of machinery where none could be seen. As the Corsairs and Explorers began releasing the Switches, these sorts of episodes increased in power and frequency (see *pages 17–18 for more information*), until a massive attack on Corantine 1, 1668 struck nearly every seer in Théah. The mass vision took place exactly one month before the island itself rose.

Since rising, several crews have ventured onto Cabora for their own purposes. Unfortunately, the

island remains an incredibly dangerous place, even with no living inhabitants to threaten interlopers. Parts of the machinery have corroded and no longer function properly. Deadly traps hide behind every corner, and the Syrneth left guardians behind — clockwork automatons who have survived thousands of years beneath the ocean waves. Then there are the remnants of whatever experiments the original inhabitants performed. Not all of them were silenced when the island sunk.

Human interest in Cabora varies wildly from person to person. Some, like the Crimson Roger Javier Bejarano, believed it held the key to human immortality. Kheired-Din and Yngvild Olafssdottir considered the island a gate between this world and the next... and that controlling it would allow them to throw the gate wide. Amanda McCormick thought that it contained the answer to one of Théah's greatest mysteries — the existence of the 7th Sea. Whatever their beliefs, the island doesn't give up its secrets easily, and few who venture there have survived to tell the tale.

More on the rise of Cabora can be found in the GM's section, and will be detailed in the upcoming *7th Sea Almanac*.

## *Café of Broken Dreams*

### **(Chaiarisa, Vodacce)**

The southernmost major island of Vodacce holds the city of Chaiarisa. Deep in the cellars of this city alongside one of the island's canals lies the Café of Broken Dreams. The lanterns are turned purposefully dim to conceal some of the cobwebs and cracks in the walls. There is room for only a dozen men in the one room establishment and only at the bar. Those who lean back in their creaky stools can touch the bar's front wall with their backs. A rivulet of water runs down the wall and puddles upon the floor, making footing treacherous. There is no sign, but a red banner above the bar declares "Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter Here." This famous quote from classical Numan literature fits in perfectly with this cancerous sore of a tavern.

Alonzo du Boise owns and runs the place. This displaced nobleman made the mistake of drinking too much and insulting *l'Empereur* at a Charouse tavern. He realized his mistake when he woke up the next morning and stumbled home. His townhouse was in flames and a troupe of soldiers were canvassing the streets looking for some sign

of him. He fled the capital for his minor holdings. He arrived to discover that the word had spread faster than he could get there. Soldiers were searching his lands for him already. Alonzo fled the country dressed as a woman, travelling to his cousin in Vodacce. Even there he discovered that the arm of *l'Empereur* was long. His cousin refused to see him and Alonzo was forced into the streets. One day he walked into the small bar and ordered a drink. The old geezer behind the bar served him a glass of something green. Alonzo spit the slop out after the first sip and demanded some real liquor. The oldster shrugged. Something finally broke within the Montaigne noble. He gave the man his last money and told him to go buy a bottle of wine and bring it back.

When the geezer returned, he bore not a bottle of fine wine, but a case of cheap Vodacce Red. Alonzo began cursing, until two disfigured sailors entered the bar. They were covered in rags and sores, and each ordered a glass of wine. The geezer charged them an exorbitant rate and they paid, happy to be served anywhere. Business was slow but the case was gone by the end of the night. Alonzo sat quietly in the corner sipping the vile wine and thinking. That night after everyone else had left, the geezer offered to make Alonzo a partner. He agreed. After only a few days, the geezer, whose name Alonzo had never learned, died in his sleep. Alonzo slipped the body into the canals outside the bar and took over completely.

The next day when the lice-infested patrons arrived, Alonzo welcomed them to the new Café of Broken Dreams. They shrugged uncaringly and sat down. The Café is now the hottest night spot in the bowels of the great city, though only the lowliest of the low patronize it. The very air reeks of refuse and failure, an aroma that the patrons bring with them. Alonzo has only owned the place for a few months but his initial hopes have already died. Even the cheapest liquors cost money and anything he leaves in the bar is stolen before he can return with new stock. The city's vermin have discovered the place and rats sit in full sight waiting to feast. The tax collectors have also discovered the bar and seized much of his money for licenses and fees. Alonzo had hoped to raise enough money to leave his new dingy home. But now he realizes that he is likely to be in this dive for the rest of his life.



## The Castillian Naval Yards

### (Tarago, Castille)

Welcome to scenic Tarago, home to over two-thirds of the Castillian Armada. Tarago is pivotal to the navy's war effort, home to both the Orduño family and the largest port facilities in Castille. After sitting idle since the sinking of the Armada in 1659, Tarago's citizens are now fiercely devoted to seeing that "their" ships get all the supplies and attention that they need. The city is, for the most part, a model of efficiency.

Its importance also makes it a prime target for Valoix's raids. With the Armada in disarray, Montaigne ships have had a respectable amount of success in attacking Tarago. The *alcalde*, Don Luis Rios de Bejarano, has managed to keep morale up and the hard-working citizens see the attacks as a reason to redouble their efforts. Given enough time and pressure, however, Tarago could fall into a state not unlike *la nostalgia*, which would cripple the already disorganized navy.

This means Tarago is very important to a lot of people.

The Inquisition works overtime to ensure the safety and loyalty of Tarago's citizens. While their leader in Tarago, High Inquisitor Vesta (Bishop Juana Rios), is unusually understanding for an inquisitor, her immediate superior is not. Vesta understands the need for practicality during wartime, but Knight-Inquisitor Matteus (Arch-Bishop Alonso Malaca) is quite fanatical and deeply concerned about heretics in Tarago. The Knight-Inquisitor also possesses an utter hatred for the masked hero El Vago. The two have crossed swords in the past, and Malaca has never emerged victorious. El Vago has appeared many times in Tarago, and "Matteus" has pursued him there more than once. While Malaca outranks Juana mundanely, their standing within the Inquisition is relatively equal, giving Tarago's Inquisition a split personality. Standard Inquisitors tend to be more understanding of vaguely "heretical" activities, so long as they further the war effort. Defenders of the Faith, however, rarely forgive any infraction.

For Montaigne merchants, this creates a paranoid atmosphere. Some soldiers are willing to trust long-time dealers, whatever their nationality, while others check everything and arrest Montaigne-appearing citizens on the slightest

pretext. Such paranoia is not entirely unwarranted. Over a dozen Montaigne spies have been caught attempting sabotage since the war began (more than half by Los Vagos), and at least three other efforts have succeeded in damaging. Some of Montaigne's deadliest spies have come into Tarago disguised as weapons dealers, and it's been bad for business for honest Montaigne traders. Many of these merchants have come to love their adopted home, and grieve over what *l'Empereur's* invasion is doing to both nations. Montaigne spies would be more fortunate to be caught by Los Vagos or the Inquisition than these merchants.

As for Los Vagos, they have a significant presence in the city. Between Malaca's fanaticism and Montaigne treachery, their members keep busy. Fortunately, they have allies throughout Tarago, from beggars and old sailors to the *alcalde* himself. Los Vagos also have many friends within the Armada's leadership, many of whom are furious over the Inquisition's treatment of Admiral Orduño. Despite their many allies, however, there's just too much going on for the few members of Los Vagos in the city to handle everything. Several Montaigne spies continue to operate in the city, Malaca's goons are hampering the war effort and imprisoning the innocent, and the Vendel/Vodacce trade war threatens to clog the vital flow of materials into Tarago. Even a small band of El Vago's supporters could make the difference.

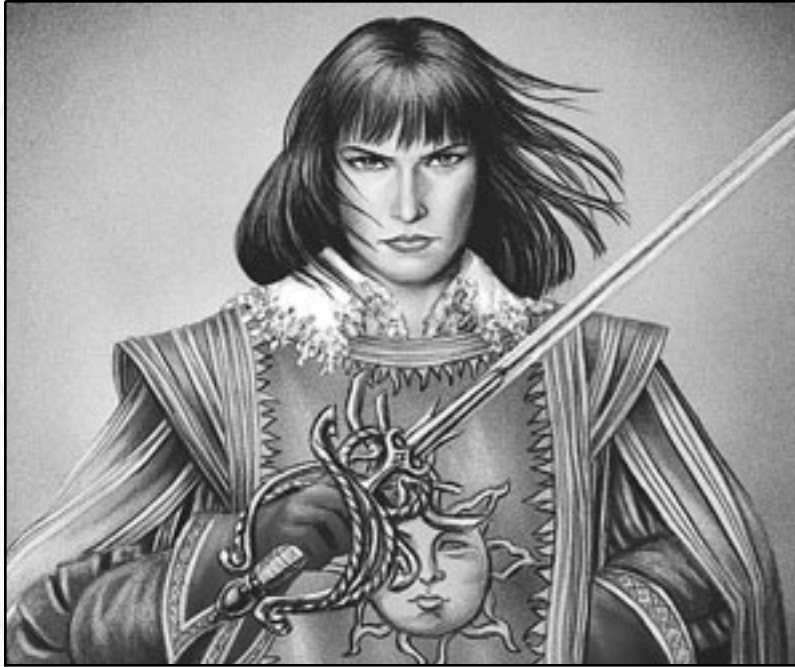
Vendel and Vodacce traders alike have found a moderately important battleground in Tarago. Unlike many cities in disputed territory, there aren't large numbers of merchants that they can woo individually. Tarago has only one real customer to court, a very demanding one known as the Castillian Armada. So far, the Vodacce remain the primary foreign source of resources for the Armada. But the Princes' use the war to try to win concessions from Castille and the Church. Their naked political maneuvering is grating heavily on the Orduños, and the Vendel are becoming progressively more persuasive. Large-scale acceptance of Vendel wares in Tarago would almost certainly mean eventual sanction of the guilders by the Castillian government.



So far, the only impediments to the Vendel are the religious issues (Vodacce are Vaticine, Vendel are not) and mistrust of Vendel friendliness with Montaigne. Still, Vodacce prices are going up, and the Vendel are offering reasonable rates. The few Vendel products purchased by the Armada have been perfectly reliable. If the Vodacce don't start behaving more reasonably soon, Don Manuel might just decide that Castille's survival is more important than Vaticine pride. One clever trader on either side could tip the balance.

Many other factions visit Tarago for a number of reasons. The Invisible College has friends both there and in the Armada, and some captains have proven quite willing to lend them aid in exchange for useful devices. Sometimes serendipity allows a scholar to hide in a friendly ship's hold for a trip to more hospitable waters. Reckless Sea Dogs occasionally raid the city or ships emerging from it, attempting to replicate their leader's legendary daring. The Brotherhood's ships commonly appear around Tarago, but they're more likely to help fend off Montaigne attackers or other raiders than to steal anything. More than a few of Tarago's citizens give thanks to Theus for Allende in their evening prayers.

Perhaps the most significant force in Tarago, however, is also the most discreet. A handful of men and women hinder the Inquisition, monitor Los Vagos, the Invisible College and the Trade War, and quietly remove people seemingly at random. Rumors persist about surviving members of the Kreuzritter, even though that order is long-since extinct. After all, who better to wage a war fought by night than those who have mastered the shadows?



## *The Flashing Swords Inn*

**(Entour, Montaigne)**

The Flashing Swords Inn is renowned throughout Théah as one of the places the Swordsman's Guild cannot reach. Located just off the docks in the city of Entour, the tavern has strong walls and no windows. Over the door hangs a sign declaring that members of the Guild are not welcome within.

Inside the building is dimly lit but in good condition. A bar extends along one wall of the room with stools set up every few feet. Tables scattered throughout the gloom provide places for other patrons to sit. A staircase leads up to a landing with four rooms off a main hallway. The common room is often full and at least one bard is always playing. Several Jennys work here and serve the sailors who crowd the Inn below. The wenches are lively and all bear a rapier-like wit along with a saber at their sides. They do not work upstairs, but encourage the sailors to partake of the pleasures to be found there. Anyone who harasses the wenches too much is sure to taste their steel. The prices are expensive because of the proximity to the harbor (this is one of the first taverns that a sailor will run across while his pay burns a hole in his pocket), but the drinks are good and the service is excellent,

The owner (who serves as the Inn's bartender) is named Felix du Entour, a tall, thin man with a

permanent scowl and a number of scars crisscrossing his face. He dresses in drab colors; the only hint of his past is a fine puzzle sword which hangs from his belt. He was a poor landless noble and one of the finest swordsmen in the Musketeers, until someone found him naked with a willing daughter of the Flaubert du Dore family. He was expelled from the Musketeers and only kept his life because of his years of faithful service. Several of his former companions donated enough money to allow him to open the Flashing Swords Inn.

Unfortunately, Pierre Flaubert du Dore, the girl's father, was unwilling to leave it at that. He convinced the powerful Swordsman's Guild to expel Felix and then sent Swordsmen to challenge him to a duel. He cut five of them down before the Guild insisted that enough was enough. Pierre was unwilling to admit defeat and used his political connections to force Felix's former companions to accuse him of stealing the money they had given him. The Musketeers were ordered into the Inn to arrest Felix for theft.

Felix refused to go quietly. The innkeeper and wenches fought off the Musketeers while a group of sailors catapulted themselves off of the balcony to crash into the "invaders." After the tremendous battle, the Musketeers were trussed up and left outside. Felix sold his beloved puzzle sword to pay the money back and barely managed to keep his tavern going, mostly with the help of the Jenny Guild and several disreputable pirates who enjoyed using the inn as a neutral meeting place.

Then last year, Felix began selling information. He did not care who purchased the information so long as he was paid. Part of every contract stipulates that none of the buyers will ever cause trouble at his inn. He has sold the location of the Avalon privateer Buckminster Smith to the General, and coastal maps to the Brotherhood of the Coast. He also sold one of Gosse's agents a portion of a treasure map created by Foul Weather Jack and numerous shipping schedules to Captain Reis. All of this has provided enough money to buy his puzzle sword back.

Felix has now paid off his debts and makes a good living. However, the perceived betrayal by

the Guild and his companions in the Musketeers has made him bitter, and he has developed a firm set of rules. No member of the Musketeers or Swordsman's Guild is allowed inside. Although he permits some to enter in civilian garb, anyone who attempts to conduct official business inside the Inn is likely to find themselves looking down the length of Felix's sword. Every employee is a skilled fencer and carries a blade at all times — if anyone comes looking for trouble, they will happily abide.

That makes the Inn a good place for pirates, criminals and thugs to meet safely. This den of crime is allowed because Felix keeps the activities confined to the Inn and quiet. Secretly the authorities are also afraid of what it would take to close it. For now they turn a blind eye (Admiral Valoix gave explicit orders that no Montaigne officers are to enter the Flashing Swords Inn), but secretly, they wait for Felix to slip up. Thus far, he shows no signs of doing so.

## *The Forbidden Cove*

### *(The Vodacce Coast)*

The Forbidden Cove lies near the Castille border of Vodacce and few men have ever entered it. Fewer still live to tell the tale. The cove is filled with shallows and shoals which threaten any long boat which enters. Sharks and mermaids patrol the natural passages through the shallows. Bogs full of quicksand prevent anyone from coming to the area from the land. Glowing lights have been seen dancing across the waters of the cove and many believe that the unquiet spirits of the dead haunt the area.

But the cove is best known for the sinister Skull Island which rests near the center. A horned skull-shaped outcropping almost a hundred yards high sits surrounded by rock spires in the shape of rib bones. Plants grow poorly on the rocky isle, and there is no sign of animal life. Even the sirens avoid coming too close. There are signs that pirates or others have visited the island, and a few visitors have come looking for buried treasure. They speak of winds that seem to scream in pain, glowing lights that lead people off cliffs and a mysterious beastman who is said to feast upon the flesh of men. Members of the Explorers Society who have visited the area have claimed that the entire island is actually the skeleton of a long dead beast, perhaps one of the mysterious

Syrneth. But most disregard this as nonsense. What creature could be so large?

Over the last few years, another danger has emerged from the Forbidden Cove. Captain Reis and the Crimson Rogers have made this one of their lairs. They keep stores of gunpowder, cannonballs, and preserved food and water. They usually anchor outside of the cove and Reis, Gerald Höhne and one of the newer recruits row out to the island with a single chest of his most valuable treasure. Reis always returns from this trip alone with whatever supplies the Crimson Rogers needs and without the treasure. After a few days, a long boat is sent back to the island to pick up Höhne. None of the other men ever return, and Höhne always has blood under his fingernails when he reaches the ship. The rest of the crew regard him as a monster and leave it at that.

Tales of Reis' buried treasure on Skull Island have to spread across Théah. Few men dare to cross Reis and the terrors of the Island keep most of the rest away. None of the remaining have found the treasure... until Jeremiah Berek of the Sea Dogs answered the challenge. He sent Lyin' John Fox in search of the stolen Vaticine Cross, and the path lead him straight to the Forbidden Cove. There, Fox hid in a tree and waited with a spyglass to see where Reis hid his treasure. He watched as Reis ordered the other men off on Skull Island and then rowed to the mainland. He rowed the longboat into a small cave which had been completely submerged only hours before. Fox slipped into the water and noiselessly followed Reis.

The pair slipped through a maze of tunnels past a dozen traps. Fox was astounded at the variations on death which existed in these tunnels. Each trap appeared more lethal than the last; several appeared to be Syrneth in nature. But he followed Reis's movements carefully and memorized the steps that would keep him from harm.

Finally the tunnel rose slightly and Reis entered a small dry chamber. Here he placed the chest upon a shelf and opened it to check its contents. The gleam of gold and gems glittered from inside and he picked up a beautifully crafted cross. Several other chests were stacked upon the wall, but Reis paid them no attention. After examining the cross for a moment, he placed it back inside the chest and then left by a different tunnel. Fox had no time to grab anything but simply hurried after Reis.



The remainder of the trip was a nightmarish blur. Crisscrossing tunnels laid with booby traps, chamber after chamber filled with loot, the only light coming from Reis' raised lantern and the knowledge that the tide must surely be coming in by now, all combined to terrify him so much that he couldn't remember any of the path, except for the first section leading to the Cross. After a seeming eternity Reis reached his boat and sculled away. Fox waited in the tunnel for almost an hour as the water rose, fearing that the pirate was waiting outside for him. As he waited, he felt the walls of the tunnel. It seemed that something had sheered through the rock of the caves to create this submerged entrance. Whatever it was, it had done so from the inside. Fox finally lost his nerve, dove under the water, and swam out.

Emerging, he saw that Reis was only now rowing away through the shark-infested shoals. He shivered at the close call and then hid himself again. He waited another three days before rowing out under cover of darkness. There was no sign of the *Crimson Roger* or her evil captain. Fox quickly left and reunited with Berek and the other Sea Dogs. They returned to the cove where Berek and a small group of men entered the cave. They made it to the first room and found a dozen chests full of loot, a number of Syrnych artifacts and the Vaticine Cross.

Fox urged them to leave after acquiring the prize, but several of the men insisted on venturing further into the cave. They departed as Fox, Berek

and the others continued moving the chests to the exit. Moments later their screams echoed through the tunnels. They had triggered one of the traps which Lyin' John Fox hadn't remembered. The Sea Dogs quickly gathered their loot and returned to the *Black Dawn*, retreating the way they had come. Somehow, they never triggered any of the traps, nor did the tide come in to drown them all. Berek's good fortune had saved them again.

Unbeknownst to them, Gerald Höhne was still upon Skull Island watching with narrowed eyes. His report to Reis would send the Crimson Rogers after the Sea Dogs to avenge the loss of his rightfully stolen treasure.

## La Bucca

(La Boca Sea)

Though not recognized by any government, the island of *la Bucca* currently houses one of the most unique governments in Théan history. The Brotherhood of the Coast makes its home there, using its formidable natural defenses to repel any efforts to attack or invade. Since 1571, seventeen escape attempts have been made in an effort to flee the prison. All of them failed. After the revolt in 1666, the former inmates turned their "escape proof" cages into an unassailable haven. To those friendly with the Brotherhood, *la Bucca* now stands as the most secure port in the world. To everyone else, it is an armed fortress, an impenetrable shell of cannon and rock where visitors are not welcome.

The island covers approximately a thousand square miles, and can support about five thousand souls. The current population numbers around nine hundred, providing plenty of room to spread out. Although most residents cluster around Shantytown or the coastal fortresses, a number of small dwellings have sprung up around the island — isolated homes for those who no longer desire the company of their fellow men.

The eastern side of the island is dominated by a rocky mountain range which drops precipitously into the sea. No harbor can be found here, and ships which approach are invariably dashed against the treacherous rocks. A pair of lakes in the mountains form the source of *la Bucca's* two rivers, which provide the island with all of its fresh water. Charlie River (renamed after an early inmate drowned in it) flows directly into the sea, while Oliver River (similarly renamed) pools into Gregorlake, near the center of the island before continuing to the western coast. The land near the mountain was once green and forested... until the riots of sixty years ago. Afterwards, the garrison uprooted all the trees to prevent the inmates from making more weapons from the wood. New growth can be seen amid the stumps, but it will take quite some time for the foliage to fully recover.

The center of the island holds rolling grassland, where the inmates grew what crops they could. Wild pigs can be found here, and are still hunted for the meat which gives the island its name. The western beaches are wide and inviting, but a maze of coral reefs out beyond the surf line prevents any ships from approaching. Not even Allende knows a way to traverse them safely; they remain as impenetrable as the mountains to the east.

The northern beach is covered with shells and pebbles; its wide arc forms a natural harbor, and docks have been built to house the Brotherhood's vessels. A pair of towering fortresses, each armed with mortar and twenty-pound cannons, overlook the harbor. Ships approaching must flash the proper signal in order to enter safely. The gunners usually give one warning shot before opening fire.

The southern beach has been completely converted into a fortress wall — one of the largest such structures ever built. Strongpoints bristling with cannon mark every four miles, giving gunners a wide arc of fire. The rocky shore helped facilitate the wall's construction, and makes approaching the island from the southern end virtually impossible. A pair of heavily-guarded docks allow ships to harbor here; before the revolt, the guards would travel by water from the north end of the island to the south rather than risk the overland trek

through the prisoners' territory. The Brotherhood currently mans both north and south beaches twenty-four hours a day; their guns are always ready.

South of Shantytown, the terrain turns into a dense swamp which has never been properly explored. Quicksand abounds within its confines, and the stagnant bog has become a breeding ground for all manner of disease. The inmates believed that the swamp was haunted, or that strange beasts lurk behind its mossy exterior. Few residents ever dare to enter it. On the eastern side of the swamp, a strange obelisk rises above the muck. It is made of an alien material, pale as gold and harder than Eisen steel. An entrance gapes open on the eastern side of the structure; only a few inches are above the waterline, but a man could enter if he were willing to brave the muck. No human being has ever seen this obelisk... nor the secrets that lie within.

### Shantytown

The village of Shantytown stands clustered around Gregorlake, the only settlement of any size on the island. It originally consisted of the original settlers' houses, along with shacks and hovels built by the prisoners. Since the revolt, the residents have begun renovating some of the more dilapidated buildings, bringing in carpenters and architects to help establish a permanent township. Jennys and tavernmasters have emigrated to the island (with the Brotherhood's permission of course), providing several establishments where bored buccaneers can have a little fun. At the center of town stands the crude statue of a pig



next to a small shack. Shantytown's governor, elected twice a year by whoever happens to be on the island at the time, works out of the shack, tabulating the Brotherhood's coffers and enforcing what few edicts exist (usually by hiring a gang of roustabouts to serve as policemen).

Shantytown's largest structure is a dilapidated mansion built by one "Billy Bilgewater" Rujeaux at the turn of the century. Billy was a carpenter with middling Porté ability, and spent most of his tenure on the island constructing the mansion. Once, another prisoner tried to kill him and take his home. The hapless cur found himself thrown into a Portal with no way back. After that, the other prisoners let Rujeaux live unmolested. On his deathbed, he swore that he would haunt his home forever after, and that his fellow prisoners should stay away.

Soon after his death, new prisoners began moving in and reports of Rujeaux's ghost began. While no one has seen the apparition, everyone who has lived in the structure reports footfalls in the night and objects mysteriously moving from one corner of the house to the other. One resident even disappeared after carving his initials into a support beam. Since then, no one has occupied the mansion for longer than a few nights.

A cluster of buildings known as "The Workshop" lies on the outskirts of Shantytown, occupied by a small number of scientists from the

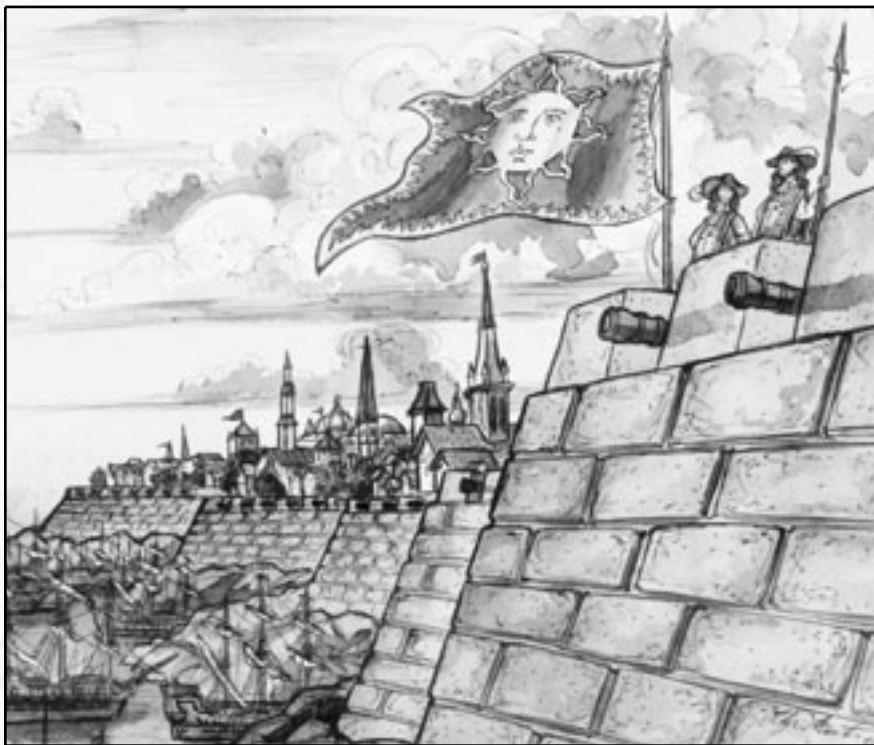
Invisible College who can conduct their experiments far from the reach of the Inquisition. The Brotherhood allows them to remain there unmolested in exchange for having first crack at any new advances which they produce. Thanks to the Collegians, the Brotherhood's vessels boast more effective rudders, improved gunpowder mixtures, and other subtle benefits. More on the Workshop can be found in the *Invisible College* sourcebook, page 55.

## The Montaigne Naval Yards

**(Muguet, Montaigne)**

While a young child out on a horseback ride, Dominique Leveque d'Aur discovered the naval yards at Muguet. She found the smell of tar and the skeletal frames slowly growing beneath the workmen's hands fascinating. Four enormous central buildings protected the hulls as they were laid in place. Docks surrounded it on three sides, filled with a number of ships in for repairs. Workmen scurried about fitting planking into place with wooden pegs as the lines rose above like a strange spider web. One of the builders strode around shouting orders that everyone ignored.

The yards in Muguet had been the launching point for every assault upon Avalon but were primarily a martialing point. While the Leveque family had produced some of the finest soldiers in Montaigne's history, there seemed no need for the naval yards in recent years. With no plans for an invasion in the near future, the yards had been allowed to deteriorate for years until Dominique happened across them. She visited every day for a month before finally deciding that the naval yards were her destiny and set about obtaining control of them from her family.



It took several years. She traded upon every political connection she had, she wound up owing favors to a number of important political figures, and she even seduced King Léon in an attempt to provide him with the male heir he so desperately desired. In the end, she married her cousin Jules and convinced her uncle, Victor Leveque, to provide ownership of the naval yards as a dowry. Most of the court was happy to see her finally obtain the yards and move there after her wedding. Everyone was tired of her obsession.

Once she arrived at the naval yards, she began by firing all of the nobles there. Although there were only three ships being built, there were close to a hundred nobles working at the yards, none of whom had ever actually picked up a hammer. Their dismissal created quite a stir, but her husband was able to defuse most of it back at court. Then he made a point of ensuring that anyone who traveled to Muguet would not see his wife, supposedly to prevent rumors of his extravagant lifestyle to reach her jealous ears.

Having dispatched with the useless nobility, she placed the skilled shipwrights and carpenters in charge of production. She brought in experienced sailors to suggest design changes and longed-for enhancements such as single piece masts and waterproof gunports which could be fastened against the waves during rough weather. She even moved into rooms at the naval yards so she could be closer to the work.

She soon brought in scholars to work with the sailors to try new ideas. She made extravagant experiments like sheathing the bottoms of the ships with lead to prevent the growth of barnacles and reinforce the hull. It failed utterly because the tremendous weight, but she never despaired. Silk sails and reinforced timbers for hulls were attempted. She imported Eisen cannonballs despite their prohibitive costs. She paid her workers good wages and gave them input into the methods of construction. She promoted non-nobles to positions of power and respectability. She even tried to construct a watertight ship that could travel beneath the waves (which led to the deaths of five of her best scholars when the ship did not resurface).

Despite her failures, she increased ship production at the yards sixfold... mostly by allowing knowledgeable commoners to take part in design and production. She launched her first ship only a few months after taking over the yards. She broke the bottle of champagne upon the hull of the first vessel herself and christened it

the *Jules* for her husband who had kept her safe politically while she worked. Twelve other boats were launched within the first year.

That was when Admiral Sices du Sices discovered Dominique and her ship yards some twenty years ago. He had made the mistake of telling then-King Léon that Montaigne would have the largest navy in the world within three years. Failing to live up to that extravagant promise would surely result in his death, so the Admiral commissioned the production of as many vessels as Dominique could provide. He considered the concept of peasant supervision dangerous, so he insisted on placing several of his own trusted officers in place to supervise production. Despite his claims, it was Dominique and her men who came up with the idea to change the production of heavy galleons to frigates. The hulls had been laid already and the new boats had all of the strength of a galleon but the speed of the much smaller vessel. This was the beginning of the domination of Montaigne frigates upon the seas.

Unfortunately, the Admiral became even more nervous about Dominique's hold upon the yard. She had complete control of production and the absolute loyalty of her men. So he reported the situation to *l'Empereur*, whose suspicious nature was aroused. Dominique was recalled to court and has remained there ever since. At first, she was thrilled to finally spend more time with her husband, but she missed her work at the yards. As the years went by, Dominique could only read the communiques from Muguet and despair because they bore little resemblance to the thriving scientific community she had created.

The Admiral's officers have taken complete control of the naval yards and their expansion. They have brought in their relatives and friends to take part in this valuable facility. The peasants have been put back into their place as menial servants and laborers. Many of the innovative procedures have been eliminated because they went against the traditions of the Montaigne navy. Morale is sinking and production is down to half of what it was, despite the fact that the yard is now twice as large. The nobles in charge routinely ignore the grumbling of the workers and the unrest of the peasants. While production still outpaces that of other naval yards, the now-middle aged Dominique fears what the final effect of all of these changes will have upon her former home.



## Shambu

(The Midnight Archipelago)

Shambu is an isle far to the west of the Frothing Sea in the Midnight Archipelago. It is only a few miles across and is set apart by its slightly smoking volcano. Dense jungle covers the rest of the island and spreads up the sides of the peak. A small native village ekes out a living from fishing in their beautiful white sanded cove. These dark skinned villagers are fiercely independent. Outsiders are slain, and roasted over an open fire while the villagers eat their internal organs and donate the rest of the corpse to the spirit of the volcano. They believe that as long as they destroy all those not of their tribe, the spirit of the volcano will be appeased and not destroy them all.

The only other notable feature on the island is a Syrneath ruin which rests in a bowl at the edge of the volcano's peak. The bowl is only forty feet across and the lava tracks from the last eruption show that magma flowed around the site without entering into it. Although a green viny moss grows over the entire ruins, there is no sign of any animal life or trees. The ruins consist of a ring of small mounds some eight feet tall huddled close together. Each mound has a single deep opening towards the center, holding a chamber containing amber lined walls and an insectoid armor. In the center of these mounds stands a larger pile, twenty feet in diameter. A single shaft leads from the top of the hillock down into its center. It collapsed long ago and the shaft is filled with

rubble. There is also a fist-sized opening upon the side of the hillock facing each of the mounds. These openings have also collapsed within an arm's length of the entrance.

An Inquisition scholar named Brother Ferdinand de Montecino came across the ruins twenty five years ago after his expedition had angered the local tribe. He literally stumbled across them while fleeing for his life after trying to convert the natives. They hung back at the edge of the bowl and would not enter. Several of the smaller openings on the hillock had a lens-like covering upon them, still intact despite the apparent years since anyone had entered the site. Brother Ferdinand seized one of them thinking to use it to signal a passing ship for help. Instantly a strange tingle spread from his hand and up his arm. He raised it to his eye, looking for the source of the tingle and saw the tribe's chief at the edge of the clearing. Somehow Brother Ferdinand understood the chief. He understood how the missionaries had insulted this leader's deep religious belief in the spirit of the volcano; he understood the chief's language; he understood exactly how the chief thought. His knowledge allowed him to avoid the native patrols and make his way from the site back to his ship.

After several days of travel, he pulled out the Lens again and began to experiment with it to try to determine the source of its power. While he did so, he thought about the laboratory back at his home monastery. He instantly knew that the laboratory lay five degrees further north than he had been sailing. Ecstatic with the power of his discovery and still pondering its source, he named it the Eye of Reason. Unfortunately, he ran afoul of a storm before he could reach home. During the storm, the Eye broke in his pocket and shattered. A pale green acid leaked from the broken lens and began to eat away at his skin. In agony, Brother Ferdinand leapt into the sea.

He was found days later upon a Castillian beach by a poor fisherman. As he recovered from his ordeal in the man's hovel, he wrote a journal of his experiences. The green liquid had carved away part of his lower torso, but he survived and was finally able to send word to his order. They arrived a few days later and took him away. He was not seen again and the Inquisition insists that

he never returned from the expedition to Shambu. However, he left his journal with the family, who sold it to a dealer in occult matters: a man named only Maximillian.

Recently Philip Gosse approached Maximillian, searching for the Spear of the West Wind (see below). Maximillian was unable to help him, but he did tell him the story of Brother Ferdinand and sold him the location of Shambu. Desperate for any means to find the Spear, Gosse traveled to the island. He decided to disembark with only himself and his friend Mabela, a native of the Archipelago who might be able to communicate with the natives and secure safe passage for the two of them.

They arrived to find the small village abandoned with signs of a recent attack. It appeared that many of the natives had fled the village by their small boats. The duo pushed on through the jungle towards the ruins. Before they arrived, they discovered what had become of the villagers. A company of undead crew from the Black Freighter awaited them in the jungle. These walking corpses shuffled out of the jungle mists to attack with rusty cutlasses. The two men fought for several long moments against their attackers until Mabela was able to break through the encirclement with a leaping kick which shattered several skeletons. Gosse dashed through the opening behind him and the two ran for the ruins. But even more undead opponents waited for them there.

Gosse launched himself at these new foes while Mabela began plucking plants from the ground and chanting over them. Every foe that Gosse dispatched was replaced by another and his old arms were beginning to tire when Mabela shrieked in triumph. He hurled a fistful of the herbs into the air while screaming in his native tongue. The plant matter formed a small cloud which hovered for a moment. As the cloud fell, it engulfed the undead warriors. They shrieked and collapsed into heaps. Within moments the few remaining creatures had fled. When Gosse asked in shock what Mabela had done, the wily native simply shrugged. Anxiously, Gosse asked if it would work against the Black Freighter itself, Mabela shook his head sadly. The power was only possible with fresh herbs and only upon land. The sea could not work the same miracle.

Gosse shook his head with resignation and then laughed at himself. He had witnessed a minor miracle and could only desire more. The two moved deeper into the jungle and quickly

retrieved one of the three remaining lenses. Gosse considered taking another lens, but decided against it. The spirits of this place had helped them against Captain Necros and it was probably best to not further impose upon their good graces. The two left quickly.

Since that day, the natives have returned to the island. The pale-skinned undead have convinced them that they were correct to kill any foreigner who arrives on their island, and they have taken further steps to defend their home and their volcano god. Two Eyes of Reason yet remain, but their defenders are ready.

### *The Spear of the West Wind*

#### **(The Trade Sea)**

The Spear of the West Wind is a Vestenmannavnjár legend still told by a few of the older skalds. After the madness and death of the Living Rune Krieg, several of the gods gathered together and created an artifact which would prevent his rampages from happening again. They toiled for years until it was completed. The Spear of the West Wind became the embodiment of all of their power, its wielder was capable of controlling all of the weather on the Trade Sea. With that power, any god could be stopped and possibly destroyed. They realized how dangerous this artifact could be and so destroyed all records that had been made to keep it secret. Those who wished to use it could petition the gods themselves; anything else which hinted at the artifact's location was destroyed. Thus protected, it lay dormant throughout the age of legends and into the modern era.

When Necros and the Black Freighter returned to Théah to destroy Philip Gosse, they did so with a crew of the vilest villains ever to walk Théah. One of those villains was Uriah the Dribbler, a pirate who had discovered the Spear of the West Wind when he had been alive. He led Necros there and Necros used its powers to generate a great storm around a longboat full of Gosse's men. One of the men fell overboard and young Thomas Gosse leapt in after him. Thomas was able to rescue the crewman, but before he could climb aboard, a bolt of lightning pierced the stormy skies and struck him. He drowned before anyone else could reach him.

When he learned of Necros' reappearance, Gosse managed to deduce how his old foe had slain Thomas. He resolved to find the Spear before Necros could use it again. It was not an easy task. Necros had already set about destroying anyone or anything that might lead Gosse to the Spear. He burned a piece of the map leading to the locale. He killed several skalds who knew of its general location. He left a company of undead pirates to guard the Eye of Reason, an artifact that could always show the way to one's destination. Necros was in pursuit of Foul Weather Jack, the one surviving sailor who knew the Spear's location, when Gosse obtained the Eye of Reason.

Gosse used the Eye to find the Spear's island far to the north-east of Vestenmannavnjar. The island was a single mountain peak rising from the Trade Sea. Although a perpetual blizzard roared around the isle, the temperature upon the isle was balmy. Sirens swarmed in the waters and shrieked their hideous chorus to the sky. When Gosse and his men reached the isle, they found enormous runes carved deep into the side of the mountain. Most of these runes were twenty feet across and ten feet deep. The further up the mountain they traveled, the closer the runes were spaced. Reaching the top of the mountain, they found a single spire of rock reaching up into the heavens — the Spear of the West Wind. The spire measured 8 feet in diameter and every square inch was covered in runes. In some cases they were too closely packed to be made out, but all were clearly visible and distinct, despite centuries of wear.

Philip Gosse reached out his hand and touched the column of rock. Instantly his eyes glazed and he saw before him all of the waters of the Trade Sea. He knew every wind and every wave. He saw a leviathan attacking a small fishing vessel and frowned. A lightning bolt roared out of thin air and smashed into the creature. With a shudder, he pulled away from the spire. Turning to his men, he warned them not to touch it. It had been created for the use of gods, not men, and contained too much power. Even that brief touch had almost destroyed him. Such power must be denied their enemy at all costs. He ordered his men down from the mountain and ordered his gunners to destroy it. The Spire of the West Wind shattered under the fire of the guns and the balmy weather collapsed under the assault of the blizzard which ringed it.

Today the Spear of the West Wind remains only as shattered pieces. The shore is rocky and inhospitable, although the continual blizzard has driven the sirens away. At least ten feet of snow cover the island. Atop the island is the shattered stump of the Spear of the West Wind.

A number of visitors have come to the island since the Spire's destruction. The first was Necros. Returning to the island, he discovered that Gosse had already found and destroyed the Spire, so he ordered a company of his undead crew to go ashore and kill anyone who arrived. After that, a number of treasure hunters who were searching for the Spire arrived. They had simply stumbled upon it by following several sightings of Gosse's ship. Their ships currently lie wrecked along

the shore and their crews have joined the undead. One group of the treasure hunters managed to escape in a longboat. They have begun spreading a warning about the dangers of the island. Unfortunately, their tales have tempted other fools to try and reap its power. The last group that recently arrived were Vestenmannavnjar rune mages. They were searching for whatever had disrupted the weather patterns lately. Upon finding the remains of the Spire and the undead who inhabit the island, they retreated. However, they have vowed to return to destroy the undead who have infested the island and reclaim some measure of its holy power.



## Chapter Three

# GM's Section

### Adventures at Sea: A General Overview

The ocean plays a large role in *7th Sea* adventures. Epic quests to sink fearsome pirates, journeys to distant locales, and maps to buried treasure are essential elements to the swashbuckling genre. The essays below discuss adventure ideas for specific crew types, but before reading them, it's important to have a general overview of what adventures at sea entail.

A ship full of Heroes can easily be thought of as an independent entity: sailing where they will, doing as they please, and weighing anchor whenever things get too hot. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ship's crews maintain a certain amount of independence, they remain firmly interconnected to other goings-on in the world. Every ship must return to port sometime, to resupply and take on new crewmen. Other ships may cross their path, ships with their own agenda and political alliances. Even an encounter with sirens or a sea monster may contain more than just a simple fight scene.

A canny GM will use that interconnectedness to enhance his adventures, and help the players understand that everything they do has an impact elsewhere in the world. For example, if the Heroes raid a ship from a particular nation, then that nation may start beefing up its merchant ships, hire mercenaries to serve as marines, or send heavily-armed naval vessels to escort their fleets... which may disrupt the Heroes' future escapades. That hidden treasure they steal may have been ear-marked by the Explorer's Society, who now wants it back. Political alliances on land often spill over to the sea; defending that Vendel schooner may land you in hot water with the Vesten who wanted to sink it. Not only can complications such as these expand your adventures far beyond a single encounter, but

they can also help you escape some of the hoarier clichés of the swashbuckling genre. Everyone knows that pirates like to swill beer, but what if their favorite tavern they're drinking in is bought by a Vodacce nobleman who believes that a lost heirloom is hidden within the walls? Suppose they get wind of it before anyone else, and decide to filch the treasure before the Vodacce arrives. Suddenly, another simple drink at the Tippy Swine has become an entire evening of adventuring. By making liberal use of such flourishes, you can make your sea-borne adventures — indeed any adventures — fun and memorable.

Most ship-bound adventures assume that the Heroes are the command crew. They hold all of the vital positions and make most of the important decisions. Alternately, the Heroes can begin the campaign as common swabbies and work their way up to officer positions. If they're on a pirate ship, that may mean overthrowing their commanders: destroying a vicious captain and taking over under a more benevolent command.

In any case, few ships can be run with only five or six crewmen, so the GM will need to create NPCs to serve in support positions (either as the Heroes' officers or the crewmen beneath them). All should be fairly well developed, and give the Heroes ample opportunity for creative interaction. The "Characters" appendix in the back provides some good ideas for such NPCs. Although official continuity will not match, you are welcome to place some of them on your Heroes' ship to serve as sidekicks, allies, or enemies if you wish.





## Faction Adventures

### Brotherhood Adventures

The Brotherhood is a relatively painless way to assemble a crew from many countries and backgrounds. Players can pick Heroes from any nationality, take nearly any size or style of ship, and still fit fairly smoothly into the Buccaneer scheme. Most characters from the Brotherhood began on *la Bucca* as prisoners. A GM wishing to run a Brotherhood campaign could start before 1666, with the Heroes exiled on the island and forced to survive among their fellow prisoners. The first adventure could center around the revolt itself, as the heroes conspire with Allende and other inmates to overthrow their guards. Once the island is in their hands, they could take control of one of the Brotherhood's vessels and set out on their own, using only the charter and a strong sense of adventure to guide them.

For those who don't want to start life as a prisoner, there are other ways to join the Brotherhood. Allende maintains contacts with the *Rilasciare* (whom he depended upon to help pull off the revolt) and *Los Vagos* has a link to the Brotherhood as well. Heroes from either of those organizations would have good reason to be aboard a Brotherhood ship. In addition, political dissidents, disgruntled peasants, and anyone wishing to escape the rulership of kings can find safe haven within *la Bucca*. All they need do is find the right captain, or a way to reach the island without being fired upon.

The Brotherhood primarily concerns itself with making money. Noble causes and daring feats are all well and good, but their fledgling nation needs wealth if it intends to survive. Rumors of treasure in the Midnight Archipelago, *Vodacce* traders laden with Crescent goods, *Montaigne* coastal estates full of wealth... these are the targets that set Brotherhood crews

drooling. Money doesn't necessarily mean gold either. The rare extract from a fearsome sea monster might fetch a high price in any port, as would spices smuggled from the Crescent Empire.

Selling such goods might be an adventure in itself. Few ports are open to Brotherhood ships, and Heroes may have to get creative if they wish to unload their precious cargo. The Brotherhood's status as wanted criminals might add an interesting twist to an otherwise standard adventure. Old enemies might reappear, former victims may come seeking revenge (regardless of the Heroes' guilt or innocence), and pirate hunters of every stripe would love to add a Brotherhood crew to their list of targets. Imagine the Heroes finally acquiring a lost *Syrneth* artifact — only to have the buyer turn out to be a former associate and the exchange a carefully orchestrated trap.

### Castillian Armada Adventures

The first thing to consider in an Armada campaign is how “military” everyone wants the game to be. For some, plotting logistics and running a realistic combat-oriented campaign is a great way to have fun. There are plenty of resources available for such a game. But for those with a more swashbuckling bent, an Armada vessel allows for much more cinematic options.

First of all, Heroes are in great demand. It is at least as important, if not more so, for navy Heroes to have interesting backgrounds with which the Game Master can make adventures personal. If the captain is a Gallegos half-blooded sorcerer who secretly reveres the Numan gods, the first officer is in love with a Fate Witch, and the bosun is a Swordsman on the run after killing his master in a drunken rage, the Game Master has several built-in plots ready to go.

Speaking of plausibility, “adventure” missions become a lot more plausible for a military vessel in a world where men control the weather, women alter destiny with a twitch of their fingers, and a gem can threaten all life. While Armada ships can expect to be given the usual assignments — attacking *Montaigne* vessels of all types, defending port towns, and safeguarding freighters in the midst of the war — Heroes can also end up with some very unusual tasks. For example, if *Verdugo's* spies hear of a blasphemous artifact that

can give men demonic speed, who gets assigned the task of finding and destroying it? Of course, there will be an Inquisition “observer” on board during the mission, as well as several other ships after the sorcerous thing. Oh, and it’s in the Trade Sea, where the Avalons and Vendel hold sway. The throne will deny all knowledge of your presence in northern waters. Good luck, Señor Phelps.

The theme for adventures with the Castillian Armada is big. The ships are enormous and the Heroes are larger-than-life. That’s a good thing, too. The stakes are routinely the fate of Castille. More often than not, the Castillians cannot afford to fail, while the Montaigne only have to succeed once. And when the stakes change, they usually go up. One good explosion could destroy a vital Vaticine Church, and *l’Empereur* isn’t known for his piety. Verdugo could become a world power if El Vago fails but once. Those fools in the Sea Dogs could inadvertently threaten all of Théah with a Syneth weapon if they raid the wrong ship. The world shouldn’t be at stake every session, but in these dark times, Heroes of the Armada must burn more brightly than ever.

## Corsairs Adventures

Heroes aboard the Corsair ships fall into two groups: loyal crew and infiltrators (read: potential revolvers). The loyal crew have clear goals and directions from Kheired-Din. They are to find the Switches and the Lightbringer. He has established tactics and gifted each captain with Syneth artifacts and secrets to complete their mission. Inside that framework, the Corsair captains are free to act as they see fit while the Corsair crews are free to act upon his orders. Nothing else is allowed under their brutal system. Their missions tend to focus on raids, but they often explore Syneth ruins as well. This latter duty might be best suited to Heroic crews. They don’t need to burn townships, enslave villagers and all those



other horrid things. They just need to find the correct artifact to help Kheired-Din’s quest.

For the infiltrators (including the captives), the picture is even more bleak. They are at the mercy of the Game Master *and* the whims of fortune to provide the opening to mutiny. Even the best plan will require a perfect trigger to allow it to succeed. However, they have no organization or rules to confine their actions. Their superiors are their opponents, so they must act carefully but without the uncertainty of conflicting orders or betrayal from above. A good Corsair campaign may start out with several adventures under the thumb of cruel overseers, followed by an epic escape/revolt and ultimate possession of the ship.

Once free, they may pursue any agenda they desire. They will have to face the forces Kheired-Din will bring against them, but they must answer only to themselves and their own desires. It also provides an instant adversary for the GM to bring in at any time. Kheired-Din’s forces will stop at nothing to destroy such an upstart crew, chasing them across the seas to stop them. The Heroes might also wish to turn the tables on their former captors by preventing them from fulfilling Kheired-Din’s quest. They can destroy clues to the location of the six Switches, sabotage artifacts which the Corsairs desire, and so on. Such deeds would do little to enhance their reputation with Kheired-Din. All infiltrators or ex-captives should take the Hunted background.



### *Explorer Adventures*

An Explorer's Society Epic can easily look daunting: at once too big and too limited. Théah is enormous, and Syrneth sites can be found all over it. Meanwhile, it seems like Explorers only do one thing — explore. How many times can you crawl through ruins killing monsters and dodging traps before it gets boring?

Fortunately, there are plenty of things for Explorer crews to do besides ruin crawling. In many ways, playing a team of Explorers is the best way for Heroes to do everything that *7th Sea* was created for. Explorers can be swinging from chandeliers one day, running from the Inquisition the next, and searching for traps the day after that. If a group wants to have seafaring adventures from one end of Théah to the other, but finds that piracy just isn't heroic enough, then the Explorer's Society is a perfect choice.

First of all, Explorers need money to fund their expeditions. This either means being a noble, having a patron, or doing "favors" for people with money. Nobles have responsibilities to their monarchs, relatives with their own agendas, and political rivals. Any of these can draw the Heroes into Théah intrigue. A patron can be as lax or demanding as a Game Master needs, ignoring the group for months (so long as she gets the trinkets

she wants), then suddenly needing their help with a rival who's using a Syrneth artifact against her. As for favors, just one innocent job transporting a box could embroil the Heroes with monarchs and villains in a plot threatening nations.

As for swashbuckling action, Explorer Heroes can easily be drawn into any sort of adventurous situation. While there are plenty of reasons for an Explorer ship to find itself under attack, Society crews may also need to find, raid, or sink other ships as well. Furthermore, their motives are usually far more noble than the simple greed of piracy. If a Syrneth artifact has been stolen from the Society, then the Heroes

may need to retrieve it. The mission may be as simple as sending the thieves to the bottom or as difficult as capturing the captain alive because he's the only one who knows where the artifact is located.

Artifacts don't have to be the only way to pull Explorers into an adventure, either. A colleague can be taken prisoner by nearly any other faction on Théah, and the Heroes may be the only ones close enough to rescue him. Of course, it's entirely possible that a captor has become smitten with the beautiful scholar, as well as one of the Heroes. Instant recipe for derring-do, love, revenge, and mystery. Exactly why did they want this particular scholar? If a real crime is involved, did a fellow Explorer (especially one so gorgeous) really stoop so low? Figuring out what happened while being hunted by another society's forces and a jealous rival can provide a thoroughly nerve-racking adventure. Indeed, at the end, the Heroes may be surprised to realize that they didn't do any ruin digging, trap dodging, or monster hunting at all.

On the other hand, the Explorer's Society has a focus, which means the Heroes have a focus. Whenever the Epic seems to be going off-course with subplots and strange intrigues, a map hinting at previously unknown Syrneth sites can point Heroes in whatever direction the Game Master wants them to go. Quests for artifacts and knowledge of the distant past can involve nearly

any sort of adventuring. The Explorer's Society has many rivals, meaning that any lead has a good chance of drawing enemies into a quest. The lead itself may be only the first piece in a complex puzzle, forcing the Heroes to unravel an ancient mystery before they get within a hundred leagues of their goal. Someone with a vital key to the mystery may be a powerful, untouchable noble, drawing the Heroes into courtly intrigue (or a desperate theft). And let's face it, searching through ruins can be fun: equal parts careful scholarship, fast reflexes, and dumb luck. While the occasional maze of neatly laid out corridors and rooms will be found, Syrneth sites tend to have more of a theme.

When exploring Syrneth ruins, all manner of strange scenarios may arise. While strong arms and fast blades are still important, the ability to decipher strange hieroglyphics may be the key to survival at one dig. In another, a canny field scholar may recognize a gem-powered trap from a previous adventure, carefully disarming them as they head toward the prize. At a third, an enormous chamber might be filled with moving clockwork machinery that the Heroes must traverse, jumping from protrusion to protrusion, to reach the controls in the center.

Throughout it all, Explorers have something going for them. While not every member is brilliant (though many are), the Heroes of the Explorer's Society have a vision, one of a world as magnificent and fantastic as that of the Syrneth Age. It can keep them going when Corsairs burn their ship, or Musketeers hunt them through Charouse, or *skjæren* turn the very wind against them. In the end, the Explorers truly are Heroes, working and fighting for a better Théah for everyone. Though some may criticize them for wasting their time with the past or meddling in heresy, the Explorer's Society is ultimately about understanding the mystery of Terra, its past, and its future.

## *Lone Pirate Adventures*

Lone pirates such as Gosse's Gentlemen truly have no one to depend upon but themselves. Adventures involving them should emphasize their self-sufficiency, giving them a chance to exercise independence while stressing how vulnerable they are out on the open sea. The right balance of insecurity and freedom is vital to maintaining an exciting lone pirate campaign.

The good news about single ships is that they have few obligations to greater entities. If you want to send them off on a lengthy treasure hunt, or strand them on a Syrneth island for months, you don't have to worry about their superiors launching a search for them. At the same time, a lone pirate campaign runs the risk of turning into a random series of adventures with little rhyme or reason. While navies have rival nations to combat, and groups like the Sea Dogs possess natural political goals, lone pirates may end up wandering aimlessly, waiting for the GM to throw another adventure at them.

Pay attention to the Heroes' motivations during character creation; knowing how and why they conduct their missions allows you to throw them for a curve. For example, if they enjoy preying on Vodacce ships, let them attack a vessel secretly carrying a powerful Fate Witch. It also establishes a regular routine which you can break with new or unusual adventures from time to time. Your players may enjoy raiding shipping lanes and playing cat and mouse with naval frigates; throwing in a treasure map every now and again, or a Crescent sorcerer who promises to make the rich if they will return him home.

Théan pirate crews tend to be territorial, and don't like competitors nosing about on their turf. Over time, your Heroes will probably carve out an established territory where they regularly raid and plunder. Imagine their surprise when a stronger, fiercer, and better-armed pirate band sets up shop nearby. Not only will they have to compete with their new adversaries for resources, but they may find themselves held responsible for atrocities committed by the other crew. Eventually, they must drive the rival pirates out or risk being driven out themselves. Pirates who lose their territory must find new haunts or take them from preexisting bands themselves.

Finally, like the Sea Dogs, reputation plays a large role in a lone pirate's life, though for somewhat different reasons. Well-known crews may find their prey surrendering with little resistance, or else too terrified to offer a real fight. On the other hand, the more wanted a pirate is, the more other ships will be searching for him or her. Few naval officers would turn down the chance to capture a notorious criminal. A famous pirate may find pickings ridiculously easy — until that heavily-armed man o' war emerges from a nearby cove. Keep track of how famous (or notorious) your party becomes, and adjust the tenor of their encounters accordingly.



### *Montaigne Adventures*

The Montaigne currently have their resources spread out all over the seas: hunting pirates, escorting Vendel ships, and oh yes, fighting protracted war with Castille. Admiral Valoix has returned some measure of focus to the navy, but to overall patterns still exist. Because of this, frigates are sent out alone or in small groups to escort merchant ships, hunt pirates, observe enemy ship maneuvers, blockade ports and generally make the seas safe for Montaigne interests. The navy's size allows them to overwhelm resistance and cover an enormous area. Because most Montaigne missions involve specific details or fighting in concert with other ships, the Montaigne navy does not favor captains who act impulsively or on a whim. They prefer stable commanders who react quickly to situations without acting independently.

Montaigne naval crews make for interesting Heroes. The notion of the "Musketeers of the waves" runs strong in Montaigne officers, and they often go out of their way to aid those in distress. However, such activities must be carefully coordinated. The navy provides its captains with clear orders and purpose but limits their choices and movements. No Montaigne vessel can deviate from its orders too far or a Porté officer will arrive to determine the reason for the disobedience. Every ship has at least one blooded object hidden aboard it, which is refreshed every time it returns to port. However, officers who

befriend or coerce their Porté Master will have a reliable quick method of traveling back to court when their presence is not required onboard ship. This can lead to officers who steer their course through the shoals of politics and court intrigue only to break away to fight more overt enemies.

Another possible outcome of the social tension is a mutiny. Montaigne ships are filled with disgruntled swabs who would love to take over. A group of heroes among the crew is certain to be the key to the success or failure of any mutiny. Those who break away are sure to be hunted down by the rest of the Montaigne Navy and those who fail are certain to face steep punishment for their impudence. Mutinies rarely occur, partly because the Porté Masters ensure that word of the attack spreads quickly and partly because of the well-trained officers. However the threat of a mutiny always hangs in the air. The Heroes may find themselves working to prevent an onboard revolt by calming tensions between the men and the other officers.

### *Sea Dogs Adventures*

The Sea Dogs are often ideal Hero crews, for they have many of the advantages of an organized navies — protection, clear purpose — without needing to follow rank-and-file protocols. Independent-minded Heroes can command their own vessels and act more or less as they please, confident that Avalon will be there to offer them safe harbor. Of course, there's a down side to such freewheeling. Because they don't belong to any "official" navy, Queen Elaine can disavow their activities whenever it suits her. Sea Dogs captured in foreign ports may find themselves bereft of allies, and those who routinely violate the Queen's sensibilities (say, by butchering villages on a regular basis) will rapidly lose their favorable status. Smart Avalon captains realize that they prosper on Elaine's whim and either keep their criminal activities quiet or make sure that Carleon always tolerates them.

Sea Dog ships tend to be more predator than prey, and their adventures have a distinctly proactive feel. They don't wait around for

someone to hand them a treasure map, they go out and get it themselves! Players with Sea Dog Heroes should be encouraged to develop their own agendas and seek out their own adventures, rather than waiting for the GM to hand them out. Most Sea Dog ships have a designated ferret who prowls docks and wharfs looking for information that the crew might make use of. An adventure could begin with a series of intriguing rumors, taken from numerous taverns and crew manifests which the crew sifts through to find the most promising. They can then track down reliable clues to confirm it (perhaps involving clandestine meetings and other skullduggery) before finally setting sail to attain it for themselves.

Trouble from foreign nations could make excellent adventure material as well. Montaigne and Castille are the primary opponents for Sea Dog crews, and raids on their trade ships and garrisons always make sense. Don't feel limited to the ship battles and snatch-and-grab operations, however. The fight against Avalon's enemies can take many forms. The Heroes could be engaged in a race against a rival crew, trying to reach a particular goal before the enemy does. They might work to set the two larger nations off against each other, exacerbating the war or otherwise diverting attention away from Avalon. NPC Sea Dogs captured in Montaigne or Castille might need rescuing, which would require entering a hostile port, breaking into a well-guarded prisons and escaping before the local garrison discovers a "pirate ship" anchored nearby.

Finally, keep in mind that reputation is very important to the Sea Dogs. A legendary story helps strengthen Glamour magic, which in turn helps strengthen Avalon. Canny Sea Dogs may forego a raid on a run-of-the-mill merchant vessel in favor of rescuing a marooned nobleman or destroying a shoal of sirens. They may not make much money, but as word spreads of their deeds, Avalon will reap the benefits.

## *Vendel Merchant Marines Adventures*

The Vendel Merchant Marines are a mixed lot. Most of the crew are there for money or the Vendel's right to pursue money. The Marines have the protection of numbers and the entire fleet. They are backed by a major Guild figure and the limits on their activities are minor. Their greatest

enemies are the Vesten Raiders who brutally assault them and their own divided nature. A common theme for the Vendel Merchant Marines is the line between a hero and a villain and the need for men to fight for their rights.

A group of Heroes can easily fit into the mix of Marines, possibly trying to bring a little honor to the cutthroats around them. But a number of the crew are villains with evil in their heart. They often lead raids against Vesten villages and urge the men to commit terrible atrocities. This can put the Heroes in an awkward situation — any forceful attempt to prevent such horrors may lead to a mutiny, yet they cannot simply sit by and do nothing. For others it may seem expedient to slaughter innocents, but this should never be an option for a hero.

When not raiding villages, a Merchant Marine captain is expected to curtail piracy in Vendel waters, a much nobler goal for Heroes to pursue. While halting the depredations of Vesten Raider can provide for some strong adventures, the Marines relative autonomy can offer a perfect mask for a captain who journeys from port to port in pursuit of his private goals. Perhaps they are searching for someone on the other side of Théah or exploring ruins in search of Synchron artifacts. The only limit on a captain is the need to give the impression of protecting Vendel interests.

## *Vesten Raiders Adventures*

The Vesten Raiders make good role-playing Heroes. While their primary purpose is to protect their homes, they are extremely aggressive about it. They are equally at home on land or at sea. And often they will actively hunt sirens and other monsters who threaten their fishermen, or Vendel who trade nearby. While their only support is their village (and sometimes other Raiders), they have a clear organization and little chance of miscommunication.

One thing which distinguishes the Raiders from other crews is the large number of Lærdom mages among them. This gives them more than brute fighting force and control over the weather. The Vesten's ancestors speak to the mages and advise them of threats and possible solutions. This gives the Raiders time to prepare for any attacks upon their village and the means to deal with the supernatural threats they often face. It



## *Vodacce Mercenary Adventures*

Vodacce vessels operate both as merchant ships and pirates, depending upon the vagaries of fortune. When they cannot find a cargo, many captains put to sea looking for another ship to plunder. This makes any meeting between vessels in Vodacce waters fraught with uncertainty.

For a hero, the situation aboard a Vodacce ship is certain to be murky and ever-changing. A common theme of many discussions aboard the Vodacce vessels is trying to fathom the purposes and reasons behind their mission. In truth, the mission changes as often as the whim of her

also means that the GM has a ready means of introducing adventure material. If great-uncle Sigvild wants his ancestral armband returned to his native village, all he has to do is appear before the Heroes' rune mage and ask him to get it.

Many Raiders missions focus on obtaining the correct weapon for battle. Their opponents often include creatures out of myth and legend, which require specific weapons to destroy. For example, a sea serpent which plagues the village of Hornshome might only be harmed by the Winter Wolf. After discovering this from a skald, the Raiders must travel to the Wolf's ancient lair and steal a handful of teeth. Only by using these as weapons can the sea serpent be driven off.

Another focus of missions is launching raids on foreign territories. Their targets are generally the player's choice and may be as far afield as Avalon, Eisen or Montaigne. A raid should be an exciting adventure, filled with uncertainty and raw courage. The fate of the village is always at stake; the Heroes' friends and family back home need supplies. When launching such raids, the Heroes must always remember that they are not sneaky thieves but conquering warriors. They do not butcher women and children: they face equal adversaries on the field of battle and take their plunder only after victory has been achieved. The Raiders believe that that are working to better themselves and their people, not to slaughter innocents.

captain. She is the ultimate mercenary: changing sides at the drop of a hat, in constant search of the greatest reward, willing to ally with enemies or find better employers without warning. Only the fear of retribution and the promise of reward keeps them true. Piracy, espionage, exploring ruins, smuggling, searching for missing expeditions or people are all common missions for the intrepid Vodacce. Heroes should be willing to rely upon themselves for direction because relying upon another will certainly result in their gain and not yours.

Of course, that doesn't mean that every Vodacce Mercenary adventure must be a nautical version of the Great Game. Some crews work for the Princes simply to get paid, and have no agenda besides doing the work they were contracted for. Every Prince has an agenda that involves adventuresome crews. Caligari pays through the nose for Synneth artifacts (and the Heroes need not be as bloodthirsty as Reis to get them). Bernoulli makes numerous trips to the Crescent Empire. Falisci's wine can collect small fortunes in the right ports, and even the fiendish Villanova has legitimate interests to maintain. A Heroic crew could be contracted to fulfill any one of these duties, all without entering into the byzantine politics that define Vodacce. After all, there's nothing to say that their employer won't turn the tables on the Heroes once they show up to collect their pay...



The following is a list of artifacts which appear in the 7th Sea CCG. It includes descriptions of their powers and abilities, a discussion of their current whereabouts, and adventure hooks designed to help you send your Heroes on quests to recover them.

## Björnsson's Horn

Captain Hrafn Björnsson is one of the greatest heroes of Vestenmannavnjar legend. He's said to have sailed all Seven Seas in a time when other sailors were afraid to go beyond sight of shore, and fought every monster Legion ever imagined. Though many dismiss his more fantastic exploits, one element that never changes is the loyalty of his crew. With one blow of his horn, he could incite them to the most fantastic efforts in his cause. In the end, so the stories go, the gods themselves blessed Captain Björnsson's horn, so that his name would live on forever.

Björnsson's Horn has one power, but it's an amazing one. Once per Scene, at the beginning of a Round, the leader of any group can blow the Horn. (The magic of the Horn allows the leader to use an Action Die to do this immediately.) For that Round, the Panache rating of everyone fighting with the blower of the Horn doubles (maximum rating of 7). If the wielder of Björnsson's Horn is a ship's captain, then the captain's Panache rating doubles as well (though the die used to blow the horn is still expended). The captain's extra dice are rolled after the Horn is used.

While Björnsson's Horn is ineffective in the hands of a Vendel, any other leader — Hero or Villain — can use it. This makes the artifact one of the most coveted enchanted items in all of Théah. It is known to lie somewhere in the nine islands fought over by the Vendel and the Vesten, but everything else about its location is

conjecture. The most credible tales place it on the mysterious ninth island, but that would make it impossible to find for all but the *skjæren*, who would certainly have claimed it by now. Some rumors place it instead on Viddenheim, though why is anyone's guess. Finally, a few sailors whisper that it has already been found by Yngvild Olafssdottir. This supposedly explains the fantastic success of the *Revensj*, as if her magic and the fanaticism of her crew were insufficient to the task.

Regardless, Olafssdottir certainly has a proprietary interest in the Horn, and will doubtless come after any captain (other than a fellow Vesten) who retrieves it. Meanwhile, many other sailors and organizations have an interest in the Horn, including the Explorer's Society, the Vendel League, Admiral Valoix, and the Crimson Rogers. The Society and the League have both offered rewards for the Horn, while Valoix has sent ships into the area to seek it and Reis takes a personal hand in the matter when time allows. Those who seek the Horn will find themselves with the most interesting traveling companions Théah can provide.



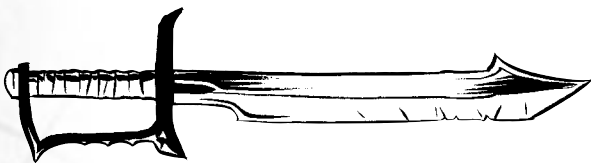
## Claw of the Thalusiai

This type of Synchron artifact, believed to be a biological creation or perhaps a body part, has shown up in several Thalussian cave sites. An oversized gauntlet with four claws, each nearly as long as a man's forearm, this fearsome weapon is actually more useful for self-defense. In many ways, it functions like a panzerhand, acting as equal parts shield and armor. The claws, however, are quite effective in a fight.

The Claw is a 1k2 weapon which a Hero can also use for grappling. While fine manipulation is impossible, the Claw shifts with the wielder's fingers, which rest inside it in a liquid resembling Thalusiai amber. Heroes can use it without penalty by anyone with the Knife or Panzerhand skills, or the Attack (Dirty Fighting) and Parry (Dirty Fighting) knacks. Anyone else suffers the usual off-hand penalty when using the Claw, no matter which hand the weapon is on.

The real benefit of the Claw, however, is that it provides the same armor effect of a dracheneisen panzerhand. Just wearing the Claw reduces damage from attacks by one Kept die. If worn in conjunction with dracheneisen, it instead adds 3 to the total armor value. However, no other armor may be placed on an arm with a Claw of the Thalusiai attached; the strange protrusions that wrap around the wielder's arm prevent it. Obviously, attacks that target specific body parts (other than the hand within the Claw) can get around the Claw's armor value, and anything that can cut through dracheneisen (like Reis' scythe and Lawrence Lugh's sword Firinbrand) can penetrate the Claw as well. (Should it ever be damaged, the Claw heals at the same rate as its wielder.)

What bothers those who know of the artifacts is that the various Claws (there are at least six) seem to have some sort of curse attached to them. They seem to vanish with depressing regularity when removed, a process that takes several minutes in itself. Those who become attached to a Claw, often refuse to remove it for any reason, and just as often turn up dead under mysterious circumstances. The wounds found on victims of the Claw's curse don't seem to come from any mortal weapon. A few rumors (strongly discouraged by the Vaticine Church) hold that the shadows themselves hate wearers of a Claw. One story claims that a taloned hand made of shadows, shaped much like the Claw, reached out of an alley and pulled in a Caligari artifact hunter carrying one of the artifacts. She was never seen again.



## Cutlass of Command

This cutlass seems to be an ordinary weapon at first glance. It is finely balanced (removing the standard attack penalty for cutlasses) but otherwise provides no other bonuses in combat. The Cutlass of Command, however, is completely unbreakable. It can parry Reis' scythe without taking so much as a mark and has been known to float in lava while remaining as solid as ever. Indeed, the Cutlass is always slightly cool to the touch, as if reminding its wielder of its existence.

At least that's what the stories say. The Cutlass slides in and out of sailors' legends like a Villanova through an underhanded scheme. It's even said to predate Captain Rogers himself, though (like any good pirate legend on Théah) he's said to have come across it in his travels. He gave it to a friend, claiming that wielding it would be "an unfair advantage against those bloated Montaigne freighters." The story might even be true.

When worn by a ship's captain, the Cutlass adds 1 to every Trait on that ship. The cannons seem to strike a little harder, the sails seem to catch the wind a little better, the crew seems to move more efficiently, the hull seems to be a bit more resilient, and the ship seems just that much more responsive to the wheel. In addition, the captain adds 1 unkept die to all Social rolls made with other sailors. The Cutlass of Command doesn't seem to affect landlubbers, but anyone who lives on the sea feels — and respects — its power.

Such an artifact, of course, is coveted by every captain on the Seven Seas. Unfortunately, the only clue to its location places it somewhere in the Forbidden Sea. The last captain rumored to have it supposedly sank under full sail after leaving the Crescent Empire for some unknown purpose. The Crescents, Bernoulli traders, and the Inquisition all take a dim view of treasure hunters sailing randomly through these restricted waters. If the Cutlass really is at the bottom of the Forbidden Sea, just reaching it will be an adventure in itself. The Invisible College is rumored to have created a suit that allows a swimmer to stay underwater for twenty times as long as a man can hold his breath, but they aren't exactly forthcoming with their inventions these days.

Even if an enterprising crew can dodge the Inquisition and meet the College's price, it's only a matter of fending off sharks, sirens, the strange

creatures that live in and around the Crescent Empire, and mysterious divers who seem to have the same suits. Unless, of course, that last captain was stubborn enough to hold on to his prize, even in death...

## Eye of Reason

The Eyes of Reason are a set of Thalusiai lenses, which can be found on the island of Shambu. If held and concentrated upon, they will reveal the location of any single person or object in Théah. The user simply grasps the Eye and spends a Drama Die (Glamour Dice work as well), and is rewarded with a sudden vision of flying across the landscape from his or her location to the location of the desired object. The user must have some knowledge of what the object looks like (i.e., has seen it before), or else have a general idea of where it's located (i.e., a specific city, province, or section of ocean). Further details can be found under the "Shambu" heading on pages 60–61.

## Eye of the Storm

The Eye of the Storm is an odd artifact, especially for one apparently created by the Vestenmannavnjar. On one side, it is a lens, albeit one that shows images taken at random from across Théah's seas. The only commonality is that it always shows violent weather. On the other, it has two runes carved into a stone backing — *Stans*, or Calm, and *Nød*, or Intensity.

The Eye of the Storm performs one simple task — it controls the wind. By spending one Drama Die, the wielder of the Eye can control the weather as thoroughly as a Master of Lærdom with the runes of *Nød* and *Stans* can without requiring a die roll. This power lasts for a Scene, and while sinking ships is unlikely with only the Eye, it can leave a craft in the doldrums while propelling another a hundred yards away at full speed. It can reduce a ship's travel time by as much as half in otherwise unfavorable weather, and always allows for a speedy trip (barring unfriendly vessels with oars or Sidhe Sails). Only one effect from the Eye may be in play at any one time, however, and it can only be used once per Scene — regardless of what it is called upon to do.

Captain Hal Magnus (Harald Magnusson) of the Explorer's Society can attest to its power. His wife Freyalinda (a Vesten *skjæren*) found the Eye



a year ago during their travels, and he used it to speed his ship, the *Iron Heart*, from one adventure to the next. One of their goals was to heal the rift between the Vendel and the Vestenmannavnjar, and by using the Eye wisely, Hal hoped to show that some Vendel could be trusted with the power of Lærdom.

Unfortunately for Captain Magnus, not everyone agreed with him. The last time the *Iron Heart* was in Kirk, the Eye was stolen. They aren't sure by whom, but Hal suspects that the thief doesn't want peace to come to the divided nation. What little he's managed to accomplish has been undone, as both Vendel and Vesten ships have disappeared mysteriously in the Trade Sea since the Eye's disappearance.

Much to the annoyance of the *Iron Heart's* crew, there's no lack of suspects. The Vodacce have no use for a meddling Explorer trying to add the power of Lærdom to the might of the Guilder. A united Vendel would be a threat to Montaigne's supremacy over Théah and Avalon's control of the western seas. Stefan Heilgrund has an enormous interest in all things sorcerous, and the Inquisition hates both sides as Objectionists or pagans. What truly galls them, however, is the possibility that one of their own — Vendel or Vesten — may be so filled with hate that any price is worth paying to prevent a peaceful solution.

While Magnus and his companions are resourceful, they certainly wouldn't be averse to some help. At this point, stopping the thief is more important than retrieving the Eye, so anyone who could aid them just might be allowed to keep the artifact as a reward.

## Franzini's Lost Notebooks

At the beginning of the Renaissance, many brilliant Vodacce discovered (or rediscovered) enormous amounts of knowledge. One of the most gifted “Renaissance men” was actually a woman — Elena Franzini. She was gifted in a wide range of fields, including natural philosophy, alchemy, artistry, medicine, craftsmanship, archaeology, mathematics, and history. Sadly, her life was a stormy one, filled with as much tragedy as triumph. As one of the most renowned women in Renaissance Vodacce, many powerful men courted her aggressively. At first, she refused them all. Most of them wanted to win her for the prestige of having Elena Franzini on his arm, and Elena was as observant as she was brilliant. One day, however, she met a man in the streets of Dionna. He was charming and gentle, and they found something special before he ever knew who she was.

He was a commoner.

Five months later he was fished out of the canals.

Elena was crushed, but as her other suitors soon discovered, her grief did not temper her anger. With the same zeal that she tackled everything else, she became an expert swordsman in the amount of time it took most to learn the basics of fencing. She then applied herself to tracking down her beloved's killer. Unfortunately, the murderer had thoroughly covered his tracks and she spent years hunting him down. Meanwhile, she continued her studies, if only to ease the pain. Elena painted masterpieces, wrote treatises on history, and filled notebooks with ideas for inventions.

Elena finally did find her nemesis, a man believed to be one of the more black-hearted Villanovas. The chase spanned four seas and half of Théah, but she finally cornered him on *la Palabra de Dios*. One way or another, the Villanova died there. Elena's fate remains unknown.

Adventurers across Théah still covet her notebooks. Some scholars believe that Franzini might have brought the modern age over a century earlier if it hadn't been for one murderer's greed. A few even believe that she used her mastery of alchemy to create each book, but most students of her works are convinced that Franzini's genius was enough. While the books can be found throughout Théah, the greatest

concentration is in *la Boca*, where her chase ended.

Each book contains enough knowledge to provide 1 to 3 Free Raises with a specific Civil Knack or Skill. For example, a copy of her *A Study of Man and Nature* provides 2 Free Raises in Natural Philosophy and 1 Free Raise in each of the Basic Knacks for the Scholar Skill. In general, the more focused the topic, the greater the bonus provided, though a few books (particularly those involving Archaeology, Engineer, Professor, and Scholar Skills) can provide both breadth and depth. One book also contains many of her theorized devices; this copy can provide the blueprints (replacing a successful Conception Check) for any invention in the *Invisible College* sourcebook with a TN of 35 or less at the Game Master's discretion. See that sourcebook, pages 85-94, for more details on inventing.

Alternately, studying each notebook for one week can provide an additional experience point at the end of each story, which can only be spent on the pertinent Knack (Natural Philosophy, Occult, etc.). Up to 3 experience points per book per reader may be acquired in this manner, and the GM has the final say on what constitutes “studying.”

## Gem of Warning

This bizarre sorcerous thing is believed to be a combination of Porté and Sorte sorcery, though some say that its power comes from Legion. The “Gem” is actually an entire skull, though the power source resides in the right eye socket. An eyepatch that gives even Fate Witches goose bumps covers the left eye socket. According to legend, the skull belonged to a pirate known as Bloodeye who terrorized the Frothing Sea for years in the late 1400s. While not as adamant about leaving no survivors as Reis, Bloodeye was more sadistic. After spending a week personally (and slowly) killing every man aboard a Vaticine ship for putting out his left eye, his right eye began to cry crimson tears. Those tears were his salvation on three occasions, as they glowed whenever danger neared. But they were also his doom, for six years, six months and six days after losing his eye, the combined forces of Avalon, Montaigne and Castille led him into a trap. The tears never glowed. His ship burned for a day and a night, long after it should have gone to the

bottom, and the screams of Bloodeye and his crew could be heard for miles.

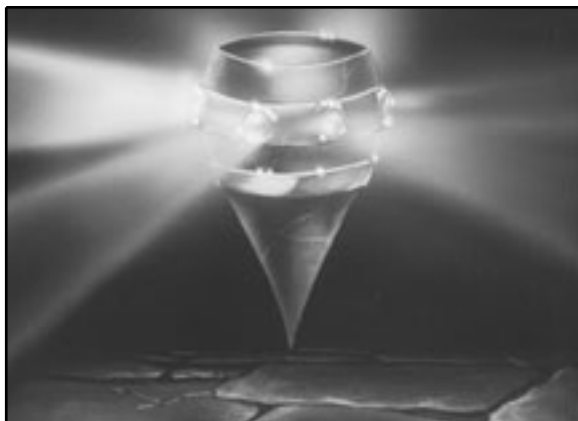
When the fire died and the ships approached, all that remained was a single skull, wearing the pirate's patch and sporting a blood-red crystal in the remaining socket. Impossibly, it floated. The Montaigne commander claimed the skull as a trophy. Leery of the thing, the other captains let him keep it, though the ship's priest for the Castillian command ship warned him that no good would come of the cursed thing. The Montaigne laughed.

Later, the captain discovered that whenever danger neared the red crystal would shine. After some experimenting, he also discovered that by opening the left eyepatch, he could "mark" one place at a time, so that if danger threatened that place, the gem would glow as well. He decided to use the eyepatch's unusual effect on himself.

He had just enough time to start screaming before he vanished.

Since then, the infamous Gem of Warning has been carefully handed down from Montaigne noble to Montaigne noble. Those who use it carefully and with Heroic intentions, never trusting to the Gem's reliability, have been able to safely tap into its powers. Those who become arrogant or use the Gem for dark purposes always find themselves betrayed by the Gem's curse, as it remains dark when the greatest danger looms.

Last year, *l'Empereur* gave the Gem of Warning to Admiral Valoix as a "gift." (No one has dared ask what happened to the previous owner.) But shortly thereafter, despite extreme care in its use and his best efforts, the skull vanished from Valoix's cabin. No one knows exactly what happened to it, but Bloodeye was sunk in a cove just south of Entour, and the Gem of Warning has reappeared there before...



## Mordekei's Casket

Like many fearsome pirates before and since, Mordekei terrorized the Seven Seas with a combination of cunning and ruthlessness. Stout-hearted men feared his name, and mothers used him to frighten children into good behavior. His most powerful weapon was a chest, enchanted with dark sorcery that made the blades of his crewmen tear through human flesh like tissue paper.

Unlike most of his kind, however, his career didn't end with a final battle against angry navies. Mordekei fell in love. His wife, a "prize" from a Castillian galleon, saw the potential for good in Mordekei. He had never known the slightest kindness before he met her, and she threw herself into his redemption with the passion typical of a Castillian. Grief-stricken with the horrors he'd committed, he dedicated himself to a new life defending those he had once victimized. Most of his crew, the only people he'd been loyal to, joined his quest for salvation. The Casket, however, had other intentions. It's said that Legion itself came out of it, and struggled with Mordekei in an attempt to claim him and his beloved. Mordekei won, and used the chest's power to fight piracy across Théah until his dying day.

Hero and Villain alike now covet the power of Mordekei's Casket, since the conflicting forces that birthed it allow anyone to use its eerie power. By placing a blade into the casket (sheathing it to the hilt), the weapon glows red and becomes empowered by something unnatural. Anyone wielding that weapon gains several benefits for the rest of the Act. First, they gain 1 Kept die for all uses of the weapon. (This only includes Knacks that the blade is normally used for: Attack, Parry, Throwing, and Swordsman Knacks gain the bonus, but using the blade for Tinkering or Natural Philosophy rolls is out of the question.) The weapon also gains 1 Kept dice for damage. Finally, the TN to hit the character when using the blade for Passive Defense goes up by 5.

The fate of the Casket is not entirely certain. It's known that the surviving members of Mordekei's crew buried it with him and his beloved, with a sign placed above it warning that those who use the Casket's power for evil will be consumed by that evil. However, all that's known about Mordekei's final resting place is that it is in the Mirror somewhere, on an island about the size of a guildler.

Current rumor holds that Reis himself is after the Casket. Anyone with even a little imagination shudders at the thought of his scythe enhanced by the Casket's power. The rumors continue with a story that Mordekei's great-granddaughter, a fiery-eyed woman of unsurpassed beauty, wants to find the Casket before Reis does. A number of names, both famous and obscure, are attributed to this Castillian beauty, but the most often heard is Angela Gallegos. Those who know Castille wonder if "fiery-eyed" might not be a literal description...



### *Scarlet Hook of Madness*

*The crew peered into the Captain's cabin nervously. Since the screams of the first mate and the Captain's wife had stopped several minutes ago, not a sound had come from below decks. Then, echoing footsteps clumped towards the door and it swung open, revealing the Captain. The hook on his hand was covered in blood, and his eyes were sunken and dead. He looked around at his crew, not really seeing them. "Get back to work." Terrified, the men leapt to their tasks.*

There are things lurking beneath the waters of Théah that can drive a man insane and destroy his very soul. The Scarlet Hook of Madness is one such object. The story of the Hook began over eight years ago, when pirate captain Gutter Kent caught his wife cheating on him with his First Mate. Angered beyond reason, he killed them both with the hook that had long since replaced

his left hand. That night, he was visited by the ghosts of the slain lovers, and his hook began to drip with blood once again. In desperation, he began asking every priest he captured to pardon his sins, killing each as they refused him. The blood never stopped oozing from his hook, and the ghosts constantly whispered in his ear, urging him to kill himself. He tried cutting off the hook, only to find it back on his arm the next day. Eventually, he went completely mad and did himself in with the dreadful thing. His crew, terrified of the unholy artifact, wrapped it in the vestments of one of the slain priests and threw it overboard, hoping to be rid of it forever. Less than a week passed before it washed up on the shore near another pirate crew...

The Scarlet Hook of Madness is a powerful item that destroys its wearer over time. When found, the Hook seems to be an ordinary pirate's hook, designed to be attached to the stump of a man's hand. Its powers are activated as soon as this is done, provided the man is alive. The Hook is a 2k2 Fencing Weapon that cannot be disarmed. When attacking with the Hook, the wearer's Finesse is considered to be 2 Ranks higher than usual. Whenever the wearer kills someone with the Hook, he immediately gains 3 XP.

The first time the wearer uses the Hook to commit a murder, the Curse of the Scarlet Hook is activated. It begins to drip blood, and the voices of the people murdered with the Hook begin to whisper in the wearer's ears constantly. Once the Curse is activated, the Hook can never be removed from the wearer. If the wearer cuts it off, he will find it reattached the next morning when he wakes up. The effects of the Curse are as follows:

The wearer gains the Envious Hubris in addition to any Arcana he might have. He also loses the ability to counter the GM's activation of his Hubris(es) by spending a Drama die. Fate witches just see a bloody blur when they look at his Arcana. Every time the wearer's Hubris is activated, he loses 1 Reputation Point. When his Reputation hits -30, he becomes a Villain under the control of the GM. When his Reputation reaches -50, he becomes so insane that he kills himself and joins the chorus of ghosts in the Hook forever. The Hook will then arrange to

move itself to somewhere else it can find a willing wearer.

At the moment, the Hook resides with Willie Wilcox, a member of the Brotherhood of the Coast. The fate witch Lucrezia attached it to his arm after he lost his hand in a fight. No one knows why Lucrezia did it, but Berek suspects that the Hook helps mask her movements from other Fate Witches in some way. Whatever the reason, the Hook has slowly wormed its way into Willie's soul, and it's only a matter of time before it drives him mad. (More can be found in Willie's entry in the Characters section.)

It is possible that a priest's blessing could lift the curse, free the spirits in the Hook, and destroy it forever, but that's up to the GM.

## *Sidhe Sails*

These enchanted sails are powerful artifacts indeed. Created with Glamour magic, Sidhe Sails are coveted by Avalon captains as well as sailors the world over. Cooler heads, however, are usually wary of them. "They may be powerful," foreign captains often say, "but are they real?"

Sidhe Sails have two effects on a ship's movement. Their lesser power is a +2 bonus to the Panache of any Vessel which flies them. More importantly, however, they are enchanted to catch the wind. A ship with Sidhe Sails is never trapped by doldrums, and no matter which way the wind is blowing, it pushes a ship in the direction it's pointed. Unfurling all Sidhe Sails on a ship moves it at its maximum speed, no matter what direction the wind is blowing, even if it's only a wisp of a breeze. On the other hand, a crew unused to this advantage can plow the ship right into reefs or even the shore before realizing it. In game terms, a ship whose Master of the Tops has a Rigging knack of less than 3 has its Wits reduced by two when using Sidhe Sails.

The other power that Sidhe Sails have is that they are virtually indestructible. When Panache is lost on a ship with Sidhe Sails, this represents damage to spars. Any normal attacks against the sails themselves do no damage. Chainshot is completely ineffective against a ship with this artifact.

On the other hand, Sidhe Sails are made from Glamour, and as such are vulnerable to cold iron. One touch from the smallest amount and the sail vanishes in moments, as if burned away. They are also vulnerable to Syrneth weapons, which work

against them normally, and certain powerful magical artifacts like Firinbrand (GM's discretion as to what qualifies as a "powerful magical artifact").

Their power is rarely seen on the Seven Seas, however. The Sidhe have only provided these sails to three captains ever. One of these sets is rumored to have belonged to the legendary Captain Rogers. The other two are zealously guarded. However, there's said to be a fourth set of Sidhe Sails. No one has dared seek them out, though, for the tales say that they reside on the Isle of the Grey Queen. Everyone knows that sailors who go to the Grey Isle never return, so no one has tried for at least a century.

Recently, however, rumors have begun to spread that the Grey Queen will provide the sails to a captain with the right mix of daring and desperate need. There is a very high "price" attached to the sails, of course. Apparently, the Grey Queen labors under some sort of curse, and the captain who wants the sails must free her from it. Naturally, most crews are wary of such rumors. After all, how could anyone know this if no one has reached the Grey Isle in a century? The answer is as chilling as it is simple — the Grey Queen herself must have begun the rumors, in an effort to rid herself of her terrible curse, a curse put on her by the Queen of the Sidhe...

More information on the Isle of the Grey Queen can be found in the *Game Masters' Guide*, page 17, and the *Avalon* sourcebook, page 31.

## *The Six Switches*

When the island of Cabora sank beneath the waves, it required more than just gravity to keep it down. Its creators built a series of six mighty engines, utilizing the energy of the planet's magnetic waves to pull Cabora down. Since that time, civilizations rose and fell, the terrain shifted, and mountains rose from empty plains, but the Switches remained. Covered by rock and shrubbery, hidden from the sight of man, they silently carried out the task for which they were built. Cabora never stirred from its resting place on the bottom of the Mirror... until Kheired-Din and Guy McCormick began to tamper with them.

Each Switch is attached to a complex series of Syrneth machinery that reaches deep into Théah's crust. Destroying them is a practical impossibility, though they can be damaged beyond functional capacity. Activating the Switches requires an



understanding of a complex code, as well as an knowledge of Syrneth languages. They utilize a unique blending of several species' technology; Setine clockwork, Tessera magnetism, even Domae gemstones play a part in their construction. Successfully interpreting them requires a Wits + Occult check at TN 45. The Explorer's Society has a few rare texts which grant up to 3 Free Raises to those who read all of them. Only Guy McCormick and a tiny handful of Explorers have ever seen the texts; most of them are forbidden to all but the highest-ranking Explorers. (Kheired-Din was guided by his "holy" visions, which provided more detail than the Explorer texts did.) Gaining access to them could form an entire adventure; details are up the GM. Only one Switch is required to sink Cabora, but it must operate in conjunction with machinery on the island itself to perform this function.

While operating the Switches is a perilous and exceedingly difficult task, the various sites where they are located are filled with both opportunity and danger. Numerous Syrneth artifacts can be found there, as well as untold amounts of forgotten knowledge and threats both ancient and modern. Below is a brief description of each of the six sites, as well as an overview of the Switch, the terrain, and the local hazards (if any).

The First Switch is located in the depths of Cathay — a great engine in midst of a hidden oasis. The oasis is used by a band of fierce tribesman, who have no idea what lies beneath it. The engine has a strange effect on the water; those who drink too much of it have hallucinogenic visions of faraway places. The tribal elders often use the water as part of their rituals. Access to the Switch is an odd-looking plug at the bottom of a

nearby salt spring. The spring is poisonous, with the same effects as arsenic to anyone who ingests it. The plug allows solid matter through, but not the spring water; the Syrneth filter prevents it from seeping through. Inside are several control rooms, overrun with tropical vines. Sunlight streams in from hidden vents and Syrneth writing decorates the walls.

The Second Switch is on an island in the Trade Sea, east of the Vestenmannavjnar archipelago. It is a great black obelisk covered with runes and almost swallowed up by the coastal sand. The Switch is activated by touching several Syrneth markings in the proper sequence. Failure to do so transforms the ground around it to vicious quicksand (Brawn check, TN 20 to escape or suffer suffocation as per page 200 of the *Game Masters' Guide*). The waters surrounding the island are full of sirens (as is typical for the Trade Sea), and the weather ranges from stormy to hurricane level.

The Third Switch is located on a bleak shoreline in Montaigne, perched atop an inhospitable seaside cliff. The cliff lies amid a stretch of abandoned land, full of rocks and sand. The shoreline has few natural harbors, and the Switch has remained undiscovered, despite its presence on Montaigne soil. Most of the machinery has been embedded into the cliffside, hidden by the rocks. Only the control panel rises above the plateau, and it has been heavily damaged by wind and erosion. (It requires an additional 5 TN Raise to activate it successfully.) Digging into the cliff top at the proper location reveals an access hatch, which would allow someone to enter the guts of the machinery.

The Fourth Switch is on a tropical island in the Midnight Archipelago, an elaborate system of globes and levers sprouting out of the jungle habitat. The natives are hostile and ruin monsters plague the island, though the Switch itself contains few threats. Indeed, triggering it requires nothing more than pulling a lever. The trick is to pull the *correct* lever. Over two hundred levers can be found throughout the island and without a precise map of the engine, locating the proper one is nearly impossible.

The Fifth Switch lies south of the Corridors of Flame, somewhere in the Mirror. It requires precise navigation to reach, skirting the Corridors while avoiding a treacherous series of reefs and sandbars (Wits + Piloting TN 40). It lies amid a

gaping cove, shielded from the elements by a hanging rock wall. It consists of a translucent glowing orb, floating within a ring of Syrnych metal. To trigger it, one must first touch the orb and then recite a proper sequence of syllables. Activating it draws a bit of essence from the user; the electrical discharge involved inflicts one Dramatic Wound for every attempt made.

The Sixth Switch resides (or resided) beneath Caligari's island in Vodacce. A modified Syrnych water vessel was used to harness the great energies involved, directing them upward into the structure of the island itself. Were it not present, the entire landmass — a city of nearly 100,000 souls — would sink straight to the bottom of the Forbidden Sea. The Caligaris have used the device as the bastion of their power, which has kept them influential for thousands of years.

More on Caligari's island can be found on pages 37–38 of the *Vodacce* sourcebook. A chart of Syrnych traps (which any of the Switches might contain) can be found on pages 84–86.

## *Spear of the West Wind*

The Spear's location has been dealt with on pages 61–62. Though destroyed by Philip Gosse, it still maintains some of its magic. Anyone who digs the stump out and stands atop it will be able to see an image of any point in the Trade Sea for one minute. After that, the stump will begin to assault the viewer's mind. Anyone standing atop it for too long will be driven insane (Resolve check, TN 10 to step off in time). Each subsequent use of the stump by the same person increases the TN of the Resolve check by 5. Chunks of the shattered Spire can be found scattered across the mountain peak beneath the snow. Each of these chunks will provide its owner with similar power as the stump, every time they are touched by bare skin. Then the chunks will begin to eat away at user's mind until he is driven insane.

Lærdom mages who touch the shards are granted a Free Raise to when using their sorcery. They must still make Resolve checks as outlined above.

## *Syrnych Tiller*

Syrnych Tillers are one of the more common types of artifacts found at digs across Théah. This is not to say that they are at all commonplace, but

it isn't unheard of for an Explorer ship to keep one on board just in case.

These artifacts are extraordinarily powerful, and would be coveted by every captain sailing the seas if it weren't for the problems in using them. Someone must wrap the Tiller — in reality, a string of strange metal beads — around the ship's rudder (unless the ship uses a tiller instead of a wheel, hence the name), then bang the first and last beads together. The sailor then has one minute to either get back on board or get well away from the ship. (If the ship does have a tiller, they can be placed on that, but doing so has its own hazards.) After a minute, the ship begins to move forward, slowly at first, then with greater speed. In an hour, it will cover over three hundred miles.

There are several dangers to using the Syrnych Tiller, however. First, there is no way to stop the artifact once it has been started. The ship moves constantly at its incredible pace until a little over an hour has passed. Second, the beads become incredibly hot, doing 5k5 damage to the ship by the end of the voyage. All Critical Hits done to the ship reduce the Wits trait as the rudder or tiller is scalded. Anyone within a foot of them while they work takes 5k5 damage per Round. Every foot farther from the artifact reduces the damage done by 1k1.

Third, turning the ship must be done slowly and carefully. All sailing difficulties double while using the Tiller. (If the Tiller is attached to any other part of the ship, moving in any direction other than a straight line does one Critical Hit to the hull every Round. Caveat Explorer.) Fourth, the sails must be brought down before the Tiller is activated or the ship's incredible speed will rip them to shreds. Roll 2k2 of damage for every five minutes that the ship is in motion and the sails remain unfurled. Each resulting Critical Hit (if any) is applied to the ship's Panache. This doesn't affect this ship's speed while the Tiller is active. Finally, once used, the beads are reduced to useless lumps.

For all that, no method of controlled ocean travel is faster. Roll 3k3, and add the result to 300; that is the number of miles that the ship will move in the seventy minutes after the Tiller is activated. Syrnych Tillers can be found throughout the Midnight Archipelago, and the Explorer's Society will sometimes sell them if they have several in their stores. On the other hand, the Explorers are quite picky about whom they sell to, making the Syrnych Tiller quite valuable to the right people.

# The Black Freighter

*"I summon all the powers of darkness against you, Philip Gosse! I call upon Legion himself to avenge my death! I swear eternal loyalty to him and his minions, if only they will make you bleed! You will know the true nature of fear, Gosse — you will taste my vengeance if I must defy the grave itself to feed it to you..."*

— The last words of Comte Robert Méchant

Few legends in Théah inspire as much fear as the Black Freighter. Even tales of other ghost ships pale in comparison to the horrifying vessel. No one familiar with the Freighter would be surprised to hear its origins, but such knowledge does little to dampen the palpable dread that surrounds it like a fog.

## History and Purpose

The Freighter was created through a combination of happenstance and ancient magic. Countless centuries ago, a great battle was fought between two inhuman creatures — the Sidhe Queen Maab and an enormous bloated siren, ruler of all her kind. Both beings claimed the Théan oceans as their domain, and both referred to themselves as "The Queen of the Sea." The hatred between them was unrelenting and soon spilled over into bloodshed. During the fight, Maab struck a mighty blow against her foe, severing one of the siren's claws. The inky blood pooled out for miles in every direction as the scaly talon sank to the bottom. The siren queen fled in anger and pain, but a part of her essence remained infused with her lost claw. It drifted with the current, attracting misfortune behind it like sharks to chum.

Several millennia later, Captain Upham unknowingly tapped into that essence when he plotted with the wreckers to sink his vessel (see pages 48–49). The reef he drove his ship onto was

actually the siren queen's severed claw, which had become encrusted with coral over the long years. As his crew perished upon the reef, their hatred and anger commingled with the talon's essence, transforming their vessel into the Black Freighter.

The Freighter serves as a powerhouse for dark emotions, feeding off of human pain and cruelty. Those who fall within its grasp become undead crewmen, their souls sealed within its rotting planks and their bodies serving as undead. Because of its link to the siren queen, it can sense human evil anywhere in the Théan seas — and appear anywhere from the Mirror to the furthest western ocean.

The vessel appears infrequently, sometimes waiting as long as sixty years before rising again. It requires sufficient motive to stir itself: someone wicked enough to guide its dread power. Each time it arises, it has a new captain at its helm — a soul so evil that the Freighter cannot resist claiming it — and a new purpose driving its depredations. The original crew was motivated by vengeance against Upham, but subsequent captains have had even less savory motivations. Some continued the deeds they perpetrated in life. Others sought to destroy those who once defied them, while still others were motivated by evil for its own sake. They used the Freighter to spread pain and horror as far as they could, adding their own dark pages to its log.

Once these dread purposes are served, the vessel vanishes for a time, only to be replaced by a new captain when it rises again. No one can speculate on the fate of the previous captains, although the original commander has never left. Captain Upham, fused to living keel by the siren queen's power, has served as the vessel's ghastly figurehead since its first inception. The Freighter's crew often subjects victims to "the Kiss of Death," forcing them to endure the gruesome figurehead's ghastly embrace. Those who do become bound to the Freighter forever, forced to serve among its undead crew.

The Freighter's current captain is Comte Robert Méchant, the Montaigne villain who battled Philip Gosse during the gentleman pirate's hey-day. Méchant's deeds since helming the Freighter have been covered in Chapter One and elsewhere. He now calls himself "Captain Necros" and has turned the undead crew towards avenging himself on Philip Gosse. He intends to make the gentleman pirate suffer an eternity of pain before finally snuffing out his life. (More information on Necros can be found in Appendix Two.)

## Using the Freighter in Your Campaign

The Black Freighter is intended as a horrifying legend to scare your Heroes with — something which appears once in a lifetime, if that. No vessel on Théah is quite like it; presenting it too often can rob it of its mystique, turning it into a slightly ghoulish version of every other pirate villain. However, if handled properly, the Black Freighter can make for a singularly unique experience — a high point of your 7th Sea campaign.

### An Enemy Returns

In the official timeline, the Freighter is currently seeking vengeance on Philip Gosse, driven by Robert Méchant's undying hatred and the dark magic coursing through its hull. There's nothing to say, however, that similar circumstances might overtake your Heroes. Méchant isn't the only evil soul in the world, and a great Villain could conceivably make a curtain call after the Heroes have dispatched him — sailing as the Freighter's newest captain.

The Villain in question should be memorable enough to justify an appearance on the Freighter. Select one whom the players truly despise, a vile and tenacious foe who has battled them on multiple occasions. After you feel he has run his course, you can arrange for a flashy final confrontation which leaves the Villain dead and the Heroes victorious. Following that, allow the campaign to move on: give the Heroes new challenges, provide them with different enemies, and generally allow them to forget about their vanquished foe. Then hit them with the Freighter. Big. Scary. Larger than life. And piloted by the man they thought they had killed so long ago. Once they know who's behind the tiller, they'll move heaven and earth to put him back in the grave again.

After the secret is out, the Heroes will have to come up with a plan for fighting the Freighter. Though immensely powerful (see "Strengths and Weaknesses," below) the Freighter will still obey the edicts of its captain, giving your Heroes valuable insight. The better they know their foe, the more likely they can predict the Freighter's course. Some captains prefer to go straight for the kill. Others will draw out the final confrontation, striking at the Heroes' friends or loved ones in order to destroy their sense of hope. Necros, for

example, has inflicted widespread harm to draw on Gosse's lingering guilt — making each new atrocity weigh on the old pirate's conscience. Depending on your mood, you can limit the Freighter's appearance to a single intense adventure, or draw it out into an entire mini-campaign as the Heroes fight multiple incursions from the Freighter before finally accumulating enough knowledge to destroy it for good.

### Tangential Encounters

If you don't wish to use the Freighter in such a dramatic way, you can still have your Heroes run across it as part of some other adventure. Perhaps the Heroes can encounter an undead scouting party, doing the Freighter's work far from its unholy protection (defeating a boarding party of skeletons is a much easier task than sinking the ship itself). Necros has launched attacks on numerous coastal villages in an effort to torture Gosse. The Heroes may have the opportunity to save innocent fishermen and their families from the Freighters' skeletal marines. Finally, and perhaps most effectively, the Freighter can arrive to claim some wicked soul whom the Heroes have been pursuing. Imagine chasing a wanted murderer for months, and finally catching up to him in some deserted seaside inn, only to witness the Freighter claiming him for its own. Do the Heroes help protect their quarry from a fate worse than death? Or leave him to his justly deserved fate? Such questions can form the crux of a suitably scary encounter which doesn't involve a decisive conflict.

As always, remember that less is more with the Black Freighter. If it appears too often, it will lose its creepy aura and the players will treat it like any other enemy. But a few carefully placed hints — followed by a single horrifying encounter — will make the Freighter all the more frightening, and all the more memorable.





### Skeletons and Zombies

#### Brutes

**Points:** 75 per Squad

**Threat Rating:** 2

**Usual Weapons:** Cutlasses (Medium)

**TN to be hit:** 25 with firearms and arrows, 20 with rapiers and knives, 15 with other weapons

**Special Abilities:** Undead brutes are easy to put down, but a lot harder to keep there. Unless a Hero attacking a skeleton or zombie adds 2 Raises on an attack (only 1 Raise necessary with heavy weapons and cutlasses), it will repair itself in a number of rounds equal to one exploding die. Rules for Undead henchmen and villains can be found on pages 103–104.

Skeletons and zombies are animated by some horrific unknown sorcery; in this aspect, they differ from the “Zombie” monster outlined in the *GMs’ Guide*. Only a few methods of creating zombies exist: the Black Freighter is one. Other sources of undead power are up to the GM, but should be used exceedingly sparingly. The Théan undead exist in nightmares, not the everyday world.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

The Black Freighter is far more powerful than any other vessel in Théah. The siren queen’s essence renders it virtually immune to damage, and it can produce a seemingly endless array of undead minions to battle for it (stats can be found in the text box above).

However, the ship does have a few Achilles’ heels. For all its power, it is not an exceptionally fast vessel and can be outmaneuvered with relative ease. It has a formidable array of cannons, but rust and decay have limited their capacity. The Freighter often prefers boarding actions to cannonfire, giving tenacious opponents an opportunity to escape. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Freighter tends to have very focused goals — pursuing individual sailors, or ships unfortunate enough to draw its attention. Peripheral vessels can usually avoid it by beating a hasty retreat and staying out of its way.

Defeating the Freighter (as opposed to just avoiding it) is considerably more difficult. It is virtually invulnerable to damage, and will ruthlessly pursue anyone foolish enough to open fire upon it. Its key weakness — effectively its only weakness — lies in the figurehead. The body of Captain Upham has become the focal point for its unholy power, and has fused to the bony keel over the centuries. If he could somehow be separated from the rest of the ship, then it would lose its invulnerability and could be sunk like any other vessel. It would still need to be damaged as per the regular *7th Sea* rules (requiring another ship or heavy cannon nearby), but once it founders, it will not rise again. At least not until another captain comes along.

This knowledge is not widely known: perhaps only a few Vaticine documents or a long-forgotten Explorer library hold the secret.

Separating Upham from the vessel requires a Brawn + Lifting check at TN 35. Upham may also be cut away using the Attack Knack from an appropriate hacking weapon (an axe, cutlass, etc.; Brawn + Attack, TN 35). For every check the Hero makes, he must also make a Finesse + Balance check at TN 20 to avoid slipping and falling into the sea (the figurehead is suspended at the front of the prow). Only one Hero may attempt to do this at any one time. Anyone attempting to cut Upham loose must board the Freighter and fight off its undead crew while hanging precariously off the bow. Certainly, it can be done, but it won’t be pleasant. (The exact number of attacking skeletons in such a scenario is up to the GM, but only four can get close enough to attack anyone hanging from the figurehead at any one time. On deck, of course, is something else entirely.)

At the GM’s discretion, Faith-based powers might have some effect on the Freighter. Those with the Faith Advantage are immune to the Freighter’s fear effects, and undead crewmen directly opposing a Hero with Faith must lose one die from their rolls (i.e., 3k2 becomes 2k2). The GM may wish to assign other benefits based on Faith, or may ignore them entirely depending on his whims.

Permanently destroying the Black Freighter is nearly impossible. It would take an act of supreme magic — power beyond the ken of the mightiest sorcerer — to put it down for good, and even then, nothing is guaranteed. As long as the sea claims innocent lives, as long as wicked men ride the waves, the Black Freighter has power. A quest to undo its evil could take years of game time and

constitute an entire campaign. Presumably, the Heroes would have to destroy the Queen of the Sea herself (who, according to legend, resides in a temple of human bones in the midst of a barren patch of western ocean). Once her evil is undone, they would then have to seek out the Freighter and banish it as per the rules above.

Alternately, they could simply find the Siren Queen's severed hand and destroy it somehow, which may undo the Freighter's essence. Such a task would be equally difficult, for no one knows exactly where Upham's ship was wrecked and the hand may very well have shifted since then. Assuming the Heroes discover the colossal artifact, disposing of it would take a herculean effort — although the Sidhe may possibly be convinced to lend their aid. Details are up to the GM, and should require nothing less than an entire campaign of adventuring to accomplish.



### The Fantastic

*7th Sea* is rife with fantastic elements such as the Black Freighter, but they don't dominate the landscape the way they do in high fantasy games. Certainly, the oceans are full of hidden treasures, fantastic monsters, and lost cities, but they're unique. Special. Unusual. Most Théans have never seen a Syrnych artifact and creatures like sirens exist for them only in sailors' stories. While they form an important part of any *7th Sea* adventure, they shouldn't be overused lest their distinctive flavor be lost.

The key to the fantastic in *7th Sea* is pacing: using it relatively sparingly to increase the sense of wonder and discovery when it arrives. If your Heroes are fighting colossal sea monsters in every adventure, such threats will soon grow commonplace. But if they only face, say, one or two over the course of their careers, then they have something special — a legendary battle with a fantastic creature than few have seen and fewer still survived. The same goes for Syrnych sites, underwater cities, and undead pirate ships. The more you can keep the sense of the fantastic out of your Heroes' day to day lives, the more incredible it will be when it sails over the horizon.

## Secrets of Cabora

The rise of Cabora — instigated by Guy McCormick and Kheired-Din — will have huge ramifications on the future of Théah. Not all of the island's secrets can be revealed here (and indeed, the final fate of the crews who set foot on it had not been determined when this book went to press), but we can tell you something about its original purpose, its history, and the powers contained within its clockwork frame.

To those actively seeking the island, Cabora represents a gateway to another realm — to the 7th Sea, to Valhalla, to the realm of Theus and the angels which serve Him. All of these hold a grain of truth, and yet they miss Cabora's true purpose. It does serve as a link to the 7th Sea, but it is more than just a simple doorway.

The island was constructed by the Syrnych beings known as the Setine, who discovered a way to harness the energy of the 7th Sea in a way that didn't damage Théah's reality. By linking their machinery to that mystic realm, they could produce a staggering amount of power, which the island's great engines harnessed and controlled. Cabora became the site of numerous scientific experiments, allowing them to advance their civilization in the relative blink of an eye.

Knowing full well how dangerous such power was, the Setine designed the island with an elaborate system of counterbalances (including a gargantuan energy field out beyond the western seas), which could sink it beneath the waves if necessary. Using their most formidable technology as well as knowledge from other Syrnych races, they created six great Switches, each with the capacity to drop Cabora under the sea and keep it there. If a time ever came when they needed to abandon the island, they would activate the six Switches and send it to the bottom of the Mirror.

For many years, the Setine continued their experiments on Cabora in peace. They created many wondrous things, pushing their society past



anything they had dreamed possible. But then one day, a great cataclysm befell them destroying everything they had built. No one knows how or why this apocalypse came, but it spelled the end of the Setine as a race. One of their last acts was to activate the six Switches, sinking Cabora and hiding its secrets forever...

...until Guy McCormick and Kheired-Din learned how to deactivate the Switches. McCormick learned the secrets of Cabora from Explorer's Society documents and the notes of his missing wife. Kheired-Din was driven by what he believed to be holy visions, instructing him how to shut off the Switches. Both men considered Cabora the key to their destiny. Neither of them entirely understood the forces which govern it.

The island has countless nooks and crannies, hiding the remains of Setine experiments, forgotten knowledge, and untold terrors from the Mirror floor. Most of the machinery still functions, but time and water have damaged the island to the point where activating anything might cause more harm than good. Individual rooms contain deadly traps set by Cabora's masters before they died. Clockwork automatons still wander the corridors, reactivated after thousands of years of neglect and now searching for interlopers. The island holds more potential knowledge than any other site in Théah — and enough threats to make sure that few intruders live long enough to find it.

In the center of the island stands a huge shimmering archway, surrounded by gears and controls. The archway binds a permanent tear in reality, linking Théah to the legendary 7th Sea. This is the engine which once powered Cabora,

and its link to the 7th Sea remains a potent as ever. If someone were to seize control of it — if they understood the nature of the devices surrounding it — they could use the Sea to travel anywhere on the planet or to release the countless souls trapped within its silvery waters.

The final fate of Cabora, and those who set foot upon it, will be detailed in the *7th Sea Almanac*, due out at the end of 2001.

### Sunken Eye Traps Table

Cabora is a deadly place. For some of its more common hazards, roll a die and consult the following chart (which can also be used to

generate encounters at any of the six Switches, though no automatons exist there).

1. **Broken Gears:** This isn't a trap in the standard sense; some of the Setines' strange technology has broken down and fills the hallway with spinning gears and broken, jagged metal.

**TN to Spot:** Automatic

**Disarm:** Attempt to jam the gears; finding the right spot requires a Wits roll of TN 20, though the skills Artifact Evaluation, Trap Lore, and Tinkering can be used.

**Avoid Roll:** Wits + Footwork, TN 30 (to get through the spasmodic machinery filling the room).

**Effect:** 3k3 wounds, and unable to get past the machinery.

**Salvage:** Bizarre clockwork pieces (one Free Raise when trying to repair/recharge other clockwork devices; uses up one piece per successful repair).

2. **Aether Leak:** Another damaged piece of Setine technology. The dispersed Aether is translucent, but becomes more solid when it clings to a victim. Aether doesn't normally act like this, but another unknown substance gives it strange properties. (The similarity to Syrneth Mist is not coincidental.)

**TN to Spot:** 15

**Disarm:** Plug leak, or cover with cloth.

**Avoid Roll:** None (removing the altered Aether requires dousing the victim in water or covering the victim in fabric to soak out the altering substance).

**Effect:** Victims suffer the effects of drowning for as long as the altered Aether clings to them.

**Salvage:** Aether, but only if filtered through fabric and a suitable container is available.

3. **Cage Rings:** This trap is designed to hold prisoners for examination. Now, it provides the Clockwork Automatons (see below) with identities. The rings sense motion beneath them, but won't attack automatons.

**TN to Spot:** 25

**Disarm:** Blow up the rings (requires at least a 5k5 explosion).

**Avoid Roll:** Wits + Footwork or Wits + Rolling, TN 25.

**Effect:** Rings surround target and tighten until the victim is completely immobilized. Bars extend from and connect to the other rings, hence the name. (TN 30 to escape in the first round, TN 40 the second, TN 50 the third. Escape becomes impossible after that.) Undoing the mechanism has a TN of 40.

**Salvage:** Syrneth metal (the rings only function once without being reset).

4. **Bloodfire:** These deadly rays burn like the hottest fire, but look like taut strings the color of blood. A cold bloodfire string that works almost exactly like a tripwire sets them off. Some scholars think that "bloodfire" is actually focused light, like a sunbeam shining through a magnifying lens.

**TN to Spot:** 15

**Disarm:** Avoid the bloodfire "tripwire," or use a series of mirrors to reflect the bloodfire into an arch out of the way.

**Avoid Roll:** Wits + Sprinting, TN 30 (they fire sequentially from one end of the corridor to the other); dracheneisen is immune, as are *El Fuego Adentro* sorcerers.

**Effect:** 6k6 wounds

**Salvage:** None.

5. **Ethera Needles:** Small pivoting barrels in the walls fire these feathered needles, which can knock out the strongest adventurer. They needles don't really use ethera, but are effective nonetheless, and sense motion like the Cage Rings.

**TN to Spot:** 10

**Disarm:** None, though nearly any sort of makeshift barrier will block the needles. The

barrels have a TN of 30 to hit and fire on anyone who attacks them. Treat each barrel as a brute that reduces damage by one Kept die.

**Avoid Roll:** Wits + Footwork, TN 25

**Effect:** If hit, the victim loses consciousness in three Phases. The effect lasts for approximately eight hours.

**Salvage:** Ethera Needles.

6. **Flying Soldanos:** Named for their twin spinning blades by an amused Montaigne (now deceased), these deadly discs can cut through bone as if it were tissue and move like lightning. They are activated when characters pass through a faintly shimmering field just ahead the discs' resting place within the walls.

**TN to Spot:** 20

**Disarm:** Strike the center of the disk (Attack TN 35) or pass through the field very slowly. They are otherwise unbreakable.

**Avoid Roll:** Any appropriate Active Defense at TN 30. Exploit Weakness (Soldano) can be used at half its value (round down).

**Effect:** The discs' blades do 4k4 damage.

**Salvage:** Two supernaturally sharp rapier-size blades (3k3) and two buckler-sized circles per disc, all unbreakable.

7. **Pit of Gears:** This may look like another broken section, but in fact it's a cunning trap. Dozens of slowly moving gears in all seven colors shift across a long, wide, deep chasm. If the Heroes look carefully past the gears into the Pit, they will notice a rainbow-like effect beneath them, with violet gears on their side, transforming through the spectrum to red gears on the opposite end.



**TN to Spot:** Automatic, but see below.

**Disarm:** Leap from colored gear to colored gear, in order from highest frequency to lowest (violet to red). This doesn't stop the trap, but allows the Hero to traverse the pit "safely." Stepping on the wrong gear results in being dropped into the Pit.

**Avoid Roll:** Finesse + Leaping; TN 15 from proper color to proper color, TN 40 to leap off an incorrect color at the last second.

**Effect:** The gears grind the Hero into paste, doing 3k3 damage every Phase.

**Salvage:** None.

8. **Crusher:** A standard trap. Walls come down around the Heroes and the ceiling descends to crush them unless they can avoid the pressure plate that fills the hallway for nearly 20 feet.

**TN to Spot:** 20

**Disarm:** Avoid placing weight on the pressure plate. Jamming it is impossible, but there are four pressure plates on the side walls that will lock the plate in place. They can be found, with an active Wits + Traps Lore check at TN 30. However, two are on each side of the plate. The ceiling can be jammed if the trap is activated, by forcing at least four blades into the edges of the descending block. The pressure plates, fortunately, are inside the walls.

**Avoid Roll:** Wits + Leaping, TN 30, to get past the closing walls.

**Effect:** The Heroes are crushed. Heroes with 16 or more points of dracheneisen protection are merely pinned. Forever.

**Salvage:** None.

9. **Aetheric Blades:** Glowing blades on the end of swinging poles slash at the Heroes.

Stopping them is impossible. There are only two routes through — above and below.

**TN to Spot:** Automatic.

**Disarm:** None. The poles are too strong to block or hold in place.

**Avoid Roll:** Wits + Swinging TN 20, or Wits + Rolling TN 30.

**Effect:** The "blades" don't leave any marks, but do 4k4 damage to anyone hit by them all the same. They can't be parried, as they pass harmlessly through steel and wood as easily as flesh. Dracheneisen and enchanted weapons will deflect them as normal.

**Salvage:** None. The poles are permanently attached to the ceiling, and the blades vanish when the trap is deactivated.

0. **Automaton in Wait:** If no automatons exist in the area, roll again, ignoring further rolls of 0. Many clockwork automatons have been lying in wait for the strange explorers that have invaded the island. Some are manning traps once controlled by the Setines. The one in this encounter has found some victims — the Heroes. In all cases, TN to Spot is increased to 20 or by one Raise, whichever is higher, and replace the listed Disarm technique with: attack and defeat Automaton manning the trap. Rules for Automatons can be found below.

## Automatons

During Cabora's heyday, the Setine created numerous artificial lifeforms to assist in their experiments. Though lacking a true soul, they were able to duplicate many of the functions of biological lifeforms. They had intelligence, could make intuitive decisions, and possessed great strength and agility. When Cabora sank, they abandoned the automatons along with the rest of the island. Most were destroyed by time and the crushing depths of the ocean, but a few endured and a small handful actually managed to escape. Their long isolation had unbalanced them, however, leaving them quite disturbed and in some cases very dangerous.



**Clockwork Automaton:  
Villain (Hero)**

**Points:** 200

**TN to be Hit:** 40 (as victim)

**Brawn:** 7

**Finesse:** 4

**Wits:** 4

**Resolve:** 5

**Panache:** 1

**Attack Roll:** 9k4

Syrneth Lash, 8k4 strike

**Damage:** 9k2 strike,  
6k4 Syrneth lash

**Skills:** As victim (no sorcery), OR Syrneth Lore 6, Attack (Lash) 5, Artifact Evaluation 6, Trap Lore 5, Ambush 5, Disguise 5

**Description:** The “average” Clockwork Automaton looks like a painfully thin humanoid made of the strange metal that most Syrneth clockworks are constructed from. They can run at great speeds (as fast as a swift bird), but move with deliberate care when taking action. When disguised, the body shifts and expands to take on the appearance of its victim. Their only purpose was once to protect the creations of the Setine, but time and age have driven some of them insane, and they now seek to perpetrate any number of horrible acts on those who they encounter.

**Special Abilities:** An Automaton has a wide variety of abilities. Primarily, it is invulnerable to any known force. However, by sticking a blade or arrow into the right place (musket balls are too thick and imprecise) the gears can be jammed. On a successful hit against the default TN of 40, the weapon is stuck in the Automaton, but it suffers 1 Dramatic Wound for as long as the weapon is left in place. However, after it's Knocked Out, an Automaton can't be killed, only hidden safely away somewhere. Fortunately, removing a weapon from the Automaton takes ten Actions.

The second of its abilities is the Automaton's Lash: a lengthy piece of alien cable which it can expand and retract from any portion of its body. It can use this weapon in the same manner as the Journeyman ability of the Zepeda School allows (see the *Castille* sourcebook, page 98). In essence, the Automaton can use its Attack (Lash) ability for the Break Fall, Swinging, and Grapple Knacks.



Exploit Weakness (Zepeda) may be used against a Clockwork Automaton fighting with its Lash at half value (rounded down).

Finally, an Automaton can actually remove the skin of a victim and “wear” it, using the Lash in some strange sorcerous way to extract the memories of its target. So long as it wears the skin, it apparently takes damage normally until the first Dramatic Wound, at which time it “retracts” the skin for repair and reveals itself as something inhuman. It essentially becomes the target, with all attendant Advantages and Skills. Only the creature's Traits remain unchanged. (The sudden reduction in Panache is one of the few ways to tell an Automaton from the original.) When it retracts its disguise, its original skills return. In the case of Heroes and Villains with Arcana, it gains that as well — along with something else.

With Villainous Arcana, the Automaton gains a crude soul of sorts — the soul of an utter Villain. Why has it wasted an eternal existence serving a dead race, when it can have so much fun tormenting its lessers? The direction of this villainy is determined by the Arcana. Be creative and nasty. Heroic Arcana, however, give Automaton's true, full-fledged humanity — and unending remorse for destroying so noble a being. The new Hero dedicates its life to defending the innocent, though if it has a Hubris, its outlook may be oddly skewed.

### Clockwork Automaton (Variants)

#### **Scout: Villain (Hero)**

**Points:** 100

**TN to be Hit:** 30 (or as victim)

**Brawn:** 3 (or as victim)

**Finesse:** 4 (or as victim)

**Wits:** 4 (or as victim)

**Resolve:** 3 (or as victim)

**Panache:** 3 (or as victim)

**Attack Roll:** 7k4 sword, 6k4 punch, 5k4 kick

**Damage:** 5k2 sword, 3k1 punch, 3k2 kick

**Skills:** As victim (no sorcery), OR Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3, Syrneth Lore 6, Artifact Evaluation 6, Trap Lore 5, Ambush 5, Disguise 5

**Description:** Automaton “scouts” look like winged human skeletons made of the strange golden metal that most Syrneth clockworks are constructed from. They can fly faster than “standard” Automatons, but are far more fragile. They carry strange, thin pointed rods that they wield almost exactly like rapiers. When disguised, the body shifts and expands to take on the appearance of its victim.

**Special Abilities:** Scout Automatons also have many abilities. While not indestructible, they reduce damage done to them by two Kept dice, as if fully clad in dracheneisen. However, this doesn’t increase the difficulty to hit them. This also affects their disguised form. It is not cumulative with actual dracheneisen, though they gain the TN bonuses, if any.

Instead of the Syrneth Lash, Scouts have wings that allow them to fly as fast as their counterparts can run. This is terribly obvious, however, and

only useful under certain circumstances. The wings conduct the memories of a victim in place of a Lash.

Finally, Scouts can take the skin of a victim and “wear” it, much like their larger counterparts. It essentially becomes the target, even moreso than with Juggernaut Automatons. In the case of Heroes and Villains with Arcana, it gains that as well — along with a new soul (see above for details). It may not use its wing in this form without revealing its true nature.

#### **Spider: Villain (Hero)**

**Points:** 100

**TN to be Hit:** 30 (or as victim)

**Brawn:** 3 (or as victim)

**Finesse:** 4 (or as victim)

**Wits:** 3 (or as victim)

**Resolve:** 2 (or as victim)

**Panache:** 5 (or as victim)

**Attack Roll:** 8k4 claw

**Damage:** 4k2 claw

**Skills:** As victim (no sorcery), or Attack (claw) 4, Parry (claw) 4, Climbing 6, Syrneth Lore 6, Artifact Evaluation 6, Trap Lore 5, Ambush 5, Disguise 5

**Description:** “Spider” Automatons look like eight-limbed humanoid skeletons made of the same strange reddish metal as most Syrneth clockworks. They move faster than the other Automatons, but are as “fragile” as the scouts.

**Special Abilities:** Spider Automatons, like their counterparts, also have many abilities. While not indestructible, Spiders reduce damage done to them by 2 Kept dice, as if fully clad in dracheneisen. However, this doesn’t increase the difficulty to hit them. This also affects their disguised form. It is not cumulative with actual dracheneisen, though they gain the TN bonuses, if any.

Instead of the Syrneth Lash, Spiders have four extra limbs. Aside from the high Panache, this allows them to climb on nearly any surface. This is terribly obvious, however, and only useful under certain circumstances. The longest pair of arms conducts the memories of a victim in place of a Lash.

Finally, Spiders can take the skin of a target and “wear” it, exactly like Scouts. They essentially become their victims. In the case of Heroes and Villains with Arcana, they gain those as well (see above for details). They cannot extend their extra limbs without revealing their true nature.



# Chapter Four

# Rules

The following section contains conversion rules for transferring characters back and forth between the card game and the role-playing game. By utilizing them, you can transform CCG crewmen cards into RPG characters for use in your campaign; similarly, they allow you to convert your RPG Heroes into crewman and captain cards for the CCG. The section also contains new Advantages, new ship creation rules, and special details on creating undead members of the Black Freighter. (Some of this material has been reprinted from the *Pirate Nations* sourcebook for your convenience.)

## *How to Turn CCG Crew and Captain Cards into RPG Characters*

When converting CCG Crew to RPG characters, there are three cases to consider: Generic Crew, Specific Crew, and Captains. Each has its own guidelines for conversion. It is important to remember that there are more options available to RPG characters than there are to CCG cards, so these rules provide a framework for RPG characters rather than a comprehensive system. Whenever officially published RPG statistics for a character exist, they take precedence over any statistics generated by using the rules here.

### **Generic Crew**

Generic Crew are cards representing groups of people: they do not have proper names or nicknames for the characters depicted on them. Cards with titles such as Brutes, Bully Boys, and Sandoval's Guard are examples of Generic Crew. Generic Crew are Brute Squads with a Threat Rating equal to the highest cost that the card may tack to pay (including suffering Hits) divided by the number of Crew it counts as against your Crew Maximum. Generic Crew with that are Loyal have their Threat Rating increased by one. Generic Crew who gain a bonus when sinking to pay a cost gain a bonus to their Threat Rating equal to one-third of that bonus, rounding fractions to the nearest whole number. Generic Crew from a Faction get a special ability based on the Faction to which they belong.

### **Black Freighter**

Generic Crew from the Black Freighter are undead. They are slower-moving than other Brute Squads, but have a special ability that compensates for it. The TN to hit an undead Brute Squad is reduced by 5. Unless a Hero attacking a skeleton or zombie adds two Raises on an attack (only one Raise necessary with heavy weapons and cutlasses), the skeleton will get back up in a number of Phases equal to one exploding die. For instance, if an undead Brute is knocked out on Phase 9 and the GM rolls a 3, he remains down for Phase 10 of that Round, as well as Phases 1 and 2 of the next Round. On Phase 3 of the next Round, he will get up and continue attacking. Getting up counts as an Action for that Brute but not for the rest of his Squad.



### Brotherhood of the Coast

Generic Crew from the Brotherhood of the Coast act as Pirate Brutes from the *Villain's Kit*: they may move from one level to another without penalty, as if on the same level. This movement is only for changing one level at a time and the benefit is lost if two or more levels are changed in a single Phase.

### Castille

As mentioned in the *Villain's Kit*, Castillian Brutes roll and keep one extra die when they attack. Thus, a 6-man, Threat 1 Brute Squad rolls 7k2 instead of 6k1.

### Corsairs

Generic Crew from the Corsairs Faction tend to be captives, held against their will. Such Crew convert into Brute Squads which do not tire quickly and endure tremendous punishment at the hands of their captors.

### Crimson Rogers

Generic Crew from the Crimson Rogers become Brute Squads who fight so viciously that they get a Free Raise to hit their victims.

### Explorer's Society

The Generic Crew of this Faction are resourceful people, but are more oriented toward archaeology than combat. These Brute Squads give a Free Raise to any Archaeology or Synchrony Lore rolls made by any Hero, Villain, or Scoundrel that they accompany. They are also considered to have Ranks in those two Knacks equal to their Threat Rating + 1.

### Gosse's Gentlemen

Generic Crew from this Faction convert into Brute Squads that employ a fighting style oriented more towards keeping their opponents busy than it is toward defeating them. The TN to hit such Brutes is increased by 5, but reduce the damage from each hit that they inflict by 1 Wound.

### Montaigne

Montaigne Generic Crew convert into Montaigne Brute Squads, as per the *Villain's Kit*: they get an additional Attack each Round. Therefore, a Threat 2 Brute Squad would have 3 Attacks per Round.

### Sea Dogs

Sea Dogs Generic Crew are from Avalon, so they are treated as Avalon Brute Squads from the *Villain's Kit*: they are allowed 1 re-roll per Scene.

### Vendel Merchant Marines

The Vendel Merchant Marines have hired mercenaries from Eisen. Each Brute in one of these Squads must be hit twice before he goes down.

### Vesten Raiders

Vesten Generic Crew become Vestenmannavnjar Brute Squads, which are tough, strong, and vengeful. Double all damage dealt to Heroes by Vestenmannavnjar Brutes.

### Examples

The Brutes card, which can tack to absorb 3 Hits, converts into a Brute Squad with a Threat Rating of 3.

The Scurvy Dogs card, which tacks to absorb 6 Hits but counts as 2 Crew, converts into a Brute Squad with a Threat Rating of 3.

The Cutthroats card, which tacks to absorb 1 Hit but absorbs 5 extra when it sinks, converts into a Brute Squad with a Threat Rating of 3.

The Marketeers card, which can pay a cost of 1 (Swashbuckling or Influence), converts into a Brute Squad with a Threat Rating of 1, while Fancy Dans, which can pay a cost of 2 Influence, converts into a Brute Squad with a Threat Rating of 2.

The Sandoval's Guard card, which can pay a cost of 3 Swashbuckling and is Loyal, converts into a Brute Squad with a Threat Rating of 4 which gets a +1k1 bonus to its attack rolls.

## Specific Crew

Specific Crew are Crew cards that have proper names or nicknames for the characters depicted on them. Cards with titles such as Maureen Leveque, The Kire, Botas Rojas, and The Callows are all examples of Specific Crew. Specific Crew are not Brute Squads. Instead, they convert into Henchmen, Heroes, Scoundrels, and Villains. Assume that all characters have a minimum Rank of 2 in each of the five Traits (Brawn, Wits, etc.) and that they may get further bonuses to these Traits in the process of conversion. All of these modifiers are cumulative, up to the maximums for characters as mentioned in the Players' Guide. If a Crew gains Ranks in a Knack from gaining multiple Skills, the Ranks in that Knack are cumulative, up to a Rank of 5.

### No Attachments

After looking at the title of the card, the next thing to consider when turning a CCG Crew card into an RPG character is whether or not the Crew has the No Attachments trait. Specific Crew that have the No Attachments trait are Henchmen, while those who do not have it are Heroes, Villains, or Scoundrels.

### Factions

The next thing to consider in the conversion process is the Faction of the Crew. Each Faction will influence the RPG statistics of the characters that belong to it.

### Black Freighter

All Crew belonging to the Black Freighter Faction have the Undead Advantage, with various bonuses and penalties based on the name and graphical depiction of the character and the flavor text about him. The nationality of a Black Freighter Crew is usually determined by the title of the card. For example, Dalia was from the Crescent Empire before she became undead, so she would still get the Trait Bonus for a character from the Crescent Empire. (Until such time as more specific rules are published for creating a character from the Crescent Empire, treat this as a bonus of +1 Wits.)

### Brotherhood of the Coast

The Brotherhood of the Coast is made up of criminals who revolted against their captors and claimed their former island prison as a new

nation. They come from all over Théah, so their nationalities will have to be determined by their name, artwork, and flavor text. If you cannot determine which nation a particular Brotherhood Crew is from, treat him as if he is from Castille. Brotherhood Crew get the Trait Bonus appropriate to their home nation and a 3-point Wanted Background.

### Castillian Armada

The Crew of the Castillian Armada are members of the Castillian Navy. As such these characters have a bonus of +1 Finesse due to being Castillian, and those who are not members of the Inquisition receive the Commission Advantage. Those who are members of the Inquisition (such as Inquisitor Bascalle) get the Ordained Advantage, as do any members with the word "Padre" in their titles.

### Corsairs

There are two kinds of Corsair Crews. The first group consists of the rowers and other captives, and the other consists of the Crescents who have captured them. The rowers and captives are from many different nations, and their nationality (and thus the Trait Bonus that goes with it) will have to be determined based on the artwork, name, and flavor text of the card. These Crew also receive a 2-point Pressed Into Service Background and Language: Crescent. The non-captive Crew of this Faction are from the Crescent Empire, and receive the Trait Bonus for a character from that Nation. Until such time as more rules are published for creating a character from the Crescent Empire, treat this as a bonus of +1 Wits. In addition, the non-captive Crew get the Corsairs Commission Advantage.



### Crimson Rogers

Many of the Crimson Rogers Crew come from Avalon, and get a Trait Bonus of +1 Resolve accordingly. Those who do not seem, based on name, art, or flavor text, to be from Avalon will get the Trait Bonus for the nation that you judge them to be from based upon this information. Also, all members of the Crimson Rogers have a -10 modifier to their Reputation, just for being a member of such a bloodthirsty Faction.

### Explorer's Society

The Crew from this Faction hail from many different nations, so it is necessary to judge their nationality (and its corresponding Trait Bonus) by examining the art, name, and flavor text of the Crew card. Crew from this Faction automatically receive the Membership (Explorer's Society) Advantage.

### Gosse's Gentlemen

Gosse will take ladies and gentlemen from any nation, including the small island nation of Kanuba, from which Mabela hails (see *Crows Nest #0, die Kreuzritter*, or the upcoming *Midnight Archipelago* sourcebook for more details about Kanuba and its inhabitants; its Trait Bonus is +1 Brawn). Gosse himself is from Montaigne, so members of his immediate family gain that nation's Trait Bonus of +1 Panache. The nationalities of the other Crew must be determined from their artwork, names, and flavor text. Members of Gosse's Gentlemen get a bonus of +10 to their Reputation.

### Montaigne

Most of the Crew of this Faction are from Montaigne, and get a Trait Bonus of +1 Panache. Also, each member of this Faction has a commission in the Montaigne Navy, and gets that Advantage as well. A few members of this Faction are not from Montaigne, such as Frieda Kesler, who is from Eisen. These characters receive the Trait Bonus appropriate to the nation that you judge them to be from based upon the information available to you.

### Sea Dogs

Almost all of the Crew of the Sea Dogs are from Avalon, so they get a Trait Bonus of +1 Resolve. They also receive the Sea Dogs Commission Advantage.

### Vesten Raiders / Vendel Merchant Marines

Crew from these Factions who are Vestenmannavnjar get a Trait Bonus of +1 Resolve, while those who are Vendel get a Trait Bonus of +1 Wits, and the Eisen that the Vendel have hired get +1 Brawn. Vendel members of the Merchant Marine get the Merchant Marine Commission Advantage. The Eisen mercenaries working for the Vendel Merchant Marine get the Heavy Weapon Skill with all of its Knacks at 2. The Vesten Raiders get a 2-point Vow Background.

### Unaligned Crew

Unaligned Crew do not gain any special Advantage or Background. Their nationality must be determined from their name, artwork, and flavor text, and they gain the Trait Bonus that corresponds to their nationality.

### Influence Cost

The Influence Cost of a Crew is a measure of his Reputation. The absolute value of the character's Reputation is determined by taking his Influence cost, subtracting 1 from it, and multiplying the difference by 10. It is up to the GM to decide if the character will have a positive Reputation or a negative one. For each point of Influence Cost the character gets 8 Hero Points which the GM should spend on fleshing out the character after all other considerations are accounted for, such as the card's skills, traits, abilities, artwork, and flavor text.

## Skills

### Cannoning

Crew with a Cannoning of 1 or higher have either the Commander Skill or the Captain Skill. Whichever they have, their Rank in the Artillery and Gunnery Knacks is equal to their Cannoning score.

### Sailing

Crew with a Sailing of 1 or higher have either the Sailor Skill or the Whaler Skill, with each of the Basic Knacks having a Rank equal to their Sailing Skill.

### Adventuring

Each point that a Crew has in the Adventuring Skill grants him one of the following Skills (each can be picked up to four times): Archaeologist, Athlete, Guide, Hunter, Spy, or Streetwise. If a

Skill is selected once, it grants each of its Knacks at Rank 2, selecting it twice gives each of its Knacks at Rank 3, selecting it a third time gives each of its Knacks at Rank 4, and selecting it a fourth time gives each of its Knacks at Rank 5.

### **Influence**

Influence is a measure not only of the wealth of a character, it is also a measure of the character's political connections and, in some cases, his ability to find things in situations where resources are scarce. Characters with an Influence score of 1 could have the Courtier, Criminal, or Streetwise Skills (with an extra Rank or two of such Knacks as Scrounging or Mooch) or they could have the Connections, Inheritance, or Patron Advantages. Those with a Rank 2 could have anything that an Influence 1 would give, but with a Rank of 3 in the appropriate Knacks, if a Skill is chosen, or two of the options given. An Influence score of 3 indicates nobility, giving the Noble Advantage. Influence scores of 4 give the Noble Advantage and the Courtier Skill with all Basic Knacks and some Advanced Knacks having at least a Rank of 3, and an Influence of 5 gives the Noble Advantage, the Courtier Skill with all Basic Knacks at Rank 4 or more and some Advanced Knacks having Ranks that match this level as well.

### **Swashbuckling**

Each point of Swashbuckling that a Crew has above 1 gives the character 2 Ranks to spend on Traits or 12 Hero Points to spend on Martial Skills.



## *CCG Traits*

### **Heroic**

The Heroic trait will give the character a bonus of + 10 to his Reputation.

### **Villainous**

The Villainous trait gives the character the Evil Reputation Advantage.

### **Holy**

If the Crew has the Holy trait, pick one of the following for the character to have: the Priest Skill with all Knacks at Rank 2, the Faith Advantage, the Miracle Worker Advantage, the Ordained Advantage, or (rarely) membership in die Kreuzritter.

### **Topman**

The Topman trait will give the character 6 Ranks to spend among the Advanced Knacks of the Sailor or Whaler Skill, depending on which of these he has.

### **Gunner**

The Gunner trait will give the character an extra Rank of the Artillery and Gunnery Knacks. If he already has a Rank of 5 in both these Knacks, he gains the Firearms Skill with Rank 2 in Attack (Firearms).

### **Rower**

The Rower Trait increases the Brawn or Resolve of the character by one Rank.

### **Captive**

The Captive Trait gives the character a 2 Point Pressed Into Service Background, if he does not have it already. Those who already have it have it increased to a 3-point Background.

### **Loyal**

The Loyal trait indicates that there is something specifically keeping the character with his current Faction. This gives the character 2 Points in an Obligation or Vow Background.

### **Experienced**

The Experienced Trait indicates that the Crew has seen more than some others. Each level of Experience gives the character a +1 Rank bonus in a Trait.



### Swordsman

Each level of the Swordsman trait is a Swordsman School in which the Crew has reached the Journeyman Rank or higher. Pick Schools that seem appropriate for the character based on the information available for him or her.

### First Mate

If the Crew is a First Mate, the character has either the Captain or Commander Skill, with Ranks of 2 in the Incitation, Leadership, and Logistics Knacks.

### Porté

A Crew with Porté 1 is either an Apprentice or an Adept of Porté, and is likely to have the Noble Advantage. A Crew with Porté 2 is a Master of Porté and is also likely to have the Noble Advantage. Also, Porté 2 indicates that the character is of Montaigne nationality, and thus they should have the Trait Bonus of +1 Panache for that nation.

### Pyeryem

A Crew with Pyeryem 1 is either an Apprentice or an Adept of Pyeryem, and is likely to have the Noble Advantage. Pyeryem 2 means that the character is a Master of Pyeryem, which means that he is of Ussuran nationality and thus should have that nation's Trait Bonus of +1 Resolve, and is likely to have the Noble Advantage.

### Glamour

A Crew with Glamour 1 is either an Apprentice or an Adept of Glamour, and is likely to have the Noble Advantage. Glamour 2 means that the character is a Master of Glamour, which means that he is from Avalon and therefore should have the Trait Bonus of +1 Resolve which that nationality entails, and is also likely to have the Noble Advantage.

### Fate

A Crew with Fate 1 is either an Apprentice or an Adept of Sorte, and is likely to have the Noble Advantage. A Crew with Fate 2 is a Master of Sorte, and is also likely to have the Noble Advantage. Furthermore, a Fate 2 Crew is from Vodacce and should have the +1 Wits Trait Bonus such nationality provides.

### Lærdom

A Crew with Lærdom 1 is either an Apprentice or an Adept of Lærdom, and is likely to have the Noble Advantage. A Crew with a Lærdom of 2 is a Vestenmannavnjar Master of Lærdom, who should have the Trait Bonus of +1 Resolve provided by his nationality, and is likely to have the Noble Advantage.

### Fear

The Fear trait gives the character a Fear Rating equal to the level of the Fear that the Crew has.

### Skeletal

If the Crew has the Skeletal trait, this character has the Undead Advantage, and must select the Skeletal option found in its description.

### Absorbing Hits

Many Crew have special traits that give them some special mechanical effect, such as absorbing extra Hits when they tack to absorb Hits. Those who inflict extra Hits (other than through the Swordsman trait) gain an Attack Knack of their choice at Rank 1, plus one per extra Hit they inflict. Those who absorb extra Hits gain a Defense Knack (Parry, Footwork, etc.) of their choice at Rank 1, plus one per extra Hit they absorb by Tacking, plus one for every 2 extra Hits they absorb when Sinking. Another option for those who Tack to absorb extra Hits is to exchange 2 of those Hits for the Toughness Advantage.

### Increased Hand Size

Crew who allow you to hold more cards have a Virtue, the nature of which is up to the decision of the GM performing the conversion, based upon the storyline information available to him.

### Increased Draw Rate

Crew who allow you to draw cards have the Combat Reflexes Advantage.

## Counts as Two Crew

Crew who count as two Crew against your crew maximum have the Scoundrel Advantage.

## Does Not Count Against Crew Maximum

Crew who do not count against your crew maximum have the Small Advantage.

## Abilities and Other Special Traits

Any other special traits or abilities that a Crew might have will require a judgment call from the GM performing the conversion.

## Artwork and Flavor Text

While the artwork and the flavor text do not have a mechanical effect while playing the CCG, they are a factor when performing conversions from CCG Crew to RPG characters. Crew who are depicted as being humongous, such as Mountainous Mike should be given the Large Advantage. Those who conceal their true names, such as Tom Toblin and Espera, should have the True Identity Background. If a Crew is described or depicted as using or owning a piece of equipment, assume that he is capable of using it, and therefore give him the Skill that would go with it and reasonable Ranks in the appropriate Knacks to make him effective with it. For instance, Frieda Kesler is shown with a Panzerhand, so it would be reasonable to give her the Panzerhand Skill with Ranks of 3 in her Attack (Panzerhand) and Parry (Panzerhand) Knacks. Characters who speak often about the Syrneth ought to have the Syrneth Lore Knack. Game Masters are encouraged to use their best judgment when performing these conversions.

Once this step is finished, the GM performing the conversion should spend any HP that the character received from his Influence cost to round out him or her. It should be noted that since the CCG is mostly concerned with naval battles and duels, the rules provided here do not provide very many Civil Skills to the characters, so special care should be taken to flesh out these areas with the Hero Points provided.

## Example of Converting a Specific Crew

Jamie Sices du Sices (Corsairs, Influence Cost 4, Cannoning 0, Sailing 2, Adventuring 1, Influence 0, Swashbuckling 2, Captive, Rower, No Attachments, Ability: React: Tack and sink Jaime when you are being targeted with an action that will

begin a Boarding with your Ship to cancel that action. The player that attempted the action must sink two cards from their hand; Flavor Text: "When do they serve the cocktails?")

Jamie has the No Attachments trait, so he is a Henchman. He is a Corsairs Crew, but of the captive class, so he has a 2-point Pressed Into Service Background and he speaks Crescent. His name suggests that he is from Montaigne, so he has a +1 Panache Trait Bonus. Because he has an Influence Cost of 4, his Reputation is 30 and he gets 32 HP to spend in order to flesh the character out. The 2 points of Sailing that he has will give him the Sailor Skill, with each of its Basic Knacks at Rank 2. He has 1 point of Adventuring, but he does not seem to be much of an archaeologist or a spy, so he will get the Athlete Knack with each of its Knacks (including the Advanced Knacks) at Rank 2. His second point of Swashbuckling will give him two Ranks to add to his Traits. The Captive trait will increase his Pressed Into Service Background from 2 Points to 3 Points. The Rower trait can give him a Rank of either Brawn or Resolve. Looking at the card's art and seeing the stern look on Jaime's face convinces the GM to give him a Rank of Resolve rather than Brawn. The fact that Jaime bears a noble name and is dressed in the rags of a very expensive outfit, coupled with the aristocratic attitude he seems to display in his flavor text, prompts the GM to give him the Noble Advantage, despite the fact that his Influence score is 0.

The GM still has 2 Ranks of Traits and 32 HP left over to flesh Jaime out. The GM has decided that Jaime should be a smart man who is probably a courtier by profession. This would help explain the card's special React ability — Jaime is not only



a captive, he is also a hostage. The two Ranks of Traits both go to Wits. The GM spends 2 HP to buy the Courtier Skill for Jaime, and spends 1 HP on Dancing, 3 HP on Etiquette, 2 HP on Fashion, 6 HP on Diplomacy, 6 HP on Seduction, and 6 HP on Sincerity. The GM decides that Jaime looks more attractive than the ordinary man, so he gets the Dangerous Beauty Advantage. Also, he should be literate, which will cost him 1 HP. His remaining 2 HP give him the Fencing Skill.

So, Jaime's guidelines RPG statistics are as follows:

Brawn: 2  
Finesse: 2  
Wits: 4  
Resolve: 3  
Panache: 3  
Advantages: Crescent, Dangerous Beauty, Montaigne (R/W), Noble  
Background: Pressed Into Service (3)  
Reputation: 30  
Athlete: Climbing 4, Footwork 2, Sprinting 2, Throwing 2, Break Fall 2, Leaping 2, Long Distance Running 2, Lifting 2, Rolling 2, Swimming 2, Swinging 2, Side-Step 2  
Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 4, Fashion 3, Oratory 1, Diplomacy 2, Seduction 2, Sincerity 2  
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 1, Parry (Fencing) 1  
Sailor: Balance 2, Climbing 4, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2

## Captains

Captains are a special kind of Crew card. They do not have an Influence Cost, but they do have Starting Wealth. Captains are never Henchmen or Brutes. They are always Heroes, Scoundrels, or Villains. The rules for converting Captains into RPG characters is very similar to that for generating RPG statistics for Specific Crew. The primary differences are that all Captains have the Swordsman trait, and their Starting Wealth is used rather than Influence Cost. All Captains get Rank 3 of each Trait (Brawn, Finesse, etc.) instead of 2.

### Swordsman Trait and Captains

All Captains have the Swordsman trait at a 2 or higher. Instead of using the rules for the Swordsman Trait found in the section for converting Specific Crew, treat the Captain's Swordsman trait as if it were one level lower than it is. For instance, Enrique Orduño's Swordsman +3 would be treated as if it were Swordsman +2.

## How to Turn RPG Characters into CCG Crew Cards

When converting RPG characters into CCG Crew cards, it is important to remember that there are more options available to RPG characters than there are to CCG cards. Not every statistic on a character sheet will affect the Crew card's statistics. For example, it is unreasonable to expect that having Rank 2 in the Chandler Knack will be represented in the CCG. Whenever it is the case that officially published CCG statistics for a character exist, they will take precedence over any statistics generated by using the rules for converting RPG characters into CCG Crew cards.

## Influence Cost (a First Look)

A Crew's Influence Cost is equal to one-tenth of the absolute value of his Reputation, minus 1, rounding down. For example, if Stewart MacGowan has a Reputation of -47, he has an Influence Cost of  $(47 \div 10) - 1 = 3.7$ , which rounds down to 3.

## Generating Skills

### Cannoning

If the Rank of the character's Gunnery Knack is higher than or equal to his Rank in the Artillery Knack, his Cannoning skill is equal to his Gunnery Knack Rank. Otherwise, the Cannoning Skill is equal to the average of the Ranks in the Gunnery and Artillery Knacks.

### Sailing

The Crew's Sailing skill is equal to his average score in the Basic Knacks of the Sailor or Whaling Skill, whichever is higher.

## Adventuring

A Crew gains one point of Adventuring (up to a maximum of 5) for each of the following Skills in which he has at least a Rank of 2 in each of the Basic Knacks and one non-zero Rank in at least one Advanced Knack: Archaeologist, Athlete, Guide, Hunter, Spy, and Streetwise. If the character has each Knack (Basic and Advanced) of any of these Skills at a Rank above 2, he gains extra points of Adventuring equal to his lowest Rank in a Knack from that Skill minus two. For instance, if Joseph Russell has Rank 2 in each of the Basic Knacks for the Athlete Skill, Rank 1 in the Swimming Knack, and has all the Archaeologist Knacks at Rank 4 except for Syneth Lore, which he has at Rank 3, he has an Adventuring skill of 3; 1 for the Athlete Skill, 1 for the Archaeologist Skill, and 1 more for having at least a Rank 3 in every Knack of the Archaeologist Skill.

## Influence

Characters who have the Courtier, Criminal, or Streetwise Skills (with an extra Rank or two of such Knacks as Scrounging or Mooch) or the Connections, Inheritance, or Patron Advantages have an Influence score of 1. Those who have anything that would give an Influence 1, but with a Rank of 3 in the appropriate Knacks, if a Skill is chosen, or two of the options given, have an Influence of 2. An Influence score of 3 is indicated by the Noble Advantage. The Noble Advantage and the Courtier Skill with all Basic Knacks and some Advanced Knacks having at least a Rank of

3 gives an Influence score of 4. If a character has the Noble Advantage, the Courtier Skill with all Basic Knacks at Rank 4 or more, and some of its Advanced Knacks having Ranks that match this level as well, then he has an Influence of 5.

## Swashbuckling

All characters have a Swashbuckling of at least 1. For every 2 Ranks of Traits above 2 (or 3, in the case of the Trait that receives the Trait Bonus for his nationality), he gains a point of Swashbuckling, up to a maximum of 5. For every full 12 HP spent on Martial Skills, give him another point of Swashbuckling (again, up to a maximum of 5).

# Secret Society Memberships

## Die Kreuzritter

Membership in Die Kreuzritter gives the Crew the Holy trait.

## Invisible College

Membership in the Invisible College gives the Crew the Ability "Act: Tack this Crew to target a Ship in this Sea. Inflict 1 Hit on that Ship."

## Los Vagos

Membership in Los Vagos gives the Crew the Ability "Act: Tack this Crew to target a Holy Crew in this Sea. Tack that Crew."

## Rilasciare

Pick one of the following Sorceries: Porté, Fate, Pyeryem or Glamour. Membership in the Rilasciare gives the Crew the Ability "Act: Tack this Crew to target a Crew with the \_\_\_\_ trait. Tack that Crew or discard one \_\_\_\_ Knack attached to that Crew. Fill in the blanks with the Sorcery you picked."

## Rose and Cross

Membership in the Rose and Cross gives the Crew the Heroic Trait.

## Sophia's Daughters

Membership in Sophia's Daughters gives the Crew the trait: When this card tacks to produce Influence, you may discard a card from your hand to produce 1 additional Influence.



**"Are cards created with this system tournament legal?"**

No.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

No.

They are intended as a fun variant for games with your friends, and are not acceptable in official *7th Sea* tournaments. In fact, it's considered good manners to announce that you have "home-brewed cards" in your deck before beginning play.

## Sorcery

### El Fuego Adentro

If the character is an Apprentice or Adept of *El Fuego Adentro*, the Crew gets the Ability: “React: Tack this Crew instead of performing a Boarding Attack. Target and discard one Ship Attachment, Captain Attachment, or Crew Attachment on a Ship in this Boarding.” If the character is a Master of *El Fuego Adentro*, the Crew gets the Ability: “React: Immediately after a Crew has been pushed forward in a Duel or as a Boarding Attack against you, tack this Crew and sink a card from your hand to target and sink all Attachments attached to that Crew.”

### Glamour

If the character is an Apprentice or an Adept of *Glamour*, the Crew has the Glamour 1 trait. If the character is a Master of *Glamour*, the Crew has the Glamour 2 trait.

### Lærdom

If the character is an Apprentice or an Adept of *Lærdom*, the Crew has the Lærdom 1 trait. If the character is a Master of *Lærdom*, the Crew has the Lærdom 2 trait.



**Captain Card Frame**

Permission is granted to photocopy this card frame for personal use only.

### Nacht

If the character has *Nacht*, the Crew has the Ability “React: Tack this card when a Crew in this Sea tacks. Discard 2 cards from your hand to target and discard that Crew.”

### Porté

If the character is an Apprentice or an Adept of *Porté*, the Crew has the Porté 1 trait. If the character is a Master of *Porté*, the Crew has the Porté 2 trait.

### Pyeryem

If the character is an Apprentice or an Adept of *Pyeryem*, the Crew has the Pyeryem 1 trait. If the character is a Master of *Pyeryem*, the Crew has the Pyeryem 2 trait.

### Scrying (Female Version)

If the character has the female version of *Scrying*, she gains the Ability “Act: Tack this card and discard one card from your hand to target and look at any card that is currently not in play.”

### Scrying (Male Version)

This Crew absorbs 1 extra Hit by tacking or sinking for each Mastery Level he has attained in *Scrying*. Thus, a Hero who is a Master in *Scrying* (Male version) will absorb 3 extra Hits when he tacks or sinks to absorb Hits.

### Sorte

If the character is an Apprentice or an Adept of *Sorte*, the Crew has the Fate 1 trait. If the character is a Master of *Sorte*, the Crew has the Fate 2 trait.

### Zerstörung

If the character somehow has *Zerstörung* Sorcery, the Crew has the ability: React: When this Crew tacks or sinks to absorb Hits, inflict (character’s Mastery Level of *Zerstörung*) Hits to the Ship that inflicted those Hits on your Ship.

## Advantages

### Citation

If the character has the *Citation* Advantage, the Crew gains the Heroic trait.

### Combat Reflexes

If the character has the *Combat Reflexes* Advantage, the Crew gains the trait: “Draw one

card when this Crew is pushed forward during a Boarding Attack or Duel.”

## Commission

Characters who have a commission with the Montaigne armed forces belong to the Montaigne Faction, while those who serve the King of Castille belong to the Castillian Armada Faction.

## Corsairs Commission

Characters who have this Advantage belong to the Corsairs Faction.

## Dracheneisen

If a character has the Dracheneisen Advantage, the Crew gains the Ability “React: Tack this card to reduce the Hits inflicted by a Boarding Attack to zero.”

## Evil Reputation

If the character has the Evil Reputation Advantage, the Crew gets the Villainous trait.

## Faith

If the character has the Faith Advantage, the Crew gets the Holy trait.

## Large

If the character has the Large Advantage, the Crew gains the trait “This Crew inflicts 1 extra Hit during Boarding Attacks.”

## Merchant Marine Commission

If the character has this Advantage, the Crew belongs to the Vendel Merchant Marines Faction.

## Miracle Worker

If the character has the Miracle Worker Advantage, the Crew has the Holy trait.

## Ordained

If the character has the Ordained Advantage, the Crew has the Holy trait.

## Scoundrel

If the character has the Scoundrel Advantage, the Crew has the trait: This Crew counts as two Crew against your Crew maximum.

## Sea Dogs Commission

If the character has this Advantage, then the Crew belongs to the Sea Dogs Faction.



## Small

If the character has the Small Advantage, the Crew has the trait: This Crew does not count against your Crew maximum.

## Toughness

If the character has the Toughness Advantage, the Crew has the Trait: This Crew absorbs 1 extra Hit when he tacks to absorb Hits.

## Undead

If the character has the Undead Advantage, the Crew is a member of the Black Freighter's Crew. If the character's Undead Advantage includes the Skeletal option, then the Crew has the Skeletal trait.

# Backgrounds

## Pressed Into Service

Characters who have the Pressed Into Service Background convert into Crew who have the Captive trait.

# Skills

## Priest

Characters who have the Priest Skill will convert into a Crew with the Holy trait.

## Swordsman Schools

Each Swordsman School in which the Crew has reached the Journeyman Rank or higher converts into a point of the Swordsman trait. Also, each Swordsman school in which the character is a Master gives a special ability or trait, which depends on the School in question.

### Aldana

Trait: The cost to attach Aldana School to this Crew is reduced to 0.

### Ambrogia

Trait: The cost to attach Ambrogia School to this Crew is reduced to 0.

### Bernoulli

React: Tack this Crew instead of performing a Boarding Attack. Inflict a number of Hits equal to his Swashbuckling to the opposing Ship.

### Bogatyr

Trait: Fear 1

### Bonita

Trait: This Crew may play a Boarding Attack in response to an opponent's Boarding Attack if the opponent's Boarding Attack appears in any of his three Boarding boxes, instead of just the two smaller boxes.

### Boucher

React: When this Crew inflicts Hits with a Boarding Attack, tack this Crew and discard one card from your hand to increase the number of Hits inflicted by 1.

### Buslayevich

Act: Tack this Crew to target a Ship 1 Sea away. Inflict 1 Hit on the target Ship.

### Cappuntina

Trait: The cost to attach Throwing Knives on this Crew is reduced to 0.

### Daphan

Act: Discard 1 card from your hand to target a Crew on a Ship in this Sea. That Crew's owner must discard one Attachment attached to that Crew.

### Desaix

React: Tack this Crew when you are about to play a Boarding Attack. Play the top card of your Deck instead of a card from your hand to play the Boarding Attack.

### Dobrynya

React: Tack this Crew when it is being pushed forward in a Boarding or a Duel. If this Crew wins the Boarding Attack, he inflicts 1 extra Hit for each card the other player played during the Duel or Boarding Attack.

### Donovan

Trait: The cost to attach Donovan School to this Crew is reduced to 0.

### Drexel

Trait: This Crew inflicts 3 extra Hits when it inflicts Hits with a Slash in a Boarding Attack or Duel.

### Eisenfaust

Trait: The cost to attach Eisenfaust School to this Crew is reduced to 0.

### El Puñal Occulto

Act: Attach a card from your hand that has a Dagger Boarding Attack box to this Crew, face-down. React: When you are about to play a Dagger Boarding Attack, remove 1 face-down card attached to this Crew and play it as the Boarding Attack.

### Finnegan

Trait: When this Crew wins a Boarding Attack or a Duel with a Punch, he inflicts 2 extra Hits.

### Gallegos

Trait: Once per Boarding or Duel, this Crew may play any card to play a Boarding Attack, regardless of its Boarding boxes.

### Gelingen

Act: Tack a Sea Attachment in this Sea with the word Monster, Monsters, or Serpent in the title. Sink that Sea Attachment.

### Goodfellow

Act: Tack this Crew to target and tack another Crew in this Sea.

### Gustavo

Act: Tack this Crew to draw 2 cards.

## Halfdansson

React: Tack this Crew when it plays a card in a Boarding Attack or a Duel. At the end of the duel, inflict 1 Hit for each other Boarding Attack card this Crew played.

## Hopken

React: Tack this Crew when another Ship begins a Boarding with your Ship. Inflict a number of Hits equal to this Crew's Swashbuckling on the other Ship.

## Leegstra

Trait: The cost to attach Leegstra School is reduced to 0.

## Larsen

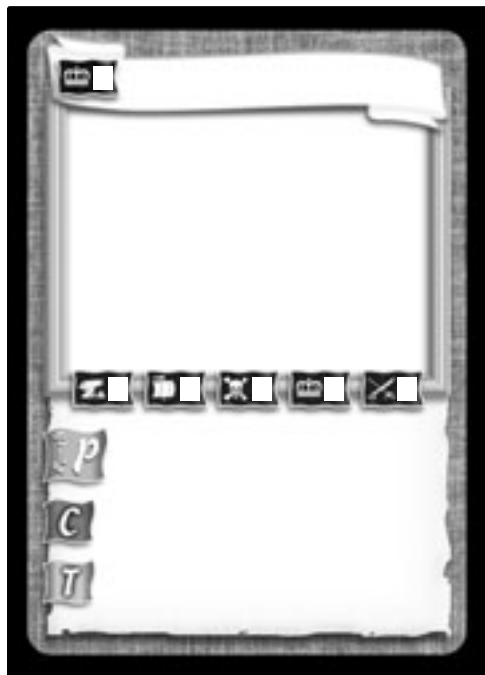
Act: Discard a card from your hand when you are in a Sea with a Port attached to it. Target a Crew on an opposing Ship in this Sea and begin a duel with that Crew.

## Loring

Trait: This Crew may have 2 Panzerhands attached.

## MacDonald

React: When this Crew inflicts Hits with a Club Boarding Attack or Duel, he inflicts 2 extra Hits.



**Crew Card Frame**

Permission is granted to photocopy this card frame for personal use only.

## Marikk

React: Immediately before you play a Boarding Attack, tack this Crew to draw 3 cards.

## Mortis

Trait: When this Crew inflicts Hits with a Dagger Boarding Attack or Duel, he inflicts 2 extra Hits.

## Necare

React: When this Crew produces a Dagger Boarding Attack, draw 1 card.

## Pösen

React: Tack this Crew instead of performing a Boarding Attack. Discard your hand to cause your opponent to discard his hand.

## Rasmusessen

Trait: The cost to attach a Pistol to this Crew is reduced by 3, minimum 1.

## Rogers

Trait: The cost to attach Rogers School to this Crew is reduced to 0.

## Rois et Reines

Trait: The cost to Attach a Musket to this Crew is reduced by 3, minimum 1.

## Shield Man

React: Tack this Crew to tack an Artifact in this Sea.

## Siggursdottir

React: When this Crew plays a Slash Boarding Attack, draw a card.

## Soldano

React: This crew may play a Slash in response to any kind of Boarding Attack.

## Steil

Act: Tack this Crew to untack another non-Captain Crew on your Ship.

## Torres

Trait: When this Crew produces a Thrust Boarding Attack, draw a card.

## Tout Pre

Trait: Immediately before this Crew begins a Boarding Attack, draw 2 cards.

## Unabwendbar

React: Instead of performing a Boarding Attack this Crew and sink one of your Crew with an Influence Cost of less than 3 to tack all crew on the opposing Ship with an Influence cost of less than 3.

## Valroux

Trait: The cost to attach Valroux School to this Crew is reduced to 0.

## Villanova

React: When this Crew is being pushed forward during a Boarding or is entering a Duel, look at the top card in your deck and attach it this Crew, face-down. React: When this Crew is about to play a Boarding Attack, you may reveal discard one face-down card attached to this Crew to play that card as a Boarding Attack.

## Vipera ex Morsi

Act: Tack this Crew to target a Ship in this Sea. Inflict 2 Hits on that Ship.

## Yael

Act: Tack this Crew to target and tack another Crew in this Sea with an Influence Cost less than this Crew's Influence Cost (Starting Wealth instead of Influence Cost if this Crew is a Captain).

## Zepeda

Trait: Immediately before this Crew tacks to produce Adventuring, you may discard 1 card from your hand to add this Crew's Swordsman bonus to his Adventuring skill.

## Influence Cost (Revisited)

Now that the rest of the process is complete, take a look at the Crew's skills. If the character's highest skill is higher than his Influence Cost (as determined from his Reputation earlier), increase his Influence Cost to equal his highest skill. For each other skill the Crew has a score of 2 or higher in, add 1 to his Influence Cost. For example, if Brigit McNulty has a Reputation of 44 (which would give an Influence Cost of 3) but has skills of 0, 2, 1, 1, and 3, then her Influence Cost is  $3 + 1 = 4$ .



## Commission

(Revised from Players' Guide; Varies, 2 Points less for Montaigne Heroes, Minimum 1)

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 purchase 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 non-commissioned 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 in the Army.

Mates are sailors with specialized skills. They are usually under direct command of First Mates.

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).

Players who buy this Advantage may choose to spend 1 HP more in order to select one of the special types of commission. Those who do so gain all the benefits of the Army or Navy rank they have purchased, plus a special bonus based given by their branch of service.

### *Castillian Navy Commission*

The Castillian Navy is full of highly trained sailors. You get the Sailor Skill for free.

### *Corsairs Commission*

This option is only available with the Navy version of the Commission Advantage. You are a member of the Corsairs, and are welcome in the Crescent Empire. If you are not from the Crescent Empire, you must display some evidence of your rank to allow the local authorities to let you pass through without being detained.

### *Mercenary Company Commission*

This option is only available with the Army version of the Commission Advantage. You are a member of a band of mercenary warriors.

### *Merchant Marine Commission*

This is only available with the Navy version of the Commission Advantage. You are a member of the Vendel Merchant Marine. You get Membership in the Merchant's Guild for free.

### *Montaigne Navy Commission*

The Montaigne Navy is full of political appointees. You gain the Courtier Skill for free.

### *Sea Dogs Commission*

This is only available with the Navy version of the Commission Advantage. You are a member of

the Sea Dogs. The stories about these privateers have spread throughout Avalon, and the reputation is starting to rub off on you. You get a Free Raise to all your Repartee Actions when you are in Avalon.

### *Vodacce Commission*

This option can be taken with either the Army or Navy version of the Commission Advantage. You have sworn your service to one of the Princes of Vodacce, and you must report directly to them. You get the Spy Skill for no cost.

### **Island Hideaway (2 or 3 Points)**

You know of an island that does not appear on anyone else's nautical charts or maps, and you have built a solid shelter there. Islands that are suitable for this Advantage are too small to appear on the maps of Théah found in the *Players' Guide* and the *Game Masters' Guide*. The island has fresh water and a steady supply of food (local game, fish, or fruit trees). If you spend 3 Points on this Advantage, there is a reef around the island, and only you know the safe ways in and out of it. Anyone else must make a Wits + Pilot roll with a TN of 30 in order to make it safely through this obstacle.

### **Regular Dock Space (2 Points, 1 for Vendel or Vodacce)**

At your vessel's home port, you have a dock space reserved for your use. You never have to pay to use this dock, no matter how heavy traffic is at that port at the time. Particularly enterprising individuals can make some money (how much is up to the GM and a bit of haggling between the characters involved in the negotiation) by leasing out their dock space.

### **Undead (15 points, Villains and Henchmen only)**

This character is no longer among the living, but he does not rest in peace. Undead characters are capable of speech and are every bit as fast, agile, and strong as they were when they were alive. They multiply the result of their Brawn Roll by 2 when they are making a Wound Check. They also get the Unnerving Countenance (Ugly) Advantage without cost. Undead characters are immune to the effects of exhaustion, and are effectively immune to all forms of poison. However, any successful attack made by someone with the Faith Advantage against an Undead character automatically inflicts a Dramatic

Wound, without rolling for damage. In addition, the character may have up to 3 of the additional abilities that follow. You may not select abilities that contradict each other (Bloated and Emaciated, or Bloated and Skeletal, for example).

Heroes may not take this Advantage under any circumstances.

### *Bloated (2 Points)*

This character's body is bloated with the gases given off by his own decomposing internal organs. When this character takes a Dramatic Wound, all living characters within melee range of him must make a Resolve roll against a TN of 20 or lose their next Action (their next Action Die is discarded without effect).

### *Claws and Fangs (1 Point)*

The character's fingers end in claw-like points, and his teeth have become elongated. This character rolls and keeps an extra die (+1k1) for damage when he is attacking using hands (1k2 barehanded attack damage).

### *Demon Eyes (3 Points)*

The undead character's eyes glow eerily, increasing his Fear Rating by +1. If the character does not have a Fear Rating, he gains a Fear Rating of 1.

### *Emaciated (1 Point)*

The character's body has shriveled, giving him the Small Advantage.

### *Headless (1 Point)*

The character's body does not have a head. This does not interfere with the character's ability to see or hear, but the character cannot taste, smell, or communicate by voice. Characters targeting this undead cannot make Called Shots targeting his head, and the undead receives a Free Raise to his Wound Check (it is far more difficult to inflict a Dramatic Wound on someone without a head).

### *Missing Limbs (1 Point)*

The character is missing one or two of his limbs. The TNs of all rolls requiring the use of that limb are increased by 10. However, the character can generate a Fear 2 effect if he can find a limb matching the one he is missing and "attach" it. The limb will remain viable on him for the remainder of the Act before rotting and falling off.

### *Revolting (2 Points)*

The character has the Unnerving Countenance (Hideous) Advantage, which inflicts a penalty of -3 unkept dice (-3k0) for all social rolls, except for those where being unpleasant to behold can be beneficial. Those social rolls get a +3k3 bonus, which also applies to Intimidation attempts. Furthermore, the character may spend one action per turn displaying his ugliness to add +1 to the Fear Rating for the remainder of the turn. If he does not have a Fear Rating, he temporarily gains a Fear Rating of 1.

### *Skeletal (2 Points)*

All of the flesh is gone from the character's body, leaving the skeleton behind. The TN to hit the character is increased by +10 because his body is devoid of vital organs. Unfortunately, all damage from attacks that do hit him is doubled (including automatic Dramatic Wounds caused by Heroes with the Faith Advantage), negating the effectiveness of doubling his Brawn roll for Wound Checks.



(Reprinted from the *Pirate Nations* sourcebook)

**Country of Origin:** None (Any character may learn it for 25 HP).

**Description:** Rogers is a style of fighting passed down from pirate to pirate over the years. Avalon's Captain Rogers is rumored to have invented the basic techniques, but it has been added to so much over the years that it no longer resembles the original style. Old tricks get retired and new ones come into their own as time passes.

Rogers relies heavily on the use of tricks to confuse and outmaneuver the enemy, but it also teaches swordsmen how to cope with the rolling of a ship during a fight. While the landlubbers slam up against the railing, the pirates move in for the kill.

The main weakness of the Rogers style is the peculiar balancing technique taught to students. While normally effective, a knowledgeable opponent can watch for a particular flexing of the legs, during which the student cannot dodge effectively. This flex is so ingrained in the student that it even occurs on land.

**Basic Curriculum:** Fencing, Dirty Fighting

**Swordsman Knacks:** Bind (Fencing), Corps-à-corps, Disarm (Fencing), Exploit Weakness (Rogers)

**Apprentice:** You can use your Balance Knack in place of any Parry Knack. In addition, you learn one Pirate Trick. Rogers apprentices do not gain automatic membership in the Swordsman's Guild. Instead, they get one extra Rank in one of their Swordsman Knacks for free.

**Journeyman:** You add +5 to your TN to be hit while aboard ship unless surprised. You also learn one additional Pirate Trick.

**Master:** You gain a bonus of +2 to your Fear Rating (see the *Game Masters' Guide*, page 175). If you don't already cause Fear, you get a Fear Rating of 2. You also learn two additional Pirate Tricks.

## Pirate Tricks

Those pirates who learn the Rogers fighting style employ all sorts of gimmicks and misdirection to outfox their opponents, and may choose their tricks from the list below:

**Against the Rails:** You receive a Free Raise when you use Corps-à-corps while your target is using Balance as his Defense Knack.

**Belay That!:** You roll and keep one extra die for damage when attacking your opponent with a belaying pin (your attack inflicts 2k2 damage, not including Brawn). You receive no off-hand penalty when wielding a belaying pin.

**Dagger Ride:** By spending one Action, you can drive a knife into a nearby sail and ride it to the deck, thus avoiding all falling damage. While doing this, you can attack someone below you using Finesse + Balance. If your attack succeeds, you inflict one die of damage for every two Levels you descended, rounding down.

**Death from Above:** If you are at least one Level higher than your target, you may spend one Action to swing down and attack him using Panache + Swinging. If your attack succeeds, it inflicts 3k1 damage, and your opponent becomes prone. If your attack fails, you must roll Panache + Swinging against a TN of 15 or become prone yourself.

**Hold Your Liquor:** You receive the Able Drinker advantage for free. In addition, receive a Free Raise when attacking with a beer mug (Improvised Weapon: 0k1 damage).

**Kick Up:** You may grab a sword off the ground and attack with it in the same Action, provided you are standing right next to it at the start of your Action.

**Over the Side!:** The Boarding rolls of your side in a Boarding Action are increased by 1. Up to three Rogers swordsmen may modify the Boarding roll of a single side.

**Quick Draw:** You may draw and fire a pistol in one Action.

**Sea Legs:** You may roll and keep an extra die when using your Balance Knack. This does not increase your TN to be hit when using it as your Defense Knack, but it does improve your Active Defense rolls.

**Sidearm:** You receive no off-hand penalty when using a pistol.



## Exiled

You used to have a place you called home. Something happened, and you were forbidden to return upon pain of death. You must pick a nation when you take this Background – if you're ever caught there by someone who recognizes and doesn't like you, you'll be executed. The number of points you put into this Background determine how well known your Hero's offense is, and how hard it will be to get the sentence lifted.

## Lost Relative

Years ago, one of your close relatives disappeared or was kidnapped. Up until then, you had a very close relationship with them, and the event was so traumatic that you've dedicated your life to finding them once again. The number of points you put in this Background determine how hard it will be to find your lost relative, and how

strongly they will react (either positively or negatively) to you when you finally succeed.

### **Moment of Awe**

Once, you saw something so beautiful – so moving – that you’ve spent your life trying to go back and see it again. Perhaps it was the 7th Sea, a beautiful woman on an uncharted island, or a dark and handsome stranger who breezed through your life one evening. Maybe it was even a golden city sparkling in the distance. Whatever it was, the everyday world has held less allure for you ever since. The number of points you put in this Background determines how hard it will be to recreate that moment of awe, and how much an impact (either positive or negative) the event will have on your life when you finally succeed.

### **Pressed into Service**

You’ve been carried off by pirates. Right now, you’re chained to an oar below decks, or serving the Captain unwillingly and waiting for your chance to mutiny or jump ship. In a worst case scenario, you could even be serving aboard the *Crimson Roger*. This Background can only be taken with GM permission. The number of points you put in this Background determines how hard it will be for you to escape or mutiny, and how dangerous the attempt will be.

### **Treasure Map**

It doesn’t matter where you got the map — perhaps you bought it from an old fortune teller, or it was handed down to you from your father — but it definitely leads to something. Several Heroes could all take this Background and have pieces of the same map, with GM permission. If you want, you can pay one fewer point for this Background than you normally would in order for a Villain to have part of the map. The number of points you put in this Background determine how dangerous the map will be to follow, and how big a reward awaits you at its end.

### **Wanted**

There is a price on your head. Bounty hunters, lawmen and Heroes alike are all on the lookout for your face — which is plastered up in every city. The number of points you put into this Background determines how much the authorities are willing to pay for your head: 1,000 guilders per Hero Point you invest here.

## New Skills and Items

### *Captain*

Captains are similar to Commanders, except for one very important difference. Instead of learning how to fire artillery, which is useless aboard ship, they learn the art of bribery. Armed with that Knack, they’re always ready to handle an unethical harbormaster or a corrupt tariff collector.

#### **Basic Knacks**

*Strategy:* Strategy lets you formulate battle plans and movements on a large scale. You know when to have your ship turn towards the enemy, and what waters are easiest to defend. This Knack is used (mostly) with the mass-combat rules, which your GM has 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 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 of the *Players’ Guide* (p. 196).

*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.

*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 results in legible, accurate maps. Failure might send the ship using them hurtling mercilessly 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 any 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 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 which tasks each man is best capable of, and give them advice on how better to do them without getting in the way. This Knack is used (mostly) with the mass-combat rules, which your GM has 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 in his *Guide*.

## Whaler

On Théah, whalers have a much more difficult time plying their trade. The whales are guarded by the fearsome leviathans, who attack not only anyone they sense harming a whale, but any ship that smells of whale's blood. Whalers are usually fearsomely strong, completely unafraid of anything, and expert swimmers.

### 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 circumstances.

**Knotwork:** With this Knack you can tie all the essential knots a sailor needs to know, and can tell the difference between a sheepshank and a two-half-hitches knot.

**Throw (Harpoon):** When you throw (or attack with) this weapon, you must use this Knack. The range on a Harpoon is 5, plus two times your Brawn.

### Advanced Knacks

**Leaping:** You can jump higher and farther than most people. This often comes in handy when exploring dusty tombs or fleeing across rooftops. In addition, you use this Knack as your Defense Knack while leaping.

**Poison:** Whalers out on the hunt use poison-tipped harpoons to fend off leviathans. This Knack lets you know what poison to use and how much to administer, as well as how to handle it safely. Your GM has rules for using this Knack in the *GMs' 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 to 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*.

## New Items

### Cannons

One of the deadliest weapons in the naval arsenal is the cannon. In real life, few people who've been hit with a cannonball (or even had one whiz too close to them) have lived to tell the tale. In 7th Sea, we wanted to keep the fear attached to cannons, without making them a "one shot, one kill" weapon. We compromised: a tough Hero might survive a cannon shot, in which case you can assume that it was a glancing blow. On the other hand, a good damage roll will probably result in death.

Cannons deal damage according to their size (see the chart below). A Hero hit by a cannon suffers one Dramatic Wound, plus one more for every 5 by which he fails his Wound Check, rounded down. Thus, a Hero who fails his roll by 25 (not unreasonable, for some of the larger cannon) suffers 6 Dramatic Wounds.

On the good side, it's hard to aim a cannon at a person, and they take a while to load, so Heroes aren't likely to be hit very often by aimed cannon fire.

On the bad side, up to three people can contribute Actions towards loading a cannon, making the process go faster. Worst of all, Heroes in a naval battle are likely to take a certain amount of collateral damage from cannon fire, if only from the splinters that are hurled off of shattering timbers by speeding cannonballs. Historically, more men died from splinters than being hit by cannonballs. Details on this can be found in *Advanced Naval Battles* (pages 110–112).

### Cutlass

Cutlasses are Fencing Weapons (2k2). They are weighted like meat cleavers to cut easily into flesh and bone, but at the expense of accuracy. Therefore, a Hero's Attack

Roll is at a penalty of one unkept die, while his Damage Roll is at a bonus of one unkept die when using a cutlass.

### Grappling Guns

Grappling guns are normally used to fire a rope across to another ship for boarding purposes. The two ships must be fairly close for the attempt to be successful, and the Hero must make a Finesse + Attack (Firearms) roll. The TN is 5 + any range modifiers. If successful, the rope is hooked in place, and can be used to swing across on. If the roll is a failure, the hook comes loose as soon as the Hero tugs on it.

**Damage:** 1k1

**Range:** 40 yards

**Short range:** –10 to hit **Long range:** –15 to hit

**Reload:** 25 Actions

### Harpoon

Whaling is a primitive operation on Théah, thanks to the extreme danger surrounding the endeavor. Typically, whalers attempt to kill any leviathans in the area with cannon volleys and envenomed harpoons, not caring whether or not the animal's body is destroyed. Then they use thrown harpoons to harvest the less dangerous beasts. Harpoons are a 3k2 weapon normally, but against large creatures (such as whales or leviathans) whose flesh they can dig deeply into, they are considered a 3k3 weapon. Like other thrown weapons, their range is 5 + (2 x Brawn).





The *Game Masters' Guide* (page 140) mentioned that this book would contain Advanced Sailing rules. These expand upon the earlier Sailing rules, which you will need to reference when using the Advanced rules.

## Sailing Through Storms

The rules for sailing a ship through a storm can be found on page 202 of the *GMs' Guide*. The ship's Pilot rolls the ship's Panache + his Piloting with a TN of the damage the ship has suffered from the weather. If he succeeds, the ship takes no damage; if not, it loses 1 die of the pilot's choice, plus one additional die for every 5 the pilot failed his roll by.

## The Ship's Draft

A ship's Draft is equal to its Resolve. A ship cannot sail in water shallower than its Draft or it runs aground. When this happens, the ship suffers a number of Critical Hits equal to its Draft minus the Draft of the area it has run aground in.

## Sailing Through Reefs

Reefs and sandbars present hazards to an unwary ship. When one appears, have the ship's Lookout make a Perception Check (TN 20) to see if the Lookout spots it in time. If not, the ship's Pilot gets a Perception Check (TN 30) to spot it at the last minute. If both rolls fail, the ship runs aground (as above). If either roll succeeds, the Pilot must make a roll of the ship's Wits + his Piloting with a TN set by the GM (but usually ranging from 20–30). If he fails, the ship runs aground.

## The Ship's Cargo and Provisions

A ship's Cargo is equal to its Resolve. It cannot carry more units of cargo than that.

In order to keep the crew well-fed, a ship must devote some of its Cargo space to provisions. One Cargo will keep six Crew fed for one month (or two Crew fed for three months, etc), barring vermin or provisions going bad. If there are no provisions aboard ship, the Crew mutinies and heads straight for the nearest land, if they can, and the Captain hasn't already made the order. If they cannot replenish their supplies, one Crew dies each week (which, as you can see in the Advanced Naval Battles rules, reduces the ship's chances of survival in a boarding action).

## Spoilage (Optional)

For Game Masters who want a little more detail (and bookkeeping) for their provisions, we suggest this system.

Everything in a ship's hold has a Spoilage TN. At the end of every week at sea, roll one die. If the die rolls equal to or higher than the Spoilage TN, it's gone bad. Each week adds an additional die to the roll, so after two weeks at sea, the GM rolls 2 dice; at the end of three weeks, the GM rolls 3 dice, etc.

Whenever the ship stops for new supplies, the GM begins rolling one die again. Game Masters may want to keep track of individual provisions ("You got new pickles in Freiburg, but you didn't get new salted pork or fresh water") if they feel particularly nasty.

### Spoilage Target Numbers

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Biscuit             | TN 20 |
| Water               | TN 20 |
| Vegetables, Fresh   | TN 5  |
| Vegetables, Pickled | TN 60 |
| Vegetables, Dried   | TN 30 |
| Meat, Salted        | TN 50 |
| Meat, Fresh         | TN 5  |
| Fish, Fresh         | TN 5  |
| Fish, Salted        | TN 25 |
| Fish, Smoked        | TN 25 |
| Alcohol             | TN 40 |

## “Random” Encounters

The concept of a random encounter can be disruptive to the pacing of an adventure game. Instead, in *7th Sea*, the GM can spend his Drama dice on the Encounter Chart to produce an encounter he wasn’t planning. Alternately, he can simply select one in order to provide players with a suitable challenge during a lull in the normal adventure.

### Encounter Chart

| Name              | Cost | Details                                                                         |
|-------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sirens            | 1    | 6 sirens (p. 161, <i>Game Masters’ Guide</i> )                                  |
| Uncharted Island  | 1    | The ship stumbles across an island that’s not on any map.                       |
| Church Ship       | 2    | Use the 10 point Explorer’s Brigantine (hauling a holy relic).                  |
| Merchant Ship     | 2    | 10 point Merchant Snow.                                                         |
| Crescent Galley   | 3    | Use the 15 point Pirate Schooner (with a Brawn of 4 and the Oars modification). |
| Pirates           | 3    | 15 point Pirate Schooner.                                                       |
| Navy Ship         | 4    | 20 point Naval Man o’ War.                                                      |
| 7th Sea           | 4    | The ship stumbles onto the 7th Sea.                                             |
| Doldrums          | 5    | The ship is becalmed.                                                           |
| Provisions go bad | 5    | 1 Cargo of Provisions goes bad.                                                 |
| Leviathan         | 6    | 1 leviathan (p. 159, <i>GMs’ book</i> ).                                        |
| Mutiny            | 6    | The crew turns against the Captain.                                             |



## Advanced Naval Battles

The *GMs’ Guide* has Naval Battle rules on pages 180–182. The following expand upon the earlier Naval Battles rules, and like the Advanced Sailing rules, cannot be used by themselves.

### Movement

To clarify the original movement rules: when a ship spends Action dice to turn, one of them must be a valid Action for this Phase, and all together, the Phases showing on the spent dice must equal or exceed the ship’s Resolve.

Example: The *Morning Glory* is a galleon with a Resolve of 6 and a Panache of 3. Her Action dice this Round show 2, 5, and 7. She cannot turn in Phase 1 unless she uses an Interrupt Action to do so. In addition, she cannot turn in Phases 2–6 without spending at least 2 dice (2 and 5, or 2 and 7). Once Phase 7 arrives, however, she may turn by spending only the 7.

### Boarding Actions

Follow this sequence for boarding actions:

1. A Hero can only board a ship in an adjacent hex.
2. A player must spend an Action Die to initiate a boarding action.
3. Subtract the Crew of the boarded ship from the Crew of the boarding ship. Roll a non-exploding die and add the roll to the sum; then consult the Boarding Chart.
4. Repeat Steps 1–3.

Ships can continue spending Actions to board. Recalculate the modifier to the chart and roll again, once more applying the result, until one side or the other reaches a Crew of 0. Of course, one side may wish to surrender before then, in which case the battle ends immediately.

Alternately, GMs may wish to run the boarding action more like a normal battle; in this case, consider each Crew to be a Threat 2 Brute Squad and set up the battle normally.

## Boarding Chart

| Result   | Attacker Losses | Defender Losses |
|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| -9       | All             | 0               |
| -7 to -8 | 4               | 0               |
| -5 to -6 | 4               | 1               |
| -3 to -4 | 4               | 2               |
| -1 to -2 | 3               | 0               |
| 0        | 3               | 1               |
| 1 to 2   | 2               | 0               |
| 3 to 4   | 2               | 1               |
| 5 to 6   | 1               | 1               |
| 7 to 8   | 1               | 2               |
| 9 to 10  | 0               | 2               |
| 11       | 1               | 3               |
| 12 to 13 | 0               | 3               |
| 14 to 15 | 2               | 4               |
| 16 to 17 | 1               | 4               |
| 18 to 19 | 0               | 4               |
| 20       | 0               | All             |

## Inertia

Ships can't turn on a dime — they're big, lumbering brutes. Therefore, every ship must move forward a number of hexes equal to its Resolve at the start of Phase 1 every Round (before any Actions are resolved). In addition, a ship can only turn a number of times per Round equal to its Wits.

## Collisions and Ramming

When a ship rams another ship, take note of the ramming ship's Resolve and the number of hexes it moved during the Action in which it rammed. Add these two numbers together, and then deal a number of Critical Hits equal to the total to both ships. For instance, if a Resolve 3 ship moves 4 hexes before hitting another ship, both ships take 7 Critical Hits.

Should two ships drift into each other due to the Inertia rule, it isn't considered a ram. They may have scraped against each other, or one may have rear-ended the other. In this case, both ships take a number of Critical Hits equal to the higher of their two Resolves.

## Incidental Damage to Heroes

Whenever a ship suffers a Critical Hit to its Crew Skill (Finesse) or Hull (Resolve), all Heroes on board the ship must roll Panache + Balance against a TN of 15 or suffer a single 2k2 hit from splinters, being thrown about, etc.

## Special Ammo

There are two distinct types of special cannon ammunition: grapeshot and chainshot. Canister shot is similar to grapeshot in intent, so it works the same way.

**Grapeshot:** Grapeshot (or canister shot) inflicts 2 fewer Kept dice of damage, but if any Critical Hits are inflicted by Grapeshot, the first die lost must be from Crew Skill (Finesse).

**Chainshot:** Chainshot inflicts 2 fewer Kept dice of damage, but if any Critical Hits are inflicted by Chainshot, the first die lost must be from Sails (Panache).

## Sinking Ships

To reiterate from p. 182 of the *Game Masters' Guide*, when a ship takes twice as many Critical Hits as it has Hull/Resolve, it begins to sink. The GM can either subtract the ship's Resolve from 20 and use the total as the number of Rounds it takes for the ship to go down, or he can roll on the chart below.

### Ship Sinking Chart

- 1: Ship hits bottom. Sits on shallow area without completely submerging.
- 2: Sinks gently. Takes 5k5 Rounds to submerge.
- 3-4: Lists to port. Takes 3k3 Rounds to submerge, port goes under in half that.
- 5-6: Lists to Starboard. Takes 3k3 Rounds to submerge, Starboard goes under in half that.
- 7-8: Ship breaks up: pieces submerge in 2k2 Rounds.
- 9: Straight down. The ship sinks in 1k1 Phases.
- 0: Ship goes down immediately, sucking down everything within fifty feet. Make a Brawn + Swimming Test against a TN of 25 to escape. Anyone who fails is dragged under and drowns.



### *Capsizing a Ship*

By spending three drama dice during a storm or other dangerous condition, the GM can force the pilot of a ship to make a capsizing check. The pilot rolls the ship's Draft + his Piloting Knack against a TN of 15. If he fails, the ship overturns, spilling everyone overboard. If not, everything's just fine. The Heroes, if they are aboard the ship, can also opt to cancel the capsizing check entirely by spending three drama dice among them.

#### **Scuttling a Ship**

When a Hero uses a weapon smaller than a cannon to attack a ship, it inflicts two fewer Kept dice of damage. Axes and other handheld weapons designed to cut wood inflict one fewer Kept die of damage.

### *New Ship Modifications*

These are new modifications that you can add to your ship as per the Design rules on pages 194–199 of the *Players' Guide*.

#### **Brig (Difficulty 1)**

The ship's brig is especially secure. Any attempt to escape from the brig (including picking the lock or trying to seduce the guard) has its TN increased by 10.

#### **Cheap Cannons (Difficulty 1)**

The ship is loaded with inferior but inexpensive cannons. This modification increases the Ship's Brawn by 1. This may exceed the normal maximum for the ship's point cost. You must pay a maintenance expense of 50 G per month or these cannons become useless and this modification is lost.

#### **Figurehead (Difficulty 5)**

The ship's figurehead is exceptionally impressive. This ship gets 2 extra Drama Dice.

#### **Fine Galley (Difficulty 2)**

This ship is famous for having better food than most seagoing vessels. Increase all Spoilage Target Numbers for food in this ship's hold by 5.

#### **Grappling Cannons (Difficulty 6)**

The ship has guns that fire boarding lines into the hulls of other ships. When rolling on the Boarding Chart in the Advanced Naval Battles Section, this ship may spend a Drama Die to re-roll a result. The result of the second roll replaces the first roll, and it cannot be re-rolled.

#### **Marker Barrels (Difficulty 1)**

This ship is equipped with barrels that may be tossed overboard to mark a location at sea. This ship's crew get a Free Raise for all their Navigation rolls.

#### **Mascot (Difficulty 1)**

An animal lives aboard this ship as its mascot, bolstering the crew's morale. The cost in Drama Dice for the GM to select a Mutiny as a "random" encounter for this ship is increased from 6 to 7.

#### **Responsive Helm (Difficulty 3)**

The ship can turn more quickly than other ships can. The number of times per Round that the ship can turn is increased by 1.

#### **Scarlet Launch (Difficulty 5, Vesten vessels only)**

The ship has a scarlet launch, which instills dread in those who view it. The ship may spend a Drama Die to force an opposing ship to discard a Drama Die.

#### **Well-Equipped Sick Bay (Difficulty 5)**

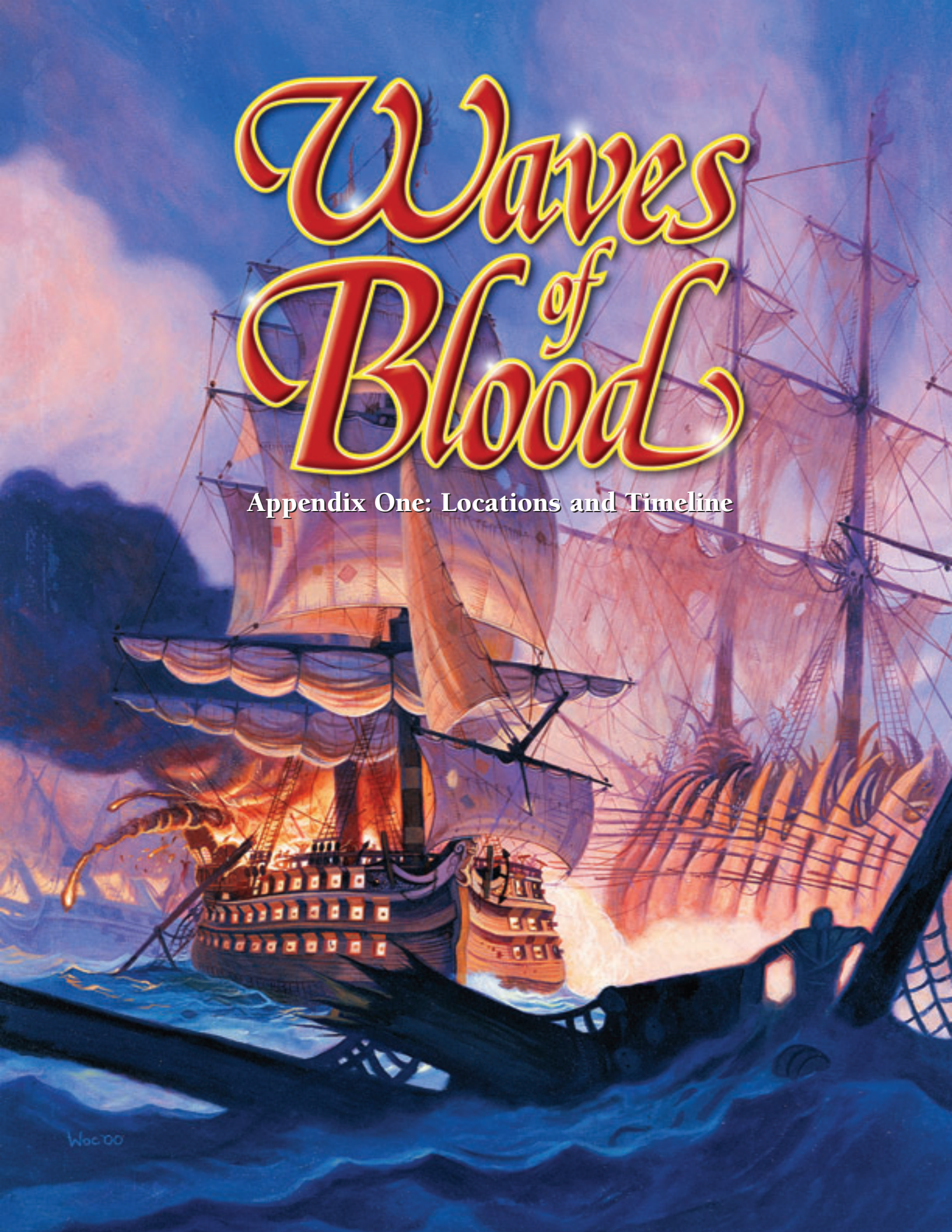
The crew of this ship receive excellent medical attention. When rolling on the Boarding Chart in the Advanced Naval Battles section this side's Losses are reduced by 1 (minimum 0).

#### **Well-Stocked Armory (Difficulty 5)**

The crew is well-prepared to repel boarders. When rolling on the Boarding Chart in the Advanced Naval Battles section the opposing side's Losses are increased by 1.

# Waves of Blood

Appendix One: Locations and Timeline







# Map Key

**1: The First Switch.** Hidden in an oasis in distant Cathay, uncovered and activated by Kheired-Din's Corsairs. (Pages 6, 78, and 120.)

**2: The Second Switch.** A great black obelisk located in the midst of the Trade Sea. The first Switch activated by Guy McCormick and his Explorers. (Pages 6, 78, and 120.)

**3: The Third Switch.** Concealed within a windswept Montaigne cliff. The site of the first meeting between the Explorers and Corsairs. (Pages 11, 78, and 123.)

**4: The Fourth Switch.** An elaborate system of globes and levers covering an island in the Midnight Archipelago. Activated by the Explorers. (Pages 17, 78, and 126.)

**5: The Fifth Switch.** Located in a treacherous cove, protected by sharp reefs and the Corridors of Flame. Activated by Maggie Malone under duress from the Corsairs. (Pages 21, 78, and 132.)

**6: The Sixth Switch.** The impetus holding up Vincenzo Caligari's island in Vodacce. The switch was controlled by a Syrneath watercraft, which was stolen by Jacob Faust, Jeremiah Berek, and Captain Allende.



Its release triggered the destruction of Caligari's island, which sank beneath the waves. (Pages 21–22, 79, 133, and 136, and pages 37–38 and 111 of the Vodacce sourcebook.)

**7: San Augustin.** A growing portside city and anchor for Castille's *la Muralla al Ultimo* ("Last Wall"). The city was finally seized by Montaigne in early 1668, and used to marshal their naval vessels. (Page 118, and pages 44–45 of the Castille sourcebook.)

**8: San Cristobal.** Home of Castille's national government and current nerve center for her war operations. The target of Admiral Valoix. (Pages 20 and 135, page 42 of the Game Masters' Guide, and page 36 of the Castille sourcebook.)

**9: San Felipe.** Castillian port and vital staging area for the Armada. Site of the Battle of San Felipe and Allende's betrayal. (Pages 14–15, 125, and 126, and pages 40–41 of the Castille sourcebook.)

**10: La Bucca.** Former island prison, now the home of the Brotherhood of the Coast. (Pages 23–26 and 56–58, and page 117 of the Game Masters' Guide.)

**11: The Isle of the Grey Queen.** Ever-shifting island of Sidhe magic and gateway to Bryn Bresail (location approximate). (Pages 10–11 and 124, page 17 of the Game Master's Guide, and page 31 of the Avalon sourcebook.)

**12: The Spear of the West Wind.** Ancient Vestenmannavnjar artifact, a rune-covered island seized and destroyed by Philip Gosse. (Pages 15–16, 61–62, 79, 125, and 128.)

**13: Shambu.** Volcanic island in the Midnight Archipelago. Resting place of the Syrneath Eyes of Reason. (Pages 16, 60–61, and 127.)

**14: The Broken Compass Inn.** Favored haunt of the Sea Dogs and anyone who loves a good story. (Pages 49–50.)

**15: Cafe of Broken Dreams.** The last destination for the lonely and the desperate. (Pages 51–52.)

**16: The Castillian Naval Yards.** Headquarters of the mighty Armada. (Pages 52–53, and pages 36–37 of the *Castille sourcebook*.)

**17: The Flashing Swords Inn.** Haven for those fleeing the Swordsman's Guild and a terrible place to start a fight. (Pages 54–55.)

**18: The Forbidden Cove.** “Haunted” site of Skull Island and hiding place for the fearsome Crimson Rogers. (Pages 8–9, 55–56, 119, and 120.)

**19: The Montaigne Naval Yards.** *De facto* home of the Montaigne navy, and headquarters of that nation's most prolific shipbuilders. (Pages 58–59, and page 24 of the *Montaigne sourcebook*.)

**20: El Morro.** “The Black One,” the most heavily armed and armored fortress in Théah. Commanded by a garrison of 2,000 Castillians and site of the planned execution of Admiral Orduño, as well as his rescue by the General and his crew. (Pages 19–20, 129, and 135, page 43 of the *Game Masters' Guide*, and pages 34–35 of the *Castille sourcebook*.)

**21: Stärke.** Eisen riverfront city near the former holdings of the General. Site of the meeting between the General and Felipe Jose de Granjero, and the beginning of the General's mission to rescue Admiral Orduño. (Pages 19, 130, and 132, and pages 38–39 of the *Eisen sourcebook*.)

**22: Estate of Captain François Allais du Crieux.** Coastal palace containing numerous valuables



brought back as plunder from the Montaigne war against Ussura. Subsequently raided by the Brotherhood of the Coast. (Pages 9, 118, and 119.)

**23: Reis' Fury.** Site of the first battle between Berek's Sea Dogs and Reis' Crimson Rogers. The *Hanged Man* rescued Jeremiah Berek a few dozen miles from this location. (Pages 10 and 122.)

**24: The *Hanged Man's* Escape.** Site of the battle between the Brotherhood of the Coast and the General. (Pages 9–10 and 121.)

**25: Jorund's Betrayal.** Site of the ambush attack on the *Revensj* and the Vesten Raiders. (Pages 11–12 and 123.)

**26: The Single Shot.** Site of the General's Single Shot and the arrest of Admiral Orduño. (Pages 13–14 and 127.)

**27: Carleon.** Headquarters of the Explorer's Society and the Sea Dogs. (Page 40, page 17 of the *Game Masters' Guide*, and pages 28–30 of the *Avalon sourcebook*.)

**28: Kirk.** Headquarters of the Vendel Merchant Marines. (Pages 41–42, page 96 of the *Game Master's Guide*, and page 51 of the *Vendel/Vesten sourcebook*.)

**29: Utopia.** Home of Gosse's Gentlemen. (Pages 34–35.)

**Compass Center: Cabora.** The Island of the Sunken Eye. (Pages 51 and 83–88.)





## 27 Secundus, 1668

The Crimson Rogers rob and sink a Castillian ship containing the priceless Cross of the Vaticine. This marks one of the few occasions where Reis has pursued a traditional source of wealth, rather than Syrneth artifacts. The Vaticine Church holds Admiral Orduño responsible for the debacle.

## 6 Secundus, 1668

After months of research, Guy McCormick unlocks the secret of the Six Switches. He sets sail in the *Discovery*, hoping to find them and release their hidden power. In so doing, he believes that he can find his missing wife, Amanda.

**Note:** Timeline is chronological but not proportional.



## 12 Secundus, 1668

Empress Ketheryna of Ussura commissions the Brotherhood of the Coast for a “mission of national pride.” Several priceless Ussuran artifacts have been taken to Montaigne by a noble officer; Ketheryna would like the Brotherhood to recover them. Intrigued by her offer, and ever willing to harm the Montaigne, Captain Allende agrees to her request.

## 3 Tertius, 1668

After months of spirited defense, the Castillian army is forced to retreat from the port of San Augustin. Now occupied by the Montaigne, it becomes a prominent base for their naval activities.

### 9 Tertius, 1668

Guy McCormick discovers a rare Syrneath compass that can lead him to the Six Switches.



### 5 Tertius, 1668

Contacts of Julius Caligari inadvertently leak word of the Rogers' recent attack. The Sea Dog Lyin' John Fox catches wind of it and surreptitiously tracks the Rogers to their hiding place — a "haunted" cove on the Vodacce coast.



### 7 Tertius, 1668

Unaware that they are being watched, the Rogers hide the Cross of the Vaticine at the Forbidden Cove, then retreat to their ship. Lyin' John Fox has observed their activities and knows the location of the buried treasure.

### 11 Tertius, 1668

The Brotherhood launches a raid on a coastal Montaigne estate in search of gold, jewels, and the heirlooms mentioned by Ussura's Empress. The raid goes off without a hitch, and the Brotherhood returns to their ship with considerable plunder.

### 21 Tertius, 1668

Guided by Lyin' John Fox, Jeremiah Berek and the Sea Dogs arrive at the Forbidden Cove.

They steal the Cross from Reis' hiding place and set sail for Avalon.

When he learns what has occurred, Captain Reis swears to sink the Sea Dogs for their impudence.



### 1 Quartus, 1668

Driven by apocalyptic visions and a fanatical desire to reshape the world, Kheired-Din journeys deep into forbidden Cathay, where he finds and activates the First Switch.



### 25 Tertius, 1668

The General receives word of the Brotherhood's raid. He promises to bring all his forces to bear against the *Hanged Man*, and intends to engage them before they return to *la Bucca*.

### 4 Quartus, 1668

Guided by McCormick's compass, the Explorers find and activate the Second Switch, located on a desolate island in the Trade Sea.

### 14 Quartus, 1668

Admiral Orduño launches an assault against the Montaigne fleet. His superior tactics allows him to shatter their blockade of the western Castillian peninsula. The Montaigne navy is left scattered across La Boca, and the Castillian Armada reasserts itself as a force to be reckoned with.



### 14–15 Quartus, 1668

Struggling to remain afloat, the *Hanged Man* is greeted by Philip Gosse and his band of Gentlemen. They assist in repairing the *Hanged Man* before “robbing” it of its booty.

Allende is so surprised by the display that he cheerfully allows Gosse to make off with his entire store — minus the Empress’ heirlooms, of course.

### 21 Quartus, 1668

Admiral Valoix takes command of the Montaigne Navy from the General, who has just arrived in port. The General is left command of a single ship with a skeleton crew.

### 14 Quartus, 1668

The General engages the *Hanged Man* in a surprise assault. He heavily damages the Brotherhood’s vessel, but is called away before he can board her. Orduño’s attack has cut off his return to San Augustin, and he must flee or else risk capture by Castille. The fate witch Alesio used Sorté magic to engineer the fortuitous timing, shrugging off visions of doom to manipulate the strands of fate in her favor. The General departs, leaving the *Hanged Man* battered but intact.





### 24 Quartus, 1668

Alesio begs Allende to journey to an empty spot of ocean in the middle of the Forbidden Sea.

She cannot say why they must do so, only that the survival of the Brotherhood depends upon it. Allende agrees, and sets sail for the designated coordinates.

### 30 Quartus, 1668

Reis orders Riant Gaucher to kill Samuel Smitts as a lesson to the rest of the crew.

The Sea Dogs' escape represents a grave threat to Reis' reputation... and the Glamour magic he channels. The Rogers must kill Bonnie McGee or else.



### 29 Quartus, 1668

The Crimson Rogers catch up with the Sea Dogs. In an effort to save his crew, Jeremiah Berek leaps onto the *Crimson Roger* and engages Reis in personal combat.

The fearsome pirate severely injures Berek and tosses him overboard, but the distraction gives Bonnie McGee time to cut the *Black Dawn* free and escape with her crew. The incident marks the first time a vessel has engaged the Crimson Rogers and survived.

### 2 Quintus, 1668

The *Hanged Man* arrives at Alesio's coordinates, where they find the battered, half-drowned body of Jeremiah Berek. They bring him aboard, where he slowly recovers from his ordeal.

## 5 Quintus, 1668

In an effort to locate “Bloody” Bonnie McGee, Captain Reis slaughters the entire patronage of the Shattered Skull Tavern in Vodacce. His violence gains him neither information nor satisfaction. Similar incidents at other wharfside taverns and inns continue for the next month.

## 4 Quintus, 1668

The Corsairs and Explorers simultaneously arrive at the site of the Third Switch on an abandoned stretch of Montaigne coast. The two crews almost come to blows before Kheired-Din recognizes the Syrneath symbols tattooed on the feet of Explorer Maggie Malone. After a hasty truce, Kheired-Din and McCormick reach an agreement whereby they will both search for and activate the remaining Switches.



## 5 Quintus, 1668

McCormick sends Jacob Faust to follow and monitor Kheired-Din.

## 7 Quintus, 1668

Jorund Guttormson engineers a cunning betrayal of Yngvild Olafssdottir, leading her ship, the *Revensj*, into a Vendel ambush. Despite his elaborate preparations, Yngvild and her crew thwart Guttormson's efforts and fight their way free of the attack. Guttormson remains with the Vendel while Olafssdottir and her crew plot revenge.



### 8 Quintus, 1668

Thomas Gosse drowns during an unexpected storm while trying to save another member of the Gentlemen. The storm abates almost as soon as Thomas is dead.

### 14 Quintus, 1668

Bonnie and the Sea Dogs leave the Isle of the Grey Queen, setting course for Eisen. None will speak of what transpired there, but McGee has aged three years from the time she arrived on the Isle.



### 12 Quintus, 1668

Bonnie and the Sea Dogs arrive at the Isle of the Grey Queen. They seek the mystic gate to Bryn Bresail, birthplace of the immortal Sidhe. There, McGee hopes to bargain for the power to defeat Captain Reis. Despite the fearsome legends surrounding the Isle, their vessel arrives safely.

### 22 Quintus, 1668

The Explorers meet Mumblety-Peg, who offers to guide them to the remaining Switches if they will allow him onboard. Despite some misgivings, McCormick allows him to join the Explorer crew.



### 23 Quintus, 1668

The Battle of San Felipe. Admiral Valoix attempts to launch a counterattack against the Castillian armada, targeting various ports along the Gallegos peninsula.

Orduño anticipates the move and engages the Montaigne fleet off the coast of San Felipe. Valoix is forced to retreat after suffering heavy casualties.

### 27 Quintus, 1668

Attempting to share the credit for Orduño's success, the Castillian Inquisition approaches the General with an offer. They will pay him a handsome sum in exchange for betraying his Montaigne crew to Admiral Orduño. Angered by his treatment at the hands of the Montaigne, the General agrees to their terms.



### 26 Quintus, 1668

Gosse's Gentlemen make a confirmed sighting of the Black Freighter — captained by Gosse's old nemesis, Captain Necros. The Freighter vanishes before Gosse and his crew can engage it.

### 1 Sextus, 1668

Gosse deduces that Necros has been using the Spear of the West Wind to assault him. He believes that the Spear was used to drown Thomas, and resolves to wrest its power away from his unholy foe.



### 9 Sextus, 1668

In an effort to locate the Spear of the West Wind, Gosse consults the occult expert known as Maximilian, who directs him to the island of Shambu in the Midnight Archipelago.

### 5 Sextus, 1668

Alesio betrays Allende in the port town of San Felipe, turning him over to a trio of Fate Witches working for Vincenzo Caligari. The Witches stab the Brotherhood's first mate numerous times before leaving her to die on the floor of a dingy inn. Berek arrives too late to save her, but listens to her pleas to save the Brotherhood from the Witches' wrath. Several hours later, a mysterious fire destroys the *Hanged Man*. Berek's quick action allows the crew to escape unharmed.



### 7 Sextus, 1668

The Brotherhood hijacks the *Falcon's Roost*, and kidnaps its owner and the harbormaster of San Felipe. Berek's cunning allows them to slip past the Castillian navy, out of the harbor and to the open sea.

### 13 Sextus, 1668

The Explorers arrive on a distant island in the Midnight Archipelago. Despite low supplies, hostile natives, and the increasingly reckless behavior of their captain, they find and activate the Fourth Switch with comparatively little difficulty.

### 18 Sextus, 1668

The pilot Espera launches a revolt against Kheired-Din. He and a small band of slaves manage to escape the *Strange Skies*, assisted by the timely aid of a pistoleer named Dunti. They hijack a second Corsair ship, and set out in search of Espera's lost love. Inishman Mike Fitzpatrick falls overboard during the escape.

### 15 Sextus, 1668

The Single Shot. The General arrives at the rendezvous point where he is supposed to turn his crew over to Orduño. He has a change of heart, however, and fires his payment into the air rather than betray the men beneath him. Touched by the man's honor, Admiral Orduño refuses to board the General's ship. He is immediately arrested by the Inquisition and charged with heresy.



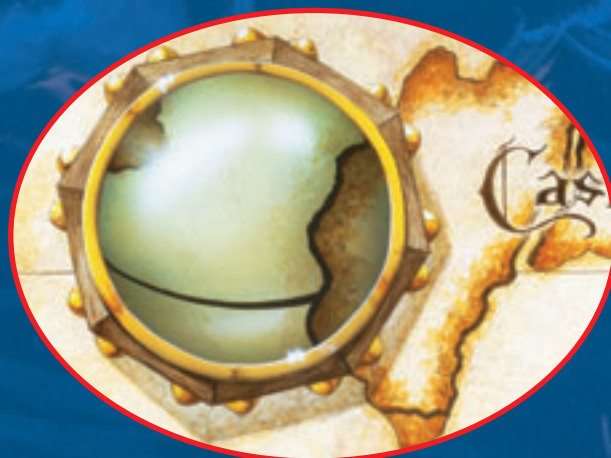
### 19 Sextus, 1668

Bonnie McGee and the Sea Dogs arrive in Eisen, there to seek out the mysterious order of smiths known as the Nibelungen.

### 17 Sextus, 1668

Using Maximilian's advice, Gosse quickly reaches the island of Shambu.

However, Captain Necros has prepared an ambush for him: a company of undead waiting to cut the old pirate to pieces. Gosse and his friend Mabela fight their way through the Freighter's crew, using Mabela's mysterious magic to ultimately vanquish their foes. They find the Eye of Reason and depart without further incident.





### 20 Sextus, 1668

Mike Fitzpatrick is washed ashore in Vodacce and nursed back to health by a band of Eisen mercenaries. They are on their way back to their homeland, there to rejoin their old commander, the General. Fitzpatrick accompanies them.

### 23 Sextus, 1668

The Nibelungen forge a new pair of knives for Bonnie McGee. Though they have never granted such a boon to anyone from outside Eisen, McGee's stirring story and Sidhe-assisted insight convince them to make an exception.



### 21 Sextus, 1668

With Orduño imprisoned and awaiting trial, Admiral Valoix launches a new series of attacks against the eastern Castillian peninsula. His aim is to destroy the armada's support network, severely hampering its ability to fight. Without Orduño in command, the Castillians struggle to contain his assault.

### 1 Julius, 1668

Using the power of the Eye, Gosse locates the Spear of the West Wind in the far reaches of the Trade Sea. Several other crews are in search of it as well, and the Gentlemen must fight their way through them before reaching their prize. The adverse conditions, coupled with the possibility that Necros could return, convince Gosse to destroy the Spear rather than attempt to keep it.

## 2 Julius, 1668

At the behest of her husband, Margareta Orduño signs a letter of condemnation supporting the Inquisition's case against him.

The Admiral fears that if she does otherwise, the Inquisition will burn her for heresy as well.



## 5 Julius, 1668

Though they accept her condemnation, the Inquisition is still wary of Margareta Orduño.

She is given command of the *Fuego Negro* with an Inquisition "advisor" to monitor her activities.

## 4 Julius, 1668

After several days spent mustering his courage, Lyin' John Fox tries to kill Nicole Cowbey, a fellow Sea Dog who witnessed him committing murder.

Cowbey is ready for him, however, and fights off his attack. He flees rather than face the crew, stealing a rowboat and making for shore.

The Sea Dogs let him go.

## 6 Julius, 1668

Orduño's trial and condemnation. He is found guilty of heresy against the Vaticine church and sentenced to death. The Inquisition moves him to the fortress of El Morro to await execution.



## 11 Julius, 1668

With only a skeleton crew remaining, Kheired-Din seeks out McCormick, demanding that the “lightbringer” Maggie Malone serve as his new pilot. McCormick agrees, prompting a mutiny among his crew. McCormick and Mumblety-Peg are forced to flee to the *Strange Skies* with Maggie in tow. The Corsairs escape the scene, despite the Explorers’ best efforts.



## 7 Julius, 1668

Margaretta Orduño pens a letter to the General, telling him what has happened and begging him to help. She entrusts it to her fencing instructor, Felipe Jose de Granjero, who is the only man she can rely upon for such a task.



## 8 Julius, 1668

The General returns to Eisen to reclaim his armor, his name, and his honor.

## 14 Julius, 1668

Necros sends another attack against Philip Gosse, led by Gosse’s undead nephew Thomas. Gosse slays Thomas using a blade given to him by the Knights of the Rose and Cross, but the incident cuts deeply into the old man’s soul.

### 16 Julius, 1668

Yngvild Olafssdottir consults the hidden King of the Vesten. Based on his advice, she launches a monstrous plan to unleash Valhalla against the Vendel nation. The High King tells her to seek out the Island of the Sunken Eye, and provides her with the knowledge to “open the gates to the afterlife” once she is there.

### 15 Julius, 1668

Disgusted by the atrocities committed by Admiral Valoix, Timothy le Beau and several others abandon the Montaigne navy. They eventually rejoin the General aboard his ship, and pledge to serve his cause.



### 16 Julius, 1668

The Brotherhood crosses paths with the three Fate Witches. They are saved by the timely arrival of Lucrezia, who slays the Witches and joins Berek's crew. She claims to have knowledge of “the Brotherhood's future,” and she says can help them find their lost captain. She also replaces Willie Wilcox's missing hand with the Scarlet Hook of Madness; though it drives Wilcox to the brink of madness, it also hides the Brotherhood from any of Caligari's other Fate Witches.



### 19 Julius, 1668

Javier de Bejarano reveals the secret of the Setine Key to Reis. Reis immediately kills him.



### 27 Julius, 1668

The Corsair Dalia, slain by the Freighter and resurrected as a member of the undead, tells Captain Necros about the 7th Sea. Believing that he can use it to unleash an army of undead, he sets sail for the Mirror, leaving a wide path of destruction for Gosse to follow.

### 21 Julius, 1668

Felipe Jose de Granjero delivers Margareta's message to the General. The Eisen mercenary pledges to save Orduño from the Inquisition's flames.



### 25 Julius, 1668

Maggie Malone is forced to guide the Corsairs to the location of the Fifth Switch: a perilous cove south of the Corridors of Flame.

Driven on by Kheired-Din, Malone activates the Fifth Switch and endures its painful electrical discharge.

### 30 Julius, 1668

Berek and the Brotherhood ascertain the location of Captain Allende: Caligari's island. They get help from El Vago, who tells them that Caligari has seized Allende for the Inquisition.

In exchange for breaking him, Caligari will receive permission to conduct trade with the Crescent Empire.

### 1 Corantine, 1668

Théah's mystics all simultaneously awaken with a terrible vision of the Island of the Sunken Eye. Their visions grow worse in the following weeks.



### 4 Corantine, 1668

Jacob Faust enters Caligari's island to secure the Sixth Switch. Using clues provided by the Corsair Shala, he locates the device in the bowels of the island. Caligari's men discover him, however, and quickly subdue him. He is imprisoned in a tower cell, next to the battered but unbroken Captain Allende.

### 3 Corantine, 1668

The Rogers track down Lyin' John Fox. Alone and bereft of the Sea Dogs' protection, Fox is no match for the incensed Captain Reis.



### 5 Corantine, 1668

Spurred on by a series of Vesten atrocities, Jorund Guttormson sets forth in a Vendel ship to destroy the *Revensj* once and for all.

### 7 Corantine, 1668

The body of Lyin' John Fox appears in a gibbet on the Carleon docks. A scroll saying "the Island of the Sunken Eye," is tacked to his chest.



### 9 Corantine, 1668

Gosse commissions Red the Adventurer to steal a ship for him.



### 8 Corantine, 1668

Bonnie McGee consults the mystic Derwyddon for insight into Reis' message. Derwyddon claims that Reis is attempting to thwart the Glamour magic surrounding his Highland foe by utilizing Cabora's Synrath technology. Bonnie and the Sea Dogs set sail for Cabora.

### 12 Corantine, 1668

Red the Adventurer absconds with a Castillian vessel known as *El Toro Rojo*, and returns it to Gosse. The gentleman pirate intends to use the vessel during a final battle with the Black Freighter.



### 14 Corantine, 1668

On their way to the Sixth and final Switch, the Corsairs and McCormick are attacked by the Explorers, trying to get Maggie Malone back. The Explorers inflict heavy damage on the *Strange Skies*, but the Corsairs escape through a “funnel-hole” to the 7th Sea.

They emerge in the Mirror, near the site of Cabora. Though McCormick is concerned about the Sixth Switch, Kheired-Din assures him that Shala is more than capable of completing their task.

### 22 Corantine, 1668

The General arranges a daring rescue for Orduño, using Timothy le Beau’s *Porté* abilities to enter the fortress as the Admiral’s execution begins. They escape the fortress and avoid the Castillian counterattack by pulling their ship into a gigantic *Porté* hole created by le Beau and other mages.



### 20–21 Corantine, 1668

The General takes a perilous journey up El Rio de Delia to El Morro, where Orduño is scheduled to be executed. His fast vessel allows him to skirt gunfire from numerous Castillian fortresses, while avoiding the Armada galleons which patrol the river.

### 25 Corantine, 1668

Valoix launches a bold attack against San Cristobal, the heart of Castille’s war effort. If he takes it, he can paralyze the enemy armies and complete *l’Empereur*’s conquest of Castille.



**29 Corantine, 1668**  
The Kire escapes from prison.

**1 Septimus, 1668**  
The rise of Cabora from the depths of the Mirror.



**30 Corantine, 1668**  
Berek and the Brotherhood organize a jailbreak for Allende, infiltrating Caligari's island and freeing the Prince's most valued captives. Jacob Faust leads the rescue party into the island's bowels, to the place where he was captured. The Sixth Switch is controlled by a great Syrneth watercraft, which the party boards and activates. As the alien ship speeds away, Caligari's island sinks and the Sixth Switch is activated.

## Appendix Two

# Crews

This appendix contains stats and background information for many of the card game's most prominent crewmen. They are divided by faction (the Black Freighter is placed in the rear in case the GM wishes to forbid his or her players from reading that section), and arranged in rough alphabetical order. Captains and other important figures lead each section (with boxed stats and a small picture), followed by the remaining crewmen in alphabetical order. The appendix also includes role-playing stats for each faction's vessel(s), in case you wish to use them in an RPG campaign.

Certain stats have been changed from previous publication, reflecting new rules or the development of the character in questions. These changes are considered definitive.

### Brotherhood of the Coast



**Captain Allende: Hero**

*Brawn:* 3

*Finesse:* 4

*Wits:* 5

*Resolve:* 4

*Panache:* 4

*Reputation:* 122

*Background:* True Identity, Wanted

*Arcana:* Altruistic

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne (R/W), Vendel, Castillian Education, Connections (Rilasciare), Noble

*Courtier:* Dancing 3, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, Fashion 4, Oratory 5, Politics 5, Scheming 2, Sincerity 3

*Sailor:* Balance 4, Cartography 4, Climbing 4, Knotwork 3, Leaping 3, Navigation 5, Pilot 4, Rigging 3, Swimming 3

*Scholar:* History 3, Law 4, Mathematics 3, Occult 3, Philosophy 4, Research 2, Theology 2

*Aldana (Master):* Feint (Fencing) 5, Riposte (Fencing) 5, Tagging (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 5

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 4, Rolling 3, Sprinting 3, Swinging 4, Throwing 3

*Captain:* Gunnery 3, Incitation 5, Leadership 5, Logistics 3, Strategy 5, Tactics 5

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

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

The man known as "Allende" is actually Prince Javier Aldana de Sandoval, the older brother of Good King Sandoval and (to some) the rightful King of Castille. Javier grew up surrounded by several unique influences, including a group of school friends who secretly belonged to the Rilasciare. He never joined the organization, but he agreed with many of their ideas, and as he entered adulthood, their influence helped shape him into an extraordinary leader.

Javier took over as Castille's Admiral of the Navy following the disastrous invasion of Avalon in 1659. He kept the captains in line and ensured that the Armada didn't collapse into complete chaos following its defeat. When his father was struck ill, he returned to port and served as regent for many weeks. His decisions were bold, yet thoughtful, and his notions of government intrigued the royal court. He was popular with nobles and commoners alike, setting very high

expectations for his eventual ascent to the throne. Some thought they were a little too high.

While his actions made him popular in the court, they made him unpopular with many members of the Church, particularly the Inquisition. They had their own designs on Castille, and Javier's innovative policies had no part in them. The Inquisition had no wish to kill him (at least not yet), but they needed him removed from power. One night, a band of hooded men broke into his private chambers and dragged him away. The Hierophant was told nothing and the royal guards had almost no leads to follow. The crown prince simply disappeared.

Javier found himself bound and gagged in the galley of a ship bound for *la Bucca*. When he reached the prison, he tried to tell the guards who he was. They just laughed and cuffed him across the jaw. *La Bucca* was full of madmen, and no one batted an eyelash at someone claiming to be the Prince of Castille (the Emperor of Numa hoed carrots on the western plains, and at least five Vaticine Prophets could be found among the prisoners). Although the guards wouldn't believe him, however, some of the inmates did, and a few held him responsible for their miserable condition. He killed the first in a knife fight just a few days after arriving. Realizing that his true identity would eventually be his undoing, he dropped his claims to the throne and began calling himself "Allende." The attacks died down soon thereafter, allowing him to slowly fade into the general populace.

Allende spent almost two years on the island working 14 hours a day under the most savage conditions. Somehow, despite the brutal conditions and attempts on his life, he managed to survive. Later, he would learn he had a bit of supernatural aid from the Fate Witch, Alesio.

His old friends in the Rilasciare had not forgotten him, however. When he failed to return after his disappearance, they went looking for him and found *la Bucca*. One of their number, Velik Galecatcher, managed to reach the island and made discreet contact with the exiled prince. Velik's presence allowed Allende to smuggle in some vital supplies, and arrange the eventual prisoner revolt (see pages 24–25). At first, he did so to earn the respect of the convicts in order to get back home. However, when discovered his father dead and his young brother on the throne, he knew he could not claim his heritage; challenging his brother's authority would bring Castille more harm than good. Instead, he

established the Brotherhood of the Coast and dedicated himself to protecting Castille's shores from his new position. He soon proved as popular with the Brotherhood as he had in court, and became the island's leader in fact if not in name.

Unfortunately, the Inquisition had still not finished with him. When they realized who he was, they arranged for his capture and imprisonment *again* — this time by Prince Vincenzo Caligari. The Inquisition has promised Caligari access to the Crescent Empire if he will break Allende and make him pliable to their demands. If Good King Sandoval grows to unruly, they can then reintroduce the "true" king of Castille, launching a succession crisis and allowing them to formally seize control of the country. Allende is currently enduring some of the worst tortures Caligari's men can conceive. But he doesn't break easily. And his friends don't abandon him without a fight.



**Alesio: Hero**  
 Brawn: 2  
 Finesse: 2  
 Wits: 4  
 Resolve: 2  
 Panache: 3  
 Reputation: 21  
 Background: Wanted  
 Arcana: Loyal

**Advantages:** Vodacce (R/W), Castille (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne, Noble

**Courtier:** Dancing 1, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, Fashion 2, Lip Reading 2, Oratory 3, Politics 4, Scheming 4, Sincerity 2

**Scholar:** Astronomy 3, History 3, Mathematics 2, Occult 4, Philosophy 2, Research 2, Theology 3

**Sailor:** Balance 3, Cartography 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 1, Navigation 3, Rigging 1

**Sorte (Adept):** Arcana 5, Coins 4, Cups 4, Staves 4, Swords 4

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

**Knife:** Attack (Knife) 2, Parry (Knife) 4

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Throat Strike 3

Alesio was born Alesia Caligari, the great-grandniece of Prince Vincenzo Caligari and a notable Fate Witch. When she came of age, her

uncle assigned her to follow one of Vodacce's archbishops, living in Vaticine City. She did a fine job for several years, but then something happened which changed her perspective for good: she met Crown Prince Javier. The man had an almost blinding Hanged Man Arcana, which made it hard for her to concentrate on anything else. The more she watched him, the more fascinated she became. One day, while trying desperately to focus on the archbishop, she noticed the Prince's Strands fray and split transforming into a Rods Strand of authority between Javier and herself.

For a time, she tried to ignore it, but when Prince Javier was betrayed, she could no longer deny the bonds of fate they shared. She abandoned her post — cutting her hair and changing her name to "Alesio" — and tracked the missing regent to the island prison of *la Bucca*. She integrated herself into the prison populace, and for the next two years used her abilities to keep Javier out of harm's way. Eventually, she revealed her identity and her intentions. She had no romantic interest in the young prince, but wanted to support him however she could. While she wasn't sure what he was destined for, she wanted to be there when it happened.

Alesio helped put the coup in motion, and provided pivotal aid during its final stages. Without her Sorte magic, the all-important merchant vessels might have turned back, stranding the prisoners on the island (*see pages 24–25 for details*). In recognition of her aid, Allende made her his chief advisor and second-in-command. Using her powers, she kept the *Hanged Man* free of common seafaring misfortunes, and the men slowly grew to respect her.

Unfortunately, uncle Vincenzo had not forgotten about Alesio or the way she abandoned her assigned duties. He sent a trio of powerful Fate Witches to punish her for her disobedience. Her connection to Allende was made clear when the witches forced her to betray him to them — then cut her to pieces with their shears. She prepared for the deed (and set the threads for its undoing) by rescuing Jeremiah Berek, but her foresight did her little good as her life bled out on the cold, hard floor. By defying her duty, she had helped launch a nation — but the cost was more than she had ever dreamt possible.





**Sean McCorley: Hero**

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 3

Wits: 2

Resolve: 4

Panache: 2

Reputation: 13

Background: Wanted

Arcana: Victorious

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Castille, Crescent, Able Drinker, Membership (Swordsman's Guild), Toughness

*Sailor:* Balance 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 3, Rigging 3, Swimming 2

*Captain:* Incitation 3, Leadership 3, Strategy 2, Tactics 3

*Donovan (Journeyman):* Bind (Buckler) 4, Disarm (Fencing) 4, Riposte (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Donovan) 4

*Fencing:* Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 2

*Buckler:* Parry (Buckler), 4

*Crossbow:* Attack (Crossbow) 4, Fletcher 2, Reload (Crossbow) 2

*Polearm:* Attack (Polearm) 2, Parry (Polearm) 1

Sean McCorley was born into a fisherman's family in northern Inismore. Living half his life on the water and half on the land, it seemed natural to sign up as a marine on one of Elaine's mercenary ships. He served as a Sea Dog for seven years until his ship was captured by Castillian galleons; he was sent to *la Bucca* for espionage against the Castillian crown.

McCorley met Allende on the prison ship and the two became fast allies, though more out of necessity than compatible personality. Allende's keen mind and McCorley's fierce fighting style complemented each other perfectly, and helped keep each other alive on the island prison.

After the coup, McCorley served as Allende's bosun and sergeant at arms. He kept fighting among the crew to a minimum and helped the pirates put aside their national and religious differences in the face of the common good. When Allende was betrayed, McCorley helped Jeremiah Berek rally the Brotherhood behind him. His status allowed him to argue on Berek's behalf, which smoothed over any friction between the wayward Sea Dog and Allende's crew. He currently serves as Berek's first mate, and has devoted himself wholeheartedly to finding Captain Allende.

## Brotherhood Crewmen

### Bjorn Brind: Hero

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3

*Reputation*: -11

*Arcana*: Friendly

*Background*: Wanted

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Castillian (R/W), Crescent (R/W), Eisen (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Théan (R/W), Ussuran (R/W), Vendel (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Appearance (Above Average), Linguist, Membership (Swordsman's Guild)

*Courtier*: Dancing 1, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette 2, Fashion 3, Mooch 4, Oratory 2, Scheming 4, Sincerity 3

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Cartography 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 3, Navigation 2, Pilot 2, Rigging 2

*Streetwise*: Scrounging 5, Shopping 4, Socializing 4, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 5

*Rogers (Apprentice)*: Bind (Fencing) 3, Corps-a-corps 2, Disarm (Fencing) 2, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 1

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

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Eye-gouge 2, Kick 3

*Pirate Tricks*: Kick up

Bjorn is a tall, well-dressed, handsome fellow. He speaks and reads almost every Théan language (although his Vodacce is a little rusty) and loves good wine. It was that last part that got him sent to *la Bucca*: he was smuggling Castillian wine to Vendel. When the authorities caught him, he demanded to speak with the Vendel ambassador. They shook their heads and sent him away, telling the Vendel ambassador he had disappeared.

For ten years, Bjorn slaved on the island; the "care packages" his contacts smuggled in kept him alive far longer than he deserved. Those same contacts provided him with certain rare chemicals and other equipment, which allowed Allende to put his revolt into motion.

Now, Bjorn uses his extensive contacts to maintain the Brotherhood's supplies and provide her ships with safe harbors. He is also the Brotherhood's direct line into the underworld, providing them with buyers for their ill-gotten gains. He arranges for meetings in friendly ports and ensures that everyone deals in a fair and open manner. He usually spends his percentage on wine.

### Delaina Darling: Henchman

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

*Reputation*: 0

*Background*: Wanted

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W) Castille, Crescent, Montaigne

*Artist*: Drawing 2, Musician (Flute) 2, Musician (Stringed Instrument) 2, Singing 4

*Performer*: Acting 2, Dancing 3, Oratory 2, Singing 4, Storytelling 3

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 3, Leaping 2, Rigging 4

*Athlete*: Break Fall 2, Climbing 4, Footwork 3, Sprinting 4, Swinging 3, Throwing 2

*Firearms*: Attack (Firearms) 2

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2

The only child of a poor Avalon family, young Delaina was orphaned at the age of 11 when her parents died of the White Plague. She had to survive as best she could on her own; the charity of strangers only went so far, especially as she grew older. Some suggested joining the Jennys' Guild, but instead, she turned to the furtive life of a pickpocket. She wasn't very good at it.

She was caught in a Castillian port town and taken to *la Bucca* at the age of thirteen. Prison life was unbearably harsh, and she probably would have died had Prince Javier not arrived and befriended the young woman. He called her "D.D." and, sensing her keen intelligence, taught her to read. D.D. learned quickly and devoured every book on the island. She could quote entire passages after a single reading and remembered every detail. Her incredible memory applied to other observations as well. D.D. could flawlessly repeat overheard conversations, instantly learn the lyrics to songs and faithfully describe anyone she saw. She also proved to be a skilled mimic, fooling even Allende on a few occasions.

When Allende assembled the *Hanged Man's* crew, he made D.D. a topman with an additional position as his personal spy; her innocent appearance and small size were excellent assets. She is completely devoted to Allende, who has shown her more kindness and respect than anyone she's ever met. She now seeks to move heaven and earth in an effort to rescue him from Vodacce.

### Velik Galecatcher: Hero

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 15

*Background*: Wanted

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne (R/W), Vendel (R/W), Keen Senses, Membership (Rilasciare) (Swordsman's Guild)

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Cartography 3, Climbing 5, Knotwork 5, Leaping 2, Navigation 4, Pilot 5, Rigging 4, Sea Lore 2, Swimming 3, Weather 3

*Streetwise*: Shopping 4, Socializing 3, Street Navigation 2

*Athlete*: Break Fall 4, Climbing 5, Footwork 4, Rolling 4, Sprinting 2, Swinging 4, Throwing 2

*Captain*: Bribery 4, Diplomacy 4, Gunnery 2, Incitation 3, Leadership 3, Logistics 2, Strategy 3, Tactics 3

*Rogers (Apprentice)*: Bind (Fencing) 3, Corps-à-Corps 4, Disarm (Fencing) 2, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 2

*Fencing*: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 2

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Eye-gouge 3, Throat Strike 2

*Pirate Tricks*: Death From Above

Barnard du Ganador was standing in the middle of a field in Vestenmannavnjar when his life changed forever. He was a merchant visiting the north country, hoping to trade for some Crescent chocolates, when he stopped his caravan and leapt from the carriage to pick up a small silver object that had caught his eye. He pocketed his treasure and forgot about it. Later that night, a storm fell on the town where he was staying. While he ran through the rain, he was struck by lightning and knocked unconscious. When he awoke, he discovered that he could smell storms. He could sense bad weather brewing from dozens of miles away, and even guess at its intensity.

Intrigued by his discovery, Barnard sent his chocolate home to his father and stayed behind in the northlands. His inquiries led him to an old Vestenmannavnjar woman who called him "Velik." Barnard noticed that all the Vestenmannavnjar called him Velik, and decided to keep the name. Over the years, his sympathy for the Vestenmannavnjar grew. Eventually, he began helping raiders smuggle weapons and supplies in from Montaigne and Castille. It was during these raids that he fell in with — and eventually joined — the secret society known as the Rilasciare.

Velik himself discovered Prince Javier's location on *la Bucca*, and offered to contact him for the sect. He allowed himself to be captured by the Castillians, who sentenced him to the



### The Brotherhood's Ships

#### The Hanged Man (40 point ship)

*Brawn*: 4

*Finesse*: 5

*Resolve*: 5

*Wits*: 6

*Panache*: 5

*Modifications*: Mascot (1),

Oars (1), Prow Ram (1),

Reinforced Masts (1),

Smuggling

Compartments (3),

Lucky (3), Figurehead (5)

*Flaws*: None

*Draft*: 5

*Cargo*: 5

*Crew*: 5

*Reputation*: 32



#### The Falcon's Roost (30 point ship)

*Brawn*: 4

*Finesse*: 5

*Wits*: 6

*Resolve*: 5

*Panache*: 6

*Modification*: Mascot (1),

Narrow Hull (4)

*Flaws*: None

*Draft*: 4

*Cargo*: 4

*Crew*: 5

*Reputation*: 0



infamous island prison. Once there, he contacted the Prince anonymously through written notes and offered the society's aid. Velik struck up a friendship with fellow smuggler Bjorn Brind, who could bring the right supplies in. He then directed the Rilasciare toward Brind's connections; they made sure the prisoners got what they needed.

Since the revolt, Velik has served as quartermaster aboard the *Hanged Man*. His silver tongue and quick thinking have made him a valued advisor, and his storm nose keeps the ship clear of any aberrant weather. He uses carrier pigeons to keep in touch with the Rilasciare, sending messages back and forth to keep them apprised of the Brotherhood's development. The other crewmen believe that the birds are merely part of his supply network and don't ask questions.

**Reggie Wilcox: Henchman**

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3

*Reputation*: -12

*Background*: Hunted, Wanted

*Advantages*: Avalon, Castille, Crescent, Montaigne, Eagle Eyes, Scoundrel

*Criminal*: Ambush 3, Cheating 4, Gambling 3, Quack 3, Lockpicking 4, Pickpocket 3, Prestidigitation 2, Scrounging 4, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5

*Sailor*: Balance 2, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Leaping 2, Rigging 3, Swimming 3

*Streetwise*: Socializing 4, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 4

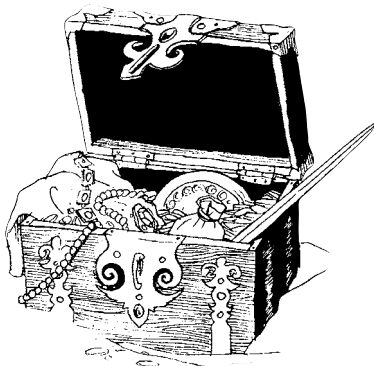
*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Leaping 3, Sprinting 3, Throwing 4

*Spy*: Disguise 3, Hand Signs 2, Lip Reading 3, Poison 2, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5

*Knife*: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 2, Throw (Knife) 4

All his life, Reggie Wilcox had been a thief. His mother died at birth, leaving him and his brother with their less-than-responsible father. Reggie and Willie turned to a life of crime. When they wore out their welcome in Avalon, they crossed to the continent and made themselves famous with Montaigne law enforcers: Reggie became known as “the cat who could climb glass.” Finally, they moved to Castille where they were captured and sent to *la Bucca*.

When the prisoners overthrew the guards, Reggie was the one who climbed the north wall, slipped down to the front door and let Allende and his fellow conspirators in. These days, he usually acts as an advance scout, sabotaging enemy ships the night before the Brotherhood’s planned attack. His uncanny climbing skills allowed the Brotherhood to kidnap San Felipe’s harbor master, a pivotal part of their theft of the *Falcon’s Roost*. His brother’s current condition deeply worries him, and he intends to help Willie destroy the cursed artifact just as soon as Allende is safe again.



**Willie Wilcox: Henchman**

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 2

*Reputation*: -10

*Background*: Hunted, Wanted 3

*Advantages*: Avalon, Castille, Crescent, Montaigne, Scoundrel, Large

*Sailor*: Balance 2, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Rigging 3, Swimming 2

*Athlete*: Break Fall 2, Climbing 3, Footwork 2, Lifting 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 3, Throat Strike 4

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

*Wrestling*: Bear Hug 3, Break 4, Grapple 5, Head Butt 4

Willie is bigger than his brother Reggie. When they were boys, Willie smashed anyone who threatened his tiny brother, while Reggie provided anything they needed. While Willie is very good at hurting people, he doesn’t like doing it. He has no reservations, however, about pounding those who threaten his brother. Luckily, Willie’s temper is not easily roused. He’s got a great deal of willpower and gives people fair warning before he smashes them.

His calm nature may be the key to surviving his latest dilemma. During the search for Captain Allende, Willie and Jeremiah Berek ran across the three Fate Witches who had captured him (along with a contingent of Inquisitors with whom they were negotiating). In the ensuing combat, Willie lost his hand, and would have suffered much more were it not for the timely arrival of Lucrezia. The mad Vodacce used her powerful *Sorte* to destroy the witches and brought a “replacement” for Willie’s hand: the Scarlet Hook of Madness (see pages 76–77). She claimed that the cursed artifact would hide their presence from any other *Sorte* practitioners, but Willie’s soul is bearing the cost. He wrestles with the Hook’s unquiet ghosts, using every last bit of willpower to keep their murderous urges in check. He hasn’t killed anyone since gaining the hook, but wonders how much longer he can keep his hands clean. He tells himself he’ll endure it for Allende’s sake. The Brotherhood has enough problems without having to put down one of their own.



## The Castillian Armada



**Admiral Enrique Orduño: Hero**

*Brawn:* 3  
*Finesse:* 4  
*Wits:* 4  
*Resolve:* 3  
*Panache:* 4  
*Reputation:* 45  
*Background:* Vow  
*Arcana:* Loyal

*Advantages:* Castillian (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Théan (R/W), Castillian Accent (Aldana), Castillian Education, Commission (Castillian Navy), Eagle Eyes, Membership (Swordsman's Guild), Noble, Small

*Courtier:* Dancing 2, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 2, Fashion 2, Oratory 3, Scheming 2, Sincerity 3

*Sailor:* Balance 5, Climbing 4, Knotwork 4, Navigation 5, Pilot 5, Rigging 3, Sea Lore 5, Swimming 3, Weather 4

*Scholar:* Astronomy 4, History 3, Law 3, Mathematics 4, Philosophy 2, Research 2, Theology 2

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

*Captain:* Ambush 3, Cartography 4, Gunnery 3, Incitation 4, Leadership 5, Logistics 4, Strategy 4, Tactics 5

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

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

Enrique could sail a ship almost before he could walk and has spent more of his life on the open sea than dry land. A consummate military man, he obeyed his superiors to the letter and expected nothing less from those beneath him. He rarely displayed emotion, but a quiet fervor burned in his eyes. He was a devout Vaticine, and his dry wit often hinted at the deep feelings below the surface.

The Orduños had long been associated with the Castillian Navy, but they suffered an immense loss of prestige during the disastrous assault on Avalon in 1659. Enrique Orduño spent the last nine years trying to erase that blot. When Prince Javier disappeared, Castille needed a new

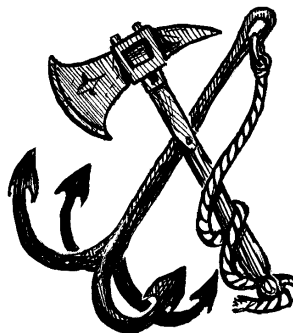
Admiral, and Enrique was the best man for the job. He swore to restore the Castillian navy to its former place of glory, and bent his entire being towards that goal.

The war with Montaigne made things easier. With the country on a military footing, he quickly procured the funds he needed, and set about building new ships in every port that could support them. For two years, he watched the Armada grow, stuck behind a planner's desk and impatient to get back to sea. Even meeting his wife Margareta could not dim his passion for proving himself.

At last, his plans came to fruition. A new Castillian navy was refurbished and set sail under his command. With the Montaigne blockading the occupied half of his country, he had a perfect target to demonstrate his nation's newly restored might. With methodical precision, he launched a massive attack that shattered the blockade and re-established Castille as the preeminent naval power in Théah.

It would not last, however. Orduño always hated the Inquisition, though he kept his feelings to himself, and their meddling in his affairs cost him dearly. Still flush with victory, he was coerced into a ridiculous rendezvous with the General, who was supposed to betray his crew to Castille. At the last minute, the General changed his mind, and fired a cannonshot full of the guilders he had been paid. Impressed with the man's honor, Orduño refused to board his ship. In response, the Inquisition arrested him, tried him for heresy, and sent him to El Morro to be executed.

Orduño would have perished at the Inquisition's hands were it not for the General, his former adversary who launched a daring rescue at the very moment Enrique was due to burn. The two escaped in the General's ship and vanished into a massive Porté hole. He has not been seen since, although many loyal Castillians have begun looking. Only time will tell if his disappearance is permanent, or whether he will return to lead the armada he spent so long rebuilding.





**Advantages:** Castillian (R/W), Théan (R/W), Castillian Accent (Soldano), Castillian Education, Combat Reflexes, Commission (Castillian Navy), Membership (Swordsman's Guild), Noble

**Artist:** Musician (Guitar) 5

**Courtier:** Dancing 5, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, Fashion 3, Lip Reading 3, Oratory 2, Politics 3, Seduction 4

**Scholar:** Astronomy 2, History 2, Law 3, Mathematics 3, Philosophy 2, Research 2

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

**Athlete:** Climbing 1, Footwork 5, Leaping 3, Side-step 4, Sprinting 2, Swimming 2, Throwing 2

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

Enrique's wife, the feisty Margareta, was the perfect match to his clinical distance. She matched a mercurial passion with a burning intelligence and moved from subject to subject with dizzying speed. By the time she met her future husband, she was already an accomplished dancer and musician, and had begun to learn the Aldana Swordsman school. She also helped her father on his diplomatic missions and acted as a *de facto* bodyguard. It was on one of these visits that she first met Enrique. Fascinated by the grim, methodical sailor who kept his passions so tightly bottled, she began courting him almost immediately. The pair were wed on the day the Admiral's ship, the *Corazón del Castille*, launched to sea.

She served on board the *Corazón* as her husband's first mate and bodyguard, using her natural swordsman's skills to make up for her lack of seamanship. The crew respected her, and she never chided them as long as they did their duty. When her husband was arrested and tried by the Inquisition, she was outraged. At first, she wanted to fight it, but Enrique begged her not to sacrifice

herself. At his behest, she tearfully signed a condemnation of him, which freed her from suspicion though it broke her heart to do so.

But she was not beaten. Through her fencing instructor, she contacted the General and asked him to help. The Eisen mercenary undertook a hazardous rescue and managed to free Orduño from his captivity. The pair disappeared, along with the rest of the General's crew, and have not been seen since. Where they went, she cannot fathom, but at least the Inquisition did not claim them.

Margareta burns to seek her missing husband, but is currently bound by other duties. She has been left in command of a single ship, *El Fuego Negro*, under the watchful eye of an Inquisition "advisor." With Admiral Valoix pressing the attack and a mistrustful Inquisition breathing down her neck, her lost lover will have to wait. For now.

Margareta is a tall, beautiful woman with long black hair. She smiles easily and her rich throaty laugh rises at the slightest amusement. Her smile turns sharper when she's threatened or bullied. Margareta is deathly afraid of heights, a condition resulting from a bad fall as a child. She refuses to climb the ship's rigging and couldn't scale a wall if her life depended on it.



**Advantages:** Castillian (R/W), Castillian Accent (Soldano), Castillian Blade (Aldana), Combat Reflexes, Membership (Swordsman's Guild)

**Streetwise:** Socializing 1, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 2

**Athlete:** Footwork 4, Leaping 2, Side-step 3, Sprinting 2, Swimming 2, Throwing 2

**Aldana (Master):** Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 5, Feint (Fencing) 5, Riposte (Fencing) 5, Tagging (Fencing) 5

**Gallegos (Master):** Exploit Weakness (Gallegos) 5

*Soldano (Journeyman)*: Double-Parry (Fencing/Fencing) 4, Whirl (Fencing/Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Soldano) 4

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

Felipe's Gallegos skill allows him to receive 1 Free Raise when Parrying with a Fencing Weapon; increases the Phase on the Action die by 1 when Holding an Action; and adds +10 to his Tn to be hit. His Soldano skill grants 2 additional Drama Dice at the start of each battle and allows him to spend a Drama die to lower by 5 the number required for his opponents to take an extra Dramatic Wound. For more details, see pages 95–96 of the *Castille* sourcebook.

Felipe de Granjero is not a sailor. In fact, he hates the water, and his service aboard first the *Corazón de Castille*, and then *El Fuego Negro* is a great feat of will. He doesn't mind, however; he has a personal stake in Margareta's well being.

Felipe is a fencing instructor of no small renown, with a school in San Cristobal an offers to teach all over Castille. At a party a few years ago, Felipe met a young woman named Alicia, sister to his prize student Margareta Vasquez de Soldano. Shortly thereafter, they fell in love, and Felipe asked permission for marriage from Alicia's father. Don Roberto, who had always been protective of his daughters, was skeptical about the match. When Margareta became engaged to Admiral Orduño, he saw a way to kill two birds with one stone. Felipe received permission to marry Alicia on the condition that he serve aboard the *Corazón de Castille*, where he would continue teaching Margareta.

Felipe is a very intense man. Years of study with the sword have taught him to focus on one task, to the exclusion of nearly anything else. With his fiance waiting for him, his attention is now focused entirely upon Margareta. At her behest, he sought out the General and delivered her message to him. His fencing skills played a key role in Orduño's rescue, and he was onboard the *Grenouille du Grâce* when it disappeared. He dedication never permitted him to consider another option.

## Castille Crewmen

### Padre Alphonso: Villain

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 2

*Reputation*: –10

*Background*: Vow

*Arcana*: Misled

*Advantages*: Castille R/W, Vodacce R/W, Théah R/W, Faith, Membership (Inquisition), Ordained

*Priest*: Oratory 3, Writing 3, Diplomacy 3

*Scholar*: History 4, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 3, Research 3, Law 4, Theology 5

*Spy*: Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Bribery 3, Interrogation 3, Lip Reading 3, Sincerity 3

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

Padre Alphonso was born the son of a simple farmer but the excellent education system of Castille identified him as a genius. The Church took him in, educated him, and raised him in a style far greater than any peasant could hope for. In return, Alphonso pledged his faith, his devotion, and a lifetime of service to the Church. He had always been most interested in the interaction of people and the conversion of the unfaithful. So when the Inquisition approached him and offered him a position of authority from which to observe and judge others, he was delighted. Cardinal Verdugo himself assigned Alphonso to the flagship of the Castillian Armada.

From there, Alphonso has bent himself on creating a strong, loyal navy to fight all foes. While he has no skills with a sword, Alphonso's church connections and position have made him a powerful force for recruiting a navy that is unquestioningly loyal to the Church and the King. In combat, Alphonso generally stays in the background. He has been useful a number of times by flanking or distracting foes so they cannot properly defend themselves. He has also been practicing with a pair of pistols, though he is no marksman.

After combat, Alphonso stays very busy working with the wounded and dying. He administers last rites, bandages the wounded, and quietly disposes of anyone whose faith showed signs of fragility in the preceding mayhem. He does this without rancor or ambition, rather like a farmer picking a weed to strengthen the rest of the garden. He has argued with Luis de Rioja constantly over this matter. The doctor has threatened Alphonso if he continues killing patients; unfortunately, Luis is too useful to dispose of, so Alphonso quietly waits and encourages the true Vaticine faith amongst the Castillian Armada in his own way.

### Inquisitor Bascalle: Henchman

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 2

*Reputation*: –15

*Arcana*: Paranoid

**Advantages:** Castillian Education, Castillian (R/W), Théan (R/W), Connections (Confidant – Cardinal Verdugo), Faith, Membership (Inquisition), Ordained, University

**Courtier:** Dancing 1, Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Oratory 3, Diplomacy 2, Scheming 4, Sincerity 3

**Merchant:** Scribe 2

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

**Spy:** Shadowing 1, Stealth 1, Bribery 2, Interrogation 2

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Eye-gouge 1, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2

If Cardinal Verdugo is the Right Hand of Theus, then Inquisitor Bascalle is its thumb, resting on the pulse of Castille's military. As chaplain aboard *El Fuego Negro*, Bascalle should be in the position to know all of the inner thoughts and feelings of Castille's sailors. However, he is hampered by one minor detail: the entire crew hates him. Bascalle makes very little secret of the power he wields over the captain, and while his position makes him immune to retaliation from the crewmen, it also does little to endear him to them.

Bascalle, like most fanatics, believes that he is truly doing the work of Theus, and that the rest of the world exists to test his resolve. Because of this, he tends to look jealously on his few superiors, and contemptuously towards those "below" him. His purpose aboard *El Fuego* is to ensure absolute loyalty from Margareta and her crew, to avoid a repeat of the "incident" with Enrique and the General. To this end, Cardinal Verdugo has granted him wide latitude, and his name and position give him considerable influence in Castille's ports.

Because of his lack of sailing experience and the crew's dislike for him, Bascalle hates shipboard life. He doesn't know a tiller from a yardarm, and most of the crew are waiting for the perfect opportunity for an "accident." It would be too bad if such a devoted servant of Theus fell overboard.

### **Luis De Rioja: Hero**

**Brawn** 2, **Finesse** 2, **Wits** 5, **Resolve** 3, **Panache** 2

**Reputation:** 10

**Background:** Rivalry (Padre Alphonso)

**Arcana:** Stubborn

**Advantages:** Castille R/W, Vodacce R/W, Commission (Castillian Navy), University, Noble, Member (Invisible College)

**Doctor:** Diagnosis 5, First Aid 5, Quack 4, Dentist 4, Examiner 4, Surgery 5

**Scholar:** History 2, Mathematics 2, Philosophy 2, Research 2, Law 3, Natural Philosophy 2

**Knife:** Attack 4, Parry 4, Throw 2

Doctor Luis de Rioja was sailing to serve the Vodacce prince Bernoulli when his ship was attacked by pirates. During the battle, Luis heard the cries of the wounded and rushed to their aid. He bandaged and cared for the injured sailors while the fighting raged around him. The pirates were finally repulsed and Luis found one of the



### **The Castillian Armada's Ships**

#### **El Corazón del Castille:** (45 point ship)

**Brawn:** 10

**Finesse:** 11

**Resolve:** 11

**Wits:** 5

**Panache:** 5

**Modifications:** Sturdy

**Hull** (2), **Well Trained**

**Crew** (2), **Slight Draft** (5)

**Flaws:** Awkward Cargo

**Space** (4)

**Note:** When Enrique Orduño was in command, the ship was a 50 point vessel, with a Wits of 6 and the extra modification Good Captain (4).

**Draft:** 9

**Cargo:** 9

**Crew:** 10

**Reputation:** 81



#### **El Fuego Negro:** (35 point ship)

**Brawn:** 6

**Finesse:** 7

**Resolve:** 7

**Wits:** 8

**Panache:** 6

**Modifications:** Prow

**Ram** (1)

**Flaws:** None

**Draft:** 7

**Cargo:** 7

**Crew:** 7

**Reputation:** 24



gunners who had been shot in the chest. He began operating, despite the pleas of the captain, who knew the man was as good as dead. The gunner lived and even recovered enough to retain his post.

The ship's captain was Enrique Orduño and he asked Luis to remain on board and teach his medical expertise to others in the Castille navy. In the emotional rush of saving the gunner's life, Luis considered his future. As a private physician, he would treat only one man and likely see little in the way of real medical emergencies. Here on board he'd treated a dozen men in just an hour, all of whom would have died without him. He agreed to take the position and remained with the navy ever since.

He is a quiet man with a deep respect for authority — until it impinges upon his patients. Then he mounts a fierce defense and refuses to budge or compromise. He is always happiest when working hard on a dozen patients with barely time to be civil to any of them. Despite his brusque bedside manner, he truly cares for his patients. He just loves his work more. He has had a number of run-ins with Padre Alphonso, who condemns some of his radical treatments. The Inquisition believes that he may have learned some of his skills as a member of the Invisible College, but they have no proof. So far his skill, and invaluable service have protected him from their wrath.

### **Fyddych O'Bannon: Hero**

*Brawn 2, Finesse 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Panache 3*  
*Reputation: 12*

*Background: True Identity, Hunting*

*Arcana: Reckless*

*Advantages: Avalon, Castillian (R/W), Able Drinker, Castillian Education, Noble, Small*

*Criminal: Gambling 2, Quack 1, Shadowing 2, Stealth 3, Scrounging 2*

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

*Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 1*

*Glamour (Apprentice): Horned Hunter 1, Jack 2, Thomas 1*

*Pugilism: Attack 2, Footwork 2, Jab 1*

Sixteen years ago, Rosa Aleja de Soldano, a Castillian noblewoman of little influence and less intelligence, went to Inismore with her father on business. While there, she met a charming man by the name of "Jack." Just "Jack." He frightened her, but he had an aura of excitement and adventure about him that intrigued her. They spent the night together, and when she woke up, Rosa found a note scrawled at her bedside, "They tell me his

name is Fyddych, and that I'll need him back someday." At the time, she did not understand the message, but a few months later, it became clear.

Rosa acceded to her mysterious lover's wishes, and named her newborn son Fyddych. The boy inherited his father's charm and mystery, and soon his mother became very protective of him. She began learning all she could about the mysterious Jack O'Bannon, in hopes of preventing her son from leaving.

For as long as he could remember, Fyddych felt a tug towards Avalon, but his mother absolutely forbade him from stepping aboard a ship. If he never crossed the water, he could never return to Mad Jack. At fifteen, he finally ran away from home, pulled by an obsession he couldn't understand. He signed on to the first ship going to Avalon, *El Matador*, and soon discovered he had a natural gift for sailing. It wasn't until after they had raised anchor and set off that Fyddych learned of his captain's goal: to sink the Sea Dog Bonnie McGee.

Fyddych was manning the tops when he heard the call from the crow's nest — the *Hurricane* was in sight, heading towards a mist-shrouded island off the coast. As soon as he saw the island, Fyddych felt the Grey Queen's call. However, by then it was too late, and the Queen had decided to punish the *Matador's* captain for his approach.

Fyddych nearly died in the wreckage; he was found on the shore of Avalon by members of Orduño's crew, and only Luis de Rioja's surgical ability saved him. In gratitude, he has signed on with Margaretta Orduño and currently serves among her crew, though he still wishes to get to Inismore. The Inquisitors don't like him, but he keeps his heritage hidden and never gives them a reason to persecute him. It hasn't been easy, however. Ever since that day off the coast of Avalon, he's been hearing and seeing things nobody else around him does.

### **Rita de Zepeda: Hero**

*Brawn 3, Finesse 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Panache 3*  
*Reputation: 0*

*Advantages: Castille R/W, Montaigne R/W, Allies (numerous), Noble, Commission*

*Background: Hunted*

*Arcana: Judgmental*

*Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 2, Natural Philosophy 2, Philosophy 2, Research 2*

*Spy: Bribery 3, Conceal 3, Cryptography 2, Disguise 2, Forgery 3, Hand Signs 3, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3*

**Athlete:** Climbing 3, Footwork 2, Leaping 2, Long-distance Running 3, Side Step 2, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2

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

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

**Riding:** Animal Training 3, Mounting 4, Ride 5, Trick Riding 5

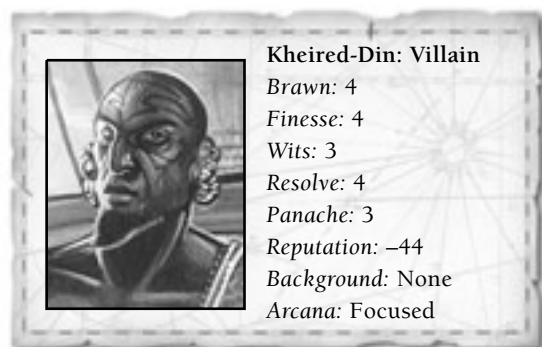
Though not a part of Orduño's crew, Rita de Zepeda has played a vital part in the Castillian war. Before the war, she was a minor noble who had no cares in the world other than riding. Horsemanship was her passion and led her to travel across all of Castille to race and search for better steeds. She took part in some of the toughest races and seemed poised to vault into the limelight of Castillian riding.

Then the war swept across Western Castille and right over her. She had been staying at an inn while dealing with a horse breeder. Waking the next morning, she looked out her window to discover Montaigne troops filling the streets. She observed the arrogant officers of the Montaigne army ordering the villagers around. They threatened and beat the frightened people, and torched the homes of anyone who resisted. Finally she watched as a Montaigne officer killed a young woman who spit on him when he tried to rape her. That was too much for Rita. She drew her pistol and rushed down to the street. With a leer, the officer ordered his men to capture her. Rita shot him between the eyes before his men seized her. The village rallied around her and attacked the squad of troops. Not one Montaigne troop escaped that day.

Since then, Rita has devoted herself to defeating the Montaigne. She has organized the people of occupied Castille into a formidable force. They raid supply lines, ambush reinforcements and attack the private homes that the Montaigne officers sleep in. These actions have forced the Montaigne to withdraw troops from the front lines to deal harshly with these "rebels." They have threatened to kill any Castillian caught with a weapon, so Rita created a series of caches — holding muskets and other weapons — throughout Zepeda. The rebels arm themselves before action and return the weapons to avoid being caught with them. Although the Montaigne do not know who Rita is, they have posted a reward of a five hundred *sols* to anyone who captures the rebel leader.



## The Corsairs



**Advantages:** Castille, Crescent (R/W), Montaigne, Vodacce, Commission (Corsairs), Faith

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Cartography 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Navigation 4, Pilot 4, Rigging 2

**Scholar:** History 2, Mathematics 2, Occult 5, Philosophy 4, Research 3, Theology 3

**Athlete:** Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Leaping 3, Lifting 4, Sprinting 3, Swinging 3, Swimming 3, Throwing 3

**Captain:** Ambush 4, Gunnery 4, Incitation 4, Leadership 4, Logistics 3, Strategy 5, Tactics 4

**Daphan (Master):** Beat (Fencing) 5, Lunge (Fencing) 5, Pommel Strike (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Daphan) 5

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 5, Kick 4, Throat Strike 4

**Wrestling:** Break 5, Grapple 4, Head Butt 4

Kheired-Din's swordsman school allows him to attack one phase earlier than the Action Phase shown on the die. In addition, when an opponent makes a successful Active Defense using Parry, he may choose to spend a Drama Die to attempt to break the opponent's weapon. He must make a successful Brawn test against the TN of the weapon he is trying to break (see *Eisenfaust in the Player's Guide*, pages 126-127). Finally, he may raise and spend a Drama Die to keep an extra die of damage.

Kheired-Din was always a devout follower of the Second Prophet, but it took a journey to a Syrneath ruin in the Crescent Empire to make him a fanatic. He and his party stumbled into some sort of trap, which reduced the others to smoking heaps of ash and seared a unique tattoo on his forehead. Why the trap spared him, no man can say, but he emerged from the ruin claiming that the Prophet had spoken to him. He abandoned his

previous ties and set forth to “bring about the next age of the world.”

That was twenty years ago. Since then, he has built the Corsairs into a mighty naval power, enslaving hundreds of innocent Théans and gathering numerous powerful Syrneth artifacts at his command. Kheired-Din hates sorcery as practiced by men, but sees the Syrneth artifacts as blessings left by the Prophet. He has spent the last two decades seeking to understand their mystery, and now believes that he has finally found the key. He intends to raise Cabora from the depths, then use its powers to flood the 7th Sea into Théah. His quest drives him past the limits of al reason, and most of his crew are as fanatical as he.

Espera's revolt dealt his plan a serious setback. He lost a significant portion of his men in the attack, and for a time lacked the resources to continue his quest. Even so, his fervor would not be denied, and the alliance with McCormick ultimately allowed his holy crusade to proceed. More details can be found in Chapter One.

Several Théans claimed to have slain Kheired-Din in the past, but he keeps turning up again. One of them watched him fall into a pool of lava, but he still showed up three months later, raiding cities once again. This is due to his tattoo, which heals him of one Dramatic Wound every hour, even if he has been killed and his body destroyed (in which case he reappears in his quarters aboard the *Strange Skies*). A magical Cross of the Prophets linked to the tattoo is hidden somewhere in the Empire of the Crescent Moon. Din was wearing it in the Syrneth ruin, and it has somehow become infused with his lifeforce. Only by finding and destroying it can Kheired-Din finally be killed.



**Ernesto Castillius: Hero**

*Brawn:* 2

*Finesse:* 4

*Wits:* 4

*Resolve:* 3

*Panache:* 2

*Reputation:* 0

*Backgrounds:* Pressed Into Service, True Identity

*Arcana:* None

*Advantages:* Avalon, Castille (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne (R/W), Théan (R/W), Castillian Education

*Courtier:* Dancing 3, Etiquette 4, Fashion 3, Oratory 3, Diplomacy 4, Politics 3, Sincerity 4

*El Fuego Adentro (Master):* Concentrate 5, Extinguish 5, Feed 5, Firestarting 5, Flaming Blade 5, Flame Serpent 5, Firebird 5, Fireflies 3, Hurl Fire 5, Range 5

*Sailor:* Balance 4, Cartography 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Navigation 5, Pilot 5, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

*Scholar:* Astronomy 5, History 4, Law 2, Mathematics 3, Occult 2, Philosophy 2, Research 2, Theology 4

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

*Aldana (Apprentice):* Feint (Fencing) 4, Riposte (Fencing) 4, Tagging (Fencing) 3, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 3

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

Ernesto Castillius grew up knowing that he was different. Though he lived among Gallegos tribesmen and his village had more goats than people, his mother told him that he was the heir to an ancient legacy. Once, his ancestors ruled all of Castille, using the fire in their blood to dispense power and justice. As proof, she showed him the seal of the Castillius family — passed from parent to child for over six hundred years.

Ernesto knew that he could never hope to regain the Castillian throne, but he took special pride in his heritage and maintained a noble bearing, even among his humble surroundings. He learned to master the fire sorcery in his blood, and took a job as a sailor on a Castillian freighter, hoping to see more of the world. In time, he became the ship's pilot, and controlled the wheel with the same cool precision as he controlled his sorcery.

Two years ago, his vessel was captured by the Corsairs. Most of the other officers were killed, but Ernesto surrendered before they could butcher him. A woman among their number named Dalia had entranced him: her writhing curves and flashing blades filled him with passion, and he allowed himself to be captured just to be near her. He gave the Corsairs an obvious pseudonym (Espera, or “Waiting”), and refused to speak of his past at all.

When Kheired-Din found that he was a skilled pilot, he ordered the Castillian chained to the wheel of the ship and given a full crewman's rations. Espera knew better than to complain. He only had one ankle chained up, after all, and he didn't have to row. He also had something to keep his mind off his plight: Dalia. He tried to flirt with

her whenever he could, hoping desperately to impress her with his charm. She gave him a scar on his throat to remind him of his place, but it didn't deter him. He kept at it with a persistence that only the hopelessly lovelorn can manage.

When Dalia vanished, Ernesto was inconsolable. He heard the whispered stories about her fate, and couldn't bear to just abandon her. His desire led him to launch an escape, taking a large number of slaves with him and crippling Kheired-Din's vessel. They captured another Corsair ship, renamed it the *Freedom's Key*, and set off in search of his lost love. With his power, he could have done it any time; his love for Dalia was the only thing holding him in check. He does not doubt that he will find her. He has his magic, and now he has a loyal crew willing to help him.

He also has a secret: another heirloom given to him by his mother shortly before his capture. He kept it hidden on his person for over two years, protecting it from even the most thorough searches. When the time is right, he will unleash its power, and prove his love to Dalia once and for all.

His mother called it the Guiding Gem of Hierro. He calls it the Firebird's Egg.



**Edahgo: Villain**  
 Brawn: 4  
 Finesse: 3  
 Wits: 3  
 Resolve: 4  
 Panache: 3  
 Reputation: -11  
 Background: None  
 Arcana: None

**Advantages:** Castille (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne, Commission (Corsairs)

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Climbing 2, Knotwork 3, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

**Spy:** Bribery 4, Conceal 3, Forgery 2, Interrogation 4, Lip Reading 3, Shadowing 2, Stealth 3

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

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

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 5, Kick 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2, Throat Strike 4

**Rogers (Apprentice):** Bind (Fencing) 2, Corps-a-corps 4, Disarm (Fencing) 2, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 3

**Pirate Trick:** Kick up

Edahgo is the galley master of the *Strange Skies*. He is a large hunchbacked man with powerful muscles and a permanent hatred for all living things. His father was a slave driver who treated his children like savage beasts. Edahgo killed the old man in his sleep one night and took over the family business. Kheired-Din considers him the perfect driver to keep his captives in line. He drives the rowers harder than necessary, and possesses a wicked cat o' nine tails with small metal barbs embedded in the tips of the each lash.

The only time that a rower dared attack him, Edahgo grabbed the man's fist in his enormous hand and squeezed until every bone in it popped. While the rower was screaming, Edahgo unlocked his chains and carried him off to his chambers. No one knows what he did to that man, but his screams didn't stop until he went hoarse; eight days later, Edahgo carried a bloody sack that couldn't possibly have contained an entire person to the deck, and threw it overboard.

Edahgo fears Kheired-Din even more than he feared his father. He has seen the fanatic captain shrug off the most grievous injuries, and rise from the dead time and again. He believes that Din is a demon in human form, and will do anything to stay on his captain's good time. For a time, Din was the only thing on Théah that Edahgo feared. A second name has recently been added to that list, however.

During his escape, Espera unleashed his fire magic on the cruel slave driver. A snake made of white hot flame held Edahgo at bay while Espera set the other prisoners free, then seared him to the bone when the slaver tried to escape. Edahgo keeps the scars hidden beneath his clothes and feigns unending hatred for the Castillian pilot. In truth he is terrified of Espera's power, and silently prays that he will never cross paths with the man again.

## Corsair Crewmen

### Dunti: Villain

**Brawn** 2, **Finesse** 3, **Wits** 3, **Resolve** 3, **Panache** 4  
**Reputation:** 0

**Arcana:** Self-Controlled

**Advantages:** Castille, Crescent (R/W), Montaigne, Commission (Corsairs), Faith, Pirate Trick (Quick Draw)

*Merchant:* Gardener 3, Scribe 2

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 1, Leaping 4, Rigging 1

*Scholar:* Astronomy 3, History 3, Mathematics 1, Occult 4, Philosophy 5, Research 1, Theology 5

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 3, Side-step 3, Sprinting 4, Swinging 4, Throwing 2

*Firearms:* Attack (Firearms) 5, Reload (Firearms) 5

*Heavy Weapon:* Attack (Heavy Weapon) 1, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 1

Dunti joined the crew after spending twenty years of his life in a monastery deep within the Crescent Empire. He had devoted his life to peace and charity until, one morning, he woke up and walked out of the monastery, stealing enough food and water to get him to the sea. There, he joined Kheired-Din's crew, who had stopped to resupply at the exact moment Dunti arrived. He never explained his extraordinary behavior, and served loyally and faithfully for several years. Until Espera's revolt.

Many Corsairs falsely believed that Dunti followed a holy vision of Kheired-Din. Instead, he saw an image of Ernesto Castillius, and the terrible fire magic he wielded. "Help this man," the Prophet whispered in his ear, "and he will show you a land undreamed of." He remained with the Corsairs to keep an eye on Ernesto, and when the Castillian revolted, Dunti turned on his captain and joined the slaves in their escape.

While he isn't a terrific swordsman, Dunti is a master marksman with the pistol. He charges into battle, guns down tough-looking opponents, and then drops back to reload, only using his sword to defend himself if hard-pressed. During the revolt, he blew a hole in Kheired-Din's back which would have killed anyone else. Din holds a special hatred for the ex-monk because of this. He now stays close by Espera, striving to keep the fire magician safe.

#### **Imshi: Henchman**

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation:* 0

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne, Commission (Corsairs), Small

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 3, Pilot 1, Rigging 1, Sea Lore 3

*Scholar:* History 2, Mathematics 4, Natural Philosophy 3, Occult 4, Philosophy 3, Research 4

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

*Captain:* Ambush 4, Bribery 2, Gunnery 5, Strategy 2, Tactics 3

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

Imshi was the first man Kheired-Din found when he emerged from the Syrneath ruins: a local guide and "Syrneath expert" who parlayed his knowledge into a middling career. Kheired-Din ordered Imshi to help him in his quest, and the man was too terrified to refuse. He helped the fanatic uncover several potent artifacts which helped facilitate the rise of the Corsair fleet. In time, he learned that Kheired-Din rewarded those who served him, and his fear slowly changed to dog-like devotion.

Currently, Imshi operates the great artifact cannon positioned at the prow of the *Strange Skies*. His job is to scoop up a bucket of sand from the bottom of the sea (or a nearby bin if the water is too deep), dump it into the artifact, and manipulate the complicated controls to make it fire. He delights in its horrendous discharge of energy and cackles madly whenever the Corsairs attack. He is the only man Kheired-Din trusts to touch the device, and relishes his favored position they way only a true toady can.

Aside from that, he spends most of his time trying hard not to be noticed by the rest of the crew. They envy his status, and torment him mercilessly whenever they get the chance. Because of this he tends to stay close to Kheired-Din, and sleeps beside the cannon rather than with the rest of the crew.

#### **Inil: Henchman**

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 2  
*Reputation:* 0

*Advantages:* Castille, Crescent (R/W), Montaigne, Commission (Corsairs), Eagle Eyes

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

*Scholar:* Astronomy 4, History 2, Mathematics 4, Natural Philosophy 2, Philosophy 3, Research 2

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 2, Break Fall 3, Swinging 3

*Crossbow:* Attack (Crossbow) 5, Fletcher 4, Reload (Crossbow) 5

Among Kheired-Din's crew, Inil is one of the few who has yet to succumb to religious fervor. He enjoys serving on the *Strange Skies* and respects Kheired-Din as a capable captain, but has little interest in their quest besides the money it puts in his pocket. Inil is a skilled crossbowman who snipes at enemy officers from the rigging.



### The Corsairs' Ships

#### The Strange Skies (30 point ship)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 3

Resolve: 6

Wits: 6

Panache: 5

Modifications: Oars (1),  
Prow Ram (1), Extra  
Crew Quarters (4),  
Boarding Party (5), Slight  
Draft (5), Artifact

Cannon

Flaws: Poorly Trained Crew (2),  
Undergunned (2), Disgruntled Crew (4)

Draft: 6

Cargo: 6

Crew: 4

Reputation: -54

Note: The artifact cannon may be fired once every three Rounds. When it is used, the Ship's Finesse is considered 5, and the cannon inflicts 6 dice of damage.



#### The Freedom's Key (30 point ship)

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 4

Wits: 6

Resolve: 3

Panache: 6

Modifications: Oars (1),  
Extra Crew Quarters (4),  
Extra Cargo Space (4)

Flaws: None

Draft: 3

Cargo: 4

Crew: 4

Reputation: 0



He's been known to put a bolt through a man's eye at up to fifty feet away. He learned how to use the weapon from his grandfather, a Crescent tribesman who was considered a sorcerer among his people. The old man knew much about the vast desert in which they lived, and taught Inil some cunning tricks, which seemed magical at the time, but now appear to him as nothing more than common sense.

Besides his extraordinary marksmanship, he is also an excellent navigator. He learned how to determine latitude using only a crossbow, and can

read maps with surprising accuracy. He claims to have inherited his directional sense from growing up in the desert. "The sands and the sea are much the same," he's fond of saying. "Only the colors differ." He joined the Corsairs for an opportunity to practice his craft, and for the generous pay Kheired-Din provided. While not nearly as loyal as other Corsairs, he has a twisted sense of honor and would never betray his captain save in the most dire circumstances. His grandfather gave him an alchemical compass, which he wears around his neck at all times.

#### Shala: Villain

Brawn 2, Finesse 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Panache 4  
Reputation: -14

Arcana: Ruthless

Advantages: Crescent (R/W), Montaigne,  
Commission (Corsairs), Dangerous Beauty, Faith  
Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 2, Fashion 1,  
Oratory 3, Seduction 4, Sincerity 3

Sailor: Balance 4, Climbing 2, Knotwork 3,  
Navigation 1, Rigging 2, Pilot 2, Swimming 3

Captain: Ambush 3, Bribery 2, Diplomacy 3,  
Incitation 4, Leadership 4, Logistics 2, Strategy  
2, Tactics 4

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3,  
Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Eye-gouge 3,  
Parry (Improvised Weapon) 1, Throat Strike 5

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

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3

Rogers (Journeyman): Bind (Fencing) 5,  
Corps-a-corps 4, Disarm (Fencing) 4, Exploit  
Weakness (Rogers) 4

Where Edahgo keeps discipline among the rowers, Shala disciplines Kheired-Din's more loyal crew. She received this position because, of all the crew, she probably believes the most fervently in Kheired-Din's mission. She fell in love with the man the first time she saw him (she was working as a bodyguard in the Ussuran city of Sredbirskeyoye), and her passion blinded her to all else. Although she lacked a sailor's training, she took to it well, and now commands fearful respect among the men. She is never seen without her lash, a small leather whip with a wooden Prophet's Cross on the handle.

Although Kheired-Din is aware of her infatuation and returns her affection privately, his mission must come first. She understands this, and devotes herself to him all the more because of it. Never particularly religious before joining the Corsairs, she has since embraced his quest with unbridled devotion, and can quote the Book of the

Second Prophet like a preacher. She always refers to Kheired-Din as “captain,” even when they are alone together.



## The Crimson Rogers



**Advantages:** Avalon (R/W), Castille, Crescent, Eisen (R/W), Montaigne, Vodacce, Evil Reputation, Toughness

**Archaeologist:** Artifact Evaluation 5, Occult 5, Research 4, Society Lore 1, Syrneth Lore 4

**Courtier:** Dancing 1, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 2, Fashion 2, Gaming 4, Oratory 4, Politics 3, Scheming 4

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Cartography 4, Climbing 4, Knotwork 4, Navigating 4, Pilot 4, Rigging 3, Swimming 3

**Spy:** Bribery 3, Disguise 4, Interrogation 5, Poison 2, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5

**Captain:** Ambush 5, Bribery 3, Cartography 4, Diplomacy 3, Gunnery 4, Incitation 5, Leadership 5, Logistics 3, Strategy 4, Tactics 4

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Eye-Gouge 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throat Strike 4

**Firearms:** Attack (Firearms) 3

**Heavy Weapon:** Attack (Heavy Weapon) 5, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 4

**Note:** The GM may spend a Drama Die to force a reroll of any attack that strikes Reis. This Drama Die may not be countered in any way.

Not even Reis himself can remember the full details of his past. He knows that he was once an Avalon pirate with considerable Glamour powers (all too rare in the days before Elaine), and he knows that he made a great deal of money raiding Syrneth sites. Beyond that, his early life is a blur.

But he remembers the Unseelie Sidhe who confronted him at a distant Syrneth ruin. He

remembers how the grinning fiend stripped his Glamour from him and tore through his crew like paper. He remembers reaching for some weapon — anything to fight back against the hideous creature — and his hands closing on a curious scythe buried amid the rubble. The Unseelie stopped smiling when Reis took its head off its shoulders.

Afterwards, Reis sought some way to regain his Glamour, to no avail. Avalon was cut off from the Sidhe, their ancestral magic all but extinct. To possess it was a miracle; to restore it after being lost, an impossibility.

The rise of Queen Elaine in 1658 marked the return of Glamour to the Enchanted Isles. While Reis could not use it to restore his lost sorcery, he could capitalize on it in other ways. He resolved to become the most fearsome pirate the seas had ever seen.

His reputation since then has more than justified that vow. He sinks every ship he meets, stealing its cargo and sending its crew to the bottom. Some believe he's a demon from Legion's Pit and that he feeds on the souls of those he slays. His ship, the *Crimson Roger*, supposedly flies sails stained red with blood, and his men are considered nothing less than beasts in human form.

Most of these tales were started by Reis himself to create an atmosphere of fear and horror around his name. In addition to giving him an edge over his victims, it affects the lost Glamour in his blood, allowing him to take power from the stories about him. As long as people *believe* he is invulnerable, the Sidhe will make it so. For ten years, the ploy worked spectacularly. He has yet to be defeated in combat, and no one has crossed his crew and lived to tell of it.

Recently, however, a threat has arisen in the diminutive form of Bloody Bonnie McGee. McGee has done the unthinkable — survived an attack from the Crimson Rogers. Twice. Now she pursues Reis' crew in an effort to avenge her lost captain, and Reis can read the writing on the wall. Every villain needs a hero, and the Sidhe have now provided one. If he can't find a way to stop McGee, his unsurpassed reign of terror will end.

Of course, the Sidhe aren't the only beings with power in the world. If they have given McGee the strength to destroy him, then Reis will have to find a means of countering their magic: perhaps among the Syrne...

Reis is a quiet commander, rarely speaking in front of the crew. He directs his officers with efficient hand gestures, and the only noise the

men usually hear from him is his fierce battle roar. In private, with his officers, he relaxes a bit and speaks in thin, whispery tones, usually giving them their instructions for the next day's labor.

He is also utterly ruthless. Pleading with him is like trying to talk an avalanche out of falling on you. Reis fears nothing and no one, and even McGee's persistent survival has yet to break his façade. The day the crew sees Reis panic is the day they know they're all going to die.

Reis' scythe is Syrneth in origin, carving through even dracheneisen as easily as it cuts through human flesh. In *7th Sea* terms, it ignores the benefits of cover and armor, and is impossible to parry. Only Defense Knacks that involve getting out of the way can be used against it. It inflicts 6k6 Wounds, regardless of its wielder's Brawn, and any 10s rolled in the Damage Roll are treated as automatic Dramatic Wounds instead of being added into the damage total. These automatic Dramatic Wounds do not cause the victim to erase their Flesh Wounds as normal.

Both his scythe and other parts of his clothing have become infused with Glamour. Those wielding them may take on his visage, and perhaps (at the GM's discretion) enjoy the benefits of his fearsome reputation. of course, anyone who wished to do so would have to take them from him first...



**Joern Keitelsson: Villain**

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 4

Wits: 3

Resolve: 4

Panache: 3

Reputation: -20

Background: None

Arcana: None

**Advantages:** Eisen, Crescent, Montaigne, Vendel (R/W), Vodacce

**Background:** Lost Love, Vendetta

**Merchant:** Accounting 1, Hagglng 3, Shepherd 4

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

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

**Captain:** Ambush 3, Bribery 3, Gunnery 2, Incitation 2, Leadership 4, Strategy 3, Tactics 4

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

**Leegstra (Master):** Beat (Heavy Weapon) 5, Corps-a-corps 5, Lunge (Heavy Weapon) 5, Exploit Weakness (Leegstra) 5

**Wrestling:** Break 4, Escape 3, Grapple 4, Head Butt 3

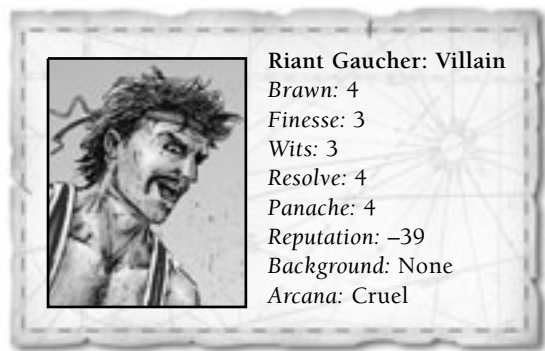
"Joern" began life as a shepherd among the Vestenmannavnjar tribes. A few weeks before his wedding, his fiance Oera caught the plague and died. The shepherd was devastated, and spent hours each day tending to her grave. After six weeks of mourning, Oera's spirit appeared to him and they spoke until long after the sun went down.

He was away visiting Oera's spirit when the Vendel raided his village, killing every man, woman, and child. Joern's memory of Oera was, by itself, not enough to keep her spirit alive, and she faded away into oblivion within a week. The ex-shepherd packed up his few possessions, changed his name to "Joern Keitelsson," and left to find some Vendel to kill.

His journey took him by ship, as he hoped to find a band of Vestenmannavnjar pirates to join, but Fate played her hand, and the *Crimson Roger* attacked before he could locate any Raiders. Finally, Joern had a foe he could fight, and all the hatred he'd been building up spewed forth in a berserk frenzy. He killed twelve men before Reis managed to incapacitate him. When he recovered consciousness, he was tied up, Reis standing over him with his scythe. Then Reis did the last thing Joern expected – he offered to make the trussed man his first mate. Joern accepted on the condition that at least one ship in four that they attacked would be Vendel.

Since coming aboard, Joern has lived only for death. He fights like a madman, offering no quarter, and only seldom bothering to protect himself from incoming sword thrusts. His last goal in life is to kill as many Vendel as he can before one of them finally manages to kill him. Joern hopes that by concealing his true name from his crewmates he may be forgotten as soon as he dies, joining his beloved Oera in blessed oblivion.





**Advantages:** Castille, Crescent, Montaigne (R/W)

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Leaping 3, Rigging 4, Sea Lore 2, Swimming 3, Weather 3

**Spy:** Bribery 2, Interrogation 4, Shadowing 1, Stealth 1

**Captain:** Ambush 4, Gunnery 3, Leadership 3, Logistics 4, Strategy 2, Tactics 4

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 5, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 5, Eye-gouge 3, Kick 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throat Strike 5

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

**Firearms:** Attack (Firearms) 5, Reload (Firearms) 5

**Wrestling:** Bear Hug 4, Break 5, Escape 4, Grapple 5, Head Butt 5

Riant is the bosun of the *Crimson Roger*. He rules the men with an iron hand, terrifying them into obedience. He is a complete sadist, looking upon his cat o' nine tails as his artist's brush, and the human back as his canvas.

He was born to a farmer in Montaigne, and raised with twelve older siblings. Being the youngest, he had to learn to defend himself early on. He found that if he took that extra step beyond friendly brotherly fighting into actual pain, he could make his older siblings respect him. Eventually, despite his small stature and young age, he effectively led the children in his family.

He has carried that lesson over into his adult life, always looking for an excuse to add another stripe to one of the men's backs. In a fight, he is as cold and calculating as a machine, doing anything necessary to gain the advantage – even firing through one of his own men to hit an enemy officer. Most of the crew hates him, and even Reis himself dislikes watching Riant let the cat out of the bag. Riant doesn't care. He was born to serve aboard the *Crimson Roger*, and intends to spend the rest of his life inflicting pain on those who cross him.

## Crimson Roger Crewmen

### Javier de Bejarano: Henchman (Deceased)

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

**Reputation:** 9

**Advantages:** Avalon, Castille (R/W),

Montaigne (R/W), Théan (R/W), University

**Background:** Hunting

**Artist:** Drawing 4

**Courtier:** Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 3, Oratory 3, Diplomacy 4

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

**Merchant:** Appraising 5, Calligrapher 4, Scribe 4

**Scholar:** History 5, Mathematics 4, Natural Philosophy 4, Occult 5, Philosophy 4, Research 5, Theology 4

**Streetwise:** Scrounging 3, Shopping 4, Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3

**Firearms:** Attack (Firearms) 3, Reload (Firearms) 1

Javier joined the *Crimson Rogers* because he had no choice, and never really understood the nature of his captain. Once a talented Church scholar, he spent his days deciphering Syrneth texts. One, bound in spun silver, held his downfall. Filled with several sorcerous incantations, it also hinted at a path to immortality. At first, he piously turned away from its temptation, but it weighed upon his mind, and he couldn't bring himself to destroy such an awesome secret. When a brief outbreak of the White Plague struck his city, he grew more and more fearful of death, until finally he cast aside his Church vestments and followed its path.

The book spoke of a "land-locked island" which could bestow immortality on those found worthy. Javier had a good idea where the island was — somewhere in the heart of the Mirror — and thought he knew how to pass the "tests" the book mentioned.

He was digging through a Syrneth ruin on a small uncharted isle when the Rogers came across him. Reis offered first pick of each Syrneth hoard if he'd use his talents to help the crew discover them caches more easily. Javier readily agreed, despite his qualms about the bloodthirsty crew, since he thought they might kill him if he refused. With their help, and regular exposure to choice Syrneth artifacts, the Castillian eventually passed the "tests" (actually clues to a particular location) and came across the Syrneth key which would grant its user immortality.

Unfortunately, he never had a chance to use it. In an effort to entice Reis to Cabora (the only place the key could be used), he revealed his plan and explained how it could render the captain impervious to an attack by Bonnie McGee. Reis responded by running the poor boy through and taking the Setine artifact. Javier's body was thrown to the sirens and his key now lies in the hands of a butcher. Immortality, it seems, was harder to achieve than he thought.

### Julius Caligari: Villain

*Brawn 2, Finesse 4, Wits 4, Resolve 2, Panache 3*  
*Reputation: -19*

*Arcana: Greedy*

*Advantages: Vodacce (R/W), Castille (R/W),*  
Montaigne, Swordsman's Guild, Patron  
(Vincenzo Caligari)

*Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 4, Fashion 3,*  
Gaming 3, Mooch 4, Oratory 3, Politics 2

*Spy: Bribery 4, Conceal 3, Forgery 3,*  
Interrogation 2, Shadowing 3, Sincerity 4, Stealth 4

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

*Athlete: Climbing 4, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2,*  
Throwing 3, Leaping 4, Swimming 3, Swinging  
4, Side-step 3

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

*Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Eye-*  
gouge 3, Kick 4, Throat Strike 4

When Caligari signed his agreement with Reis, he stipulated in the contract that one of his cousins must serve aboard the *Crimson Roger* to keep an eye on his interests. He sent his cousin Julius, a skilled duelist and a member of the Swordsman's Guild.

Julius is tall and slender, with a dancer's build. He is a Journeyman in the Ambrogia school of fighting, and would have made Master were it not for his blind right eye, which has a pale white cataract.

Within a month, Julius showed his true colors to the captain. Approaching him in the night, Julius smiled and said, "For a price, I'll keep my right eye on my cousin's interests instead of my left." Reis, no fool, paid his price and has continued to do so, but has since watched Julius closely, as he no longer trusts the man. Anyone who would betray his own cousin would turn on his Captain even more easily.

As with many Vodacce, Julius understands how to play both sides against the middle. He has willfully ignored Reis' occasional duplicity and

helped the Rogers pull the wool over Prince Caligari's eyes. At the same time, he has quietly filched some of their choicest cargo: keeping some of it for himself and turning the rest over to Vincenzo as "recovered plunder." He intends to keep his position on the *Roger* stable, in case he needs it to escape his cousin. But should Reis prove too threatening, he would turn on the man in an instant. Nobody ever said the Great Game was pretty.

### Gerald Hühne: Henchman

*Brawn 3, Finesse 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4, Panache 3*  
*Reputation: -16*

*Advantages: Castille, Crescent, Eisen (R/W),*  
Montaigne

*Merchant: Appraising 4, Weaponsmith 4*

*Sailor: Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 3,*  
Rigging 2

*Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 4, Philosophy*  
2, Research 2, Law 3

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

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

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

*Note: During Gerald's bouts of madness, he*  
gains 2 ranks of brawn, 2 ranks of resolve, Attack  
(Dirty Fighting) 5, and his barehanded damage  
becomes 0k2.

Originally from Eisen, Gerald was a skilled weaponsmith who fled his ravaged homeland seeking a new life. Eventually, he signed on with the Explorer's Guild as a Shield Man. While exploring the Montaigne sewers with a team of archaeologists, he stumbled upon a strange jeweled mask. As he picked it up, the filth fell away from it, leaving it perfectly clean. Delighted, he showed it to his team, then jokingly pressed it against his face. His vision went grey, and when he recovered his senses, the archaeologists were torn to shreds and his hands were covered in blood. He fled the sewers screaming, and spent six years moving from place to place; a new bout of madness seemed to come upon him every six months or so, and Theus help anyone in his vicinity when they did.

Finally, he wound up in a bar, drunkenly telling his story to a stranger sitting next to him. The stranger smiled and stuck out his hand, saying in a thin whisper, "I think I can help you." It turned out to be Reis, who needed a good weaponsmith for his crew. When it was almost

time for Gerald's next bout of madness, the Captain had the men put ashore (see "The Forbidden Cove," pages 55–56). Without warning, the rest of the crew jumped in the longboats and rowed away, leaving Gerald alone with an unlikable sailor who had recently joined the crew. After a few days, they went back and found Gerald, shamefaced and alone. Since then, the Captain always signs on a few new sailors every few months or so, just in case. Naturally, the newcomers never hear about Gerald's "need." As Reis says, "Sailors are a dime a dozen. A good weaponsmith is hard to find." The rest of the crew looks upon Gerald as a monster, and he has no friends, nor does he want any.

### Jemy: Henchman

*Brawn* 6, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 5, *Panache* 4  
*Reputation*: 15

*Advantages*: Crescent, Toughness, Legendary Trait

*Artist*: Musician (Flute) 4

*Merchant*: Sail Maker 3

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Climbing 5, Knotwork 4, Leaping 4, Rigging 5, Swimming 3, Weather 2

*Athlete*: Break Fall 3, Climbing 5, Footwork 3, Lifting 5, Rolling 3, Side-step 2, Sprinting 5, Swinging 3, Throwing 3

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Kick 3, Throat Strike 4

*Wrestling*: Bear Hug 3, Break 4, Escape 5, Grapple 4

Jemy is an enigma. His skin is black as coal, unheard-of in Théah. The *Crimson Roger* came upon him floating, half-dead, on a raft in the middle of the Frothing Sea. Why the sirens hadn't eaten him, no one was sure, but they hauled him aboard and nursed him back to health, if only to get to the bottom of the mystery.

When he had recovered his strength, he only said one word, "Jemy." The crew assumed it was his name. Falling easily into the daily routine, Jemy proved as strong as any three men, easily lifting a wet sail by himself and carrying it up the rigging. Unfortunately, much to the Captain's disappointment, Jemy refused to fight when they attacked another ship. He simply stood at the rudder, calmly watching the fight unfold around him, and only defending himself as necessary.

After the fight, Riant Gaucher attempted to discipline the disobedient sailor with thirty lashes. Jemy looked on, bemused, as they bound him to the mast. When the first lash fell, it failed



### The Crimson Rogers' Ship

**The Crimson Roger** (35 point ship)

*Brawn*: 8

*Finesse*: 4

*Wits*: 5

*Resolve*: 5

*Panache*: 4

*Modifications*:

Overgunned (2), Good

Captain (4), Extra

Boarding Guns (5)

*Flaws*: Old (1)

*Draft*: 5

*Cargo*: 5

*Crew*: 5

*Reputation*: -71



to leave even a slight mark. Jemy flinched slightly, then easily snapped the ropes binding him. Snatching the lash away from the bosun, he whipped Riant across the deck until he pleaded for mercy. Although the bosun later begged Reis for Jemy's death, the Captain felt that his skills as a topsman (and his usefulness in case Riant ever got out of line) outweighed the bosun's outrage. Although Riant hates him to this day, he is too frightened of Jemy to lift a finger without Reis' backing.

### Andrei Levovich: Henchman

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 2

*Reputation*: 0

*Advantages*: Castille, Crescent, Ussuran (R/W)

*Hunter*: Stealth 4, Survival 3, Tracking 4

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 3, Leaping 4, Lifting 4, Sprinting 4, Swinging 3, Throwing 4

*Commander*: Incitation 3, Leadership 3, Strategy 1, Tactics 3

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

*Heavy Weapon*: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 5, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 2

*Wrestling*: Bearhug 4, Break 5, Grapple 5, Head Butt 4

Andrei truly isn't afraid of anything – not monsters, not Reis, not even Riant. In fact, he left his home in Ussura to seek something that could

frighten him. Old hands tell the story of how he sank a Vendel merchant ship all by himself. He charged straight at the boarding cannons, screaming so loudly that the gunner who was drawing a bead on him dropped his match into a nearby powder keg. The explosion killed most of the crew and blew a hole in the ship, but Andrei was miraculously unhurt. Quickly, he organized the boarding party to unload cargo from the ship, and they managed a good haul before the *Roger* had to pull away or risk going down with her.

Andrei's main problem is that although he doesn't feel fear, neither does he feel any sympathy for those who do. Nothing earns his contempt as quickly as a show of terror. The captain earned his respect by reaching out with his bare hand and crushing a deadly ten-second beetle that had slipped into a load of artifacts. Ever since then, he has served Reis loyally, although that could change if he ever saw the captain display cowardice – an event which seems unlikely.



## The Explorers

|                                                                                     |                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Guy McCormick: Villain</b>             |
|                                                                                     | Brawn: 2                                  |
|                                                                                     | Finesse: 4                                |
|                                                                                     | Wits: 4                                   |
|                                                                                     | Resolve: 4                                |
|                                                                                     | Panache: 3                                |
|                                                                                     | Reputation: -30                           |
|                                                                                     | Background: Lost Love<br>Arcana: Stubborn |

**Advantages:** Avalon (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Théah (R/W), Vendel (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Indomitable Will, Membership (Explorer's Society)

**Archæologist:** Artifact Evaluation 4, Occult 4, Research 5, Syrneath Lore 4, Trap Lore 5

**Courtier:** Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 3, Oratory 4, Politics 4, Sincerity 2

**Hunter:** Ambush 4, Survival 4, Tracking 3

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Cartography 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Leaping 3, Navigation 3, Pilot 3, Rigging 3, Swimming 4

**Scholar:** Astronomy 3, History 4, Mathematics 2, Occult 4, Philosophy 2, Research 5, Theology 3

**Streetwise:** Socializing 3, Street Navigation 2, Shopping 3

**Athlete:** Break Fall 4, Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 2, Leaping 3, Rolling 2, Swimming 4, Swinging 3, Side Step 1

**Captain:** Ambush 4, Gunnery 2, Leadership 3, Logistics 4, Strategy 1, Tactics 4

**Fencing:** Attack 3, Parry 3

McCormick's reputation in early 1668 was 53. The lower number (and his status as a Villain) reflects his reputation as of the rise of Cabora.

Guy and Amanda McCormick were once the toast of the Explorer's Society. Guy was the great-nephew of Society founder Cameron McCormick, and as close to royalty as the Explorers came. He led numerous expeditions into the Midnight Archipelago and developed startling insights into Syrneath technology. His wife Amanda served as one of the Society's chief field scholars, an assistant to Cristenne d'Asourne herself. For a time, they were the Society's golden couple and their future among the Explorers looked as bright as the stars.

Then things started to change. Amanda stumbled across a bit of forgotten knowledge, something she claimed proved the existence of the 7th Sea. She began searching for other pieces of evidence, other clues that could confirm her beliefs. It became an obsession with her; she ignored other pursuits, her friends, even Society business in favor of her overriding goal. She kept her studies hidden from her husband, who simply believed she was busy. Eventually, she chartered a ship and headed off in search of the 7th Sea, convinced that she could unlock its secrets.

She was never seen again.

For a time, Guy thought that his wife had died on relatively mundane Explorer business. When he learned what she was looking for, however, he changed. He came to believe that Amanda had not died, but actually succeeded in her quest and found the 7th Sea. Her obsession became his and he eventually embarked on his own ship in an effort to pursue her.

McCormick's quest has been detailed in Chapter One, but not the gradual change in his demeanor. The kind, enthusiastic Explorer was slowly replaced by a brooding, driven monomaniac. He gradually shed his fetters of morality, willing to sacrifice his ship, his crew, even his life in pursuit of his goal. By the time his crew mutinied, the Society was considering a forced retirement lest he commit even further mischief. They hired bounty hunters to return

him (alive) to Carleon, where they intend to strip him of his membership. The shining star has fallen hard indeed.

McCormick no longer concerns himself with his lost reputation. He has more important things on his mind.



**Advantages:** Avalon (R/W), Eisen (R/W), Théan (R/W), Keen Senses, Left-handed, Membership (Explorer's Society)

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

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Cartography 2, Climbing 2, Knotwork 3, Navigation 2, Pilot 3, Rigging 3, Swimming 3

**Scholar:** History 3, Mathematics 2, Occult 3, Philosophy 1, Research 4

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

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack 2, Kick 2, Parry 2, Throat Strike 1

**Shield Man School (Apprentice):** Corps-à-corps 3, Riposte (Improvised Weapon) 3, Bind (Improvised Weapon) 2, Exploit Weakness (Shield Man School) 3

Cosette St. Clair was McCormick's first mate, an ex-Shield Man who traded her bodyguarding duties for life onboard a ship. Her father sailed for a Vendel merchant and seagoing was always in her blood. When she became the first mate of the *Discovery*, she downed an entire cask of ale in his honor.

Cosette and Guy McCormick had known each other since her induction into the Society. They had served on several missions together and it was his recommendation that got her transferred from Shield Man duty. She responded with an almost fanatical loyalty, willing to follow him to the edge of the world and beyond. As first mate, she helped spread that loyalty throughout the crew.

But her devotion to McCormick never blinded her to the Society's overall goals — or to his

eventual abuse of those goals. She maintained a strong sense of ethics and a love of knowledge that kept her objectivity intact. When McCormick began to change, she was the first in the crew to notice. Initially she dismissed it, believing that he was simply under stress. But as he began taking more and more risks at the expense of his crew, she couldn't ignore his gradual degradation. She tried to speak to him about it. He ignored her. She tried diverting him from his reckless course. He reprimanded her. She even considered doctoring evidence to "prove" Amanda's death, but never had a chance to plant it.

Finally, when McCormick allowed the Corsairs to take Maggie Malone, Cosette had had enough. In a flash of temper, she turned on her former mentor and led a mutiny aboard his ship. McCormick was forced to flee with the Corsairs while Cosette took command of his ship.

Since then, she has pursued her ex-captain to the exclusion of all else, determined to bring him back and face justice for his crimes. She has deeply mixed feelings about the mutiny she engendered; while her head tells her she did the right thing, her heart insists that she betrayed McCormick. She hopes that by capturing him, she can put those doubts to rest.



**Advantages:** Avalon (R/W), Théan (R/W), Combat Reflexes

**Archæologist:** Artifact Evaluation 6, Occult 5, Research 1, Synchrony Lore 6, Trap Lore 5

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Climbing 2, Cartography 4, Knotwork 2, Navigation 5, Rigging 3

**Spy:** Disguise 5, Poison 4, Shadowing 4, Sincerity 4, Stealth 4

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

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

Mumblety-Peg's hand grants him on unkept bonus die to all Attack and Wound Rolls involving that hand, and also adds +2 unkept dice to any Climbing Checks.

No one knows much about the mysterious sailor known as Mumblety-Peg. He refuses to speak of his past, save in cryptic references, and grows violent when people press the issue. He has the ethics of a weasel and the cunning of a starved fox, but he claims to have seen Amanda McCormick, and that is enough for his captain.

The Explorers picked up Mumblety-Peg at a tavern in Vodacce after witnessing him brawling with some other customers. He wore a green vest belonging to Amanda, which McCormick had identified immediately. At first, they attempted to interrogate him, but he laughed at their efforts to browbeat him. He claimed to have seen the Island of the Sunken Eye and to have met Amanda there once. He promised to lead them there if McCormick allowed him on board. Amanda's vest, coupled with his clockwork Syrneth hand, convinced McCormick to agree.

For a time, Mumblety-Peg served as second mate onboard the *Discovery*. The crew deeply distrusted him, but McCormick ordered them to follow him and they did not wish to disobey. His presence created a schism, however, that ultimately facilitated Cosette's mutiny.

On the other hand, he seemed true to his word. With his guidance, the Explorers easily reach the fourth of the six Switches and activated it without difficulty. He steered several crewman away from potential threats and doubtless would have lead them all the way to Cabora had the mutiny not thrown everything into a cocked hat. He helped McCormick escape his crew's wrath and currently remains by his side, leading him ever closer to the elusive Sunken Isle. His motives are as murky as ever, but for now, he has done more than anyone to help McCormick reach his goal.

## Explorer Crewmen

### Kirsten Blumfeld: Hero

Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3, Panache 3  
Reputation: 24

Arcana: Worldly

Advantages: Avalon, Eisen (R/W), Théan (R/W), Dangerous Beauty, Membership (Explorer's Society)

Hunter: Stealth 2, Survival 3, Tracking 2

Merchant: Accounting 3, Haggling 3, Jeweler 2

Sailor: Balance 1, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 1, Occult 3, Philosophy 1, Research 4

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

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

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

Kirsten comes from a well-respected merchant family in Eisen. After the War of the Cross, business plummeted and she was forced to seek other methods of earning money. She found a company of Explorers looking for Syrneth ruins and treasures. After a few years of evading booby traps, malicious diggers, and strange creatures, she earned enough to retire comfortably, but soon found herself growing bored.

Over the years, Kirsten had acquired various mementos of her exploits, and set herself to studying them. Eventually, she grew to know every piece in her collection like the back of her hand, and she grew bored again. Armed with her knowledge of Syrneth artifacts and yearning to learn more about the mysterious races that created them, she signed on to the *Discovery* with Guy McCormick. Her skills at artifact analysis, along with Guy's ever-expanding treasure trove, have kept her aboard ever since.

Kirsten loves studying artifacts purely out of curiosity. While Guy only sees the devices as means to an end, to Kirsten they are ends in themselves. While she loses interest in the world when a new toy comes along, Kirsten is a deeply passionate individual, and firmly believes that things must be done with style, or not at all. She bores easily, and the only thing that can keep her interest for a long period of time is a new and interesting artifact.

### Rose Calloway: Hero

Brawn 3, Finesse 2, Resolve 3, Wits 4, Panache 2

Reputation: 12

Background: Romance

Arcana: Self-Controlled

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Théan (R/W), Keen Senses, Membership (Explorer's Society)

Sailor: Balance 3, Cartography 4, Climbing 2, Knotwork 2, Navigation 4, Rigging 1, Swimming 3

Scholar: Astronomy 4, History 2, Natural Philosophy 3, Mathematics 4, Philosophy 2, Research 3

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 2, Leaping 2, Lifting 3, Sprinting 3

*Fencing*: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3  
*Shield Man School (Apprentice)*:  
 Corps-à-corps 3, Riposte (Improvised Weapon) 4,  
 Bind (Improvised Weapon) 3, Exploit Weakness  
 (Shield Man School) 4

### Vincent Calloway: Hero

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Wits* 3, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 13  
*Background*: Romance, Hunting  
*Arcana*: Passionate  
*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Eisen (R/W),  
 Théan (R/W), Appearance (Above Average),  
 Indomitable Will, Membership (Explorer's  
 Society)  
*Courtier*: Dancing 2, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette  
 1, Fashion 1, Oratory 2  
*Sailor*: Balance 3, Knotwork 2, Rigging 1, Sea  
 Lore 2, Swimming 3  
*Scholar*: History 2, Mathematics 1, Philosophy  
 3, Research 2, Occult 3  
*Streetwise*: Scrounging 2, Shopping 4,  
 Socializing 2, Street Navigation 1  
*Athlete*: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Side-step 2,  
 Sprinting 2, Throwing 1  
*Fencing*: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 4  
*Shield Man School (Apprentice)*: Corps-à-corps  
 4, Riposte (Improvised Weapon) 3, Bind  
 (Improvised Weapon) 4, Exploit Weakness  
 (Shield Man School) 3

Vincent and Rose Calloway had quite a bit in common, even before they ever met. Each of them was born on an Explorer ship (although not the same one), and they both grew up searching Syrneath ruins and evading the Inquisition. Eventually, they ended up on the same ship, and found that they complemented each other nearly perfectly.

Shortly after their wedding, Vincent and Rose ended up serving alongside Guy and Amanda McCormick. The two couples became close friends, and when Amanda vanished, it hit the Calloways hard. Since then, they have been devoted to helping Guy find Amanda, and are willing to do anything to see her returned safely to his side.

Rose is calm, quiet, and collected. She can look at a problem and instantly determine what is necessary to solve it. She rarely shows much emotion, and Guy often relies upon her to make objective judgments. If Rose says something is a good idea, it almost always is. She is an expert scientist and mathematician, and often serves as navigator aboard the *Discovery*. While she hides it

behind a calm exterior, Rose truly does love the important things in her life – her crewmates, her occupation, and most importantly, Vincent. If there is one thing that could break her calm, it is a serious threat to her husband.

Vincent, on the other hand, is lively and full of humor. He rarely stops to evaluate a situation before leaping into action, relying on a lifetime's experience in dangerous situations to pull him through. Vincent experiences everything to the fullest. When Amanda McCormick went missing, he took the loss very hard, and still hopes to find her despite Guy's betrayal.

### Jacob Faust: Hero

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 4  
*Reputation*: 20  
*Background*: Defeated, Obligation  
*Arcana*: Adaptable  
*Advantages*: Castille (R/W), Avalon (R/W),  
 Midnight Archipelago, Montaigne (R/W), Théah  
 (R/W), Ussuran (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Linguist,  
 Membership (Explorer's Society)  
*Hunter*: Ambush 3 Stealth 4, Survival 2,  
 Tracking 3  
*Scholar*: Astronomy 3, History 4, Mathematics  
 2, Philosophy 2, Research 1, Theology 3  
*Spy*: Bribery 3, Conceal 1, Cryptography 3,  
 Lip Reading 3, Shadowing 3, Sincerity 3  
*Streetwise*: Shopping 3, Socializing 3, Street  
 Navigation 4,  
*Athlete*: Break Fall 4, Climbing 3, Footwork 4,  
 Leaping 2, Rolling 3, Side Step 3, Sprinting 2,  
 Swinging 3, Throwing 1  
*Fencing*: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3

Jacob Faust had already made his reputation with the Explorers Guild when they discovered the Thalussian Islands. He was a linguist, a cultural expert who could walk into the jungle of an unfamiliar island and come out three days later with the local chief on one arm and the shaman on the other. So when the Explorers found strange ruins on the Thalussian islands, they sent him out to take a look.

He landed a longboat on shore and took five men with him into the dense jungle. At first the only odd thing was the total absence of birds or animals. There were no sign of ruins, just the burr of crickets breaking the silence. Then a swarm of bees attacked the group. The men quickly covered their bare skin and pushed on. Scorpions appeared and they pushed on. Then waves of beetles, fire red ants and enormous mosquitoes attacked. By now all of the men were covered in



## The Explorers' Ship

**The Discovery** (35 point ship)

Brawn: 5

Finesse: 9

Resolve: 6

Wits: 7

Panache: 7

Modifications: Well-

Trained Crew (2)

Flaws: None

Draft: 6

Cargo: 6

Crew: 8

Reputation: 37



welts and several felt faint. Faust ordered the group back, but it was too late. A black cloud of unknown, flesh-eating insects engulfed the group and everyone but Faust succumbed to the attack. Faust stumbled, blood welling from wounds beyond number, into a small cave lined with amber. No one knows what he encountered there, but he emerged the next morning looking like he'd aged a decade. His hair had fallen out and his eyes hard and weary.

He strode unmolested past the deadly insects which had cleaned the flesh from the bones of his companions. He managed to signal the *Discovery*, Guy McCormick's ship, as it passed on the way to another isle. Jacob boarded and warned the Explorers that the island held terrors too great for humans to face. When they pressed him for more information, he refused. The hideous scars where giant beetles had gnawed upon his skull and the look in his eyes convinced them to take his word for it. Faust has followed McCormick since then acting as his scout and advance man.

Recently McCormick sent him to shadow Kheired-Din and the Corsairs in search of the elusive Switches. He lost track of them during Espera's revolt, and sought to reacquaint their trail at the site of the Sixth Switch. He was able to send word to McCormick before he was captured, but now languishes in prison alongside the famous Allende of the Brotherhood of the Coast.

### Foul Weather Jack: Hero

Brawn 3, Finesse 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Panache 4  
Reputation: -9

*Background:* Cursed, Treasure Map

*Arcana:* Misfortunate

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Foul Weather Jack, Membership (Explorer's Society), Toughness

*Criminal:* Ambush 2, Cheating 3, Gambling 3, Quack 1, Scrounging 3, Shadowing 2, Stealth 1

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 3, Rigging 2, Sea Lore 4, Swimming 3, Weather 3

*Athlete:* Footwork 2, Sprinting 1, Throwing 2

*Captain:* Cartography 2, Gunnery 2, Strategy 1, Tactics 2

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2

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

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

*Rogers (Apprentice):* Bind (Fencing) 1, Corps-à-Corps 1, Disarm (Fencing) 1, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 1

*Pirate Tricks:* Sidearm

For as long as he can remember, James Easton has been going by the name "Jack." It wasn't until he took to the sea some twenty years ago, that he earned the nickname "Foul Weather Jack." Despite serving on over a dozen vessels since then, he has carried the name with him wherever he goes, and for good reason.

Bad luck follows Jack around like his shadow, but only for the people around him. When Jack made a killing playing cards, the tavern burned down an hour after he left. The day he proposed to his wife (who didn't believe in luck), his dog died. His wife ran away with his best friend a few years later, and the ship carrying them on their honeymoon sunk. Several years ago, while on shore on a tropical island, his parrot caught a rare disease, and when he dug the bird's grave, he found a treasure chest. He discovered the Spear of the West Wind with a group of compatriots and drew a map to it. The map was split into four pieces and divided amongst them. The other three men all died in horrible ways, and Jack is the only one left.

Jack got his current position aboard the *Discovery* three years ago. He was drinking his sorrows away at the Café of Broken Dreams (his previous crew abandoned him after three constant days of storms; as soon as they left, lightning struck their mainmast), Guy McCormick approached him with an offer to serve as gunner. Guy told Jack that on his boat, men make their own luck. The funny thing is that since then, Jack hasn't had any problems. The crew aboard the *Discovery* love listening to his stories, and he has

even shown them his piece of the map, although he refuses to search for the other three sections. He doesn't want to push his luck.

### Maggie Malone: Henchman

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 0

*Background*: Amnesia

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Théah (R/W), Keen Senses, Membership (Explorer's Society), Short

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Cartography 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 3, Navigation 3, Rigging 3, Weather 4  
*Athlete*: Footwork 2, Break Fall 5, Leaping 5, Lifting 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 2

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack 3, Attack (Improv) 3, Parry (Improv) 3, Throw (Improv) 3

*Knife*: Attack 3, Parry 3, Throw 3

Maggie Malone is a lithe topman aboard the *Discovery*. She is a feisty redhead who enjoys practical jokes and tinkering with Syrneth artifacts. But, she always acts humble and obedient to McCormick, her foster father. Nothing is known about her past before McCormick found her on the Syrneth Isles five years ago. Guy was leading an expedition in the flooded buildings known as Site C when he discovered one room that was dry, despite the fact that it lay beneath sea level. He entered with a few men and found a young girl dressed in rags standing in the center of the room. There were no other signs that anyone had ever been in the building before, so Guy walked up cautiously and tapped her on the shoulder. The girl fell over sideways and began shaking.

As Guy spoke to her and tried to understand who she was, one of his crew pointed to two glowing sigils upon the floor hidden until that moment by the girl's feet. When the man touched one of them, an intense crackling ripped through the room and he burst into flames. Guy and the others dragged the unconscious girl out as water began seeping into the room. Only later did Guy notice that she had tattoos of the sigils upon her bare feet.

Guy named her Maggie Malone, after his mother's maiden name, and raised the girl as his own, finding her to be exceptionally bright and agile. However, she can remember nothing of her past before Guy touched her and the only language she could speak at first was ancient Théah.

Guy is hiding his true feelings: he fears the girl he raised. After years of watching her closely, he has seen strange things. Metal objects fly to her

hand when no one else is around. Several Syrneth artifacts have simply lain dormant until she activated them. St. Elmo's fire covers the sails whenever she is aloft after a thunderstorm. And during one storm, he saw her fall off a mast and simply float there for a moment before she caught herself. He believes that she is not truly human, but something else. He doesn't know what her purpose might be (indeed, she herself seems ignorant), but he is afraid to find out.



## Gosse's Gentlemen



**Philip Gosse: Hero**  
*Brawn*: 2  
*Finesse*: 4  
*Wits*: 5  
*Resolve*: 3  
*Panache*: 4  
*Reputation*: 115  
*Background*: None  
*Arcana*: Fortunate

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Vendel

*Courtier*: Dancing 3, Etiquette 2, Fashion 3, Oratory 4, Sincerity 4

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Cartography 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 5, Navigation 5, Pilot 5, Rigging 4, Sea Lore 3, Swimming 3

*Scholar*: Astronomy 3, History 5, Law 4, Mathematics 4, Occult 4, Philosophy 4, Research 3

*Captain*: Diplomacy 5, Gunnery 3, Incitation 4, Leadership 5, Logistics 4, Strategy 4, Tactics 4

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 4

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

*Rogers (Journeyman)*: Bind (Fencing) 4, Corps-a-corps 4, Disarm (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 5

*Pirate Tricks*: Dagger Ride, Kick Up

Years ago, Philip was the subject of the daydreams of hundreds of young girls. Handsome, honorable, and extremely good with a sword, he seemed like the heroes of old. A native Avalon, he served in the Montaigne navy before buying his own ship, the *Uncharted Course*, and pursuing a life of piracy. The chaplain he served with in the navy, Hernando Ochoa, filled him with visions of a different life, where all men were equal and bound by honor and friendship. The two of them

left the service together, to pursue careers as “gentlemen pirates.” For thirty years, he and his crew sought to live those dreams, and he returned from retirement for the chance to do it all again one final time.

Of course, time has worn him down, and his glorious adventuring has been cut short by horror and tragedy. The loss of his wife troubled him deeply, and the recent return of the Black Freighter has shook him to the core. He isn’t as handsome as he used to be, nor is his sword as quick. But his reputation as a pirate has endured far better than he himself. He draws strength from it, and it has allowed him to maintain his sense of honor in the face of adversity.

His criminal reputation was always surrounded by the glow of chivalry. He would never allow his crew to take a lady’s jewelry, for instance. Nor would he shoot a man in the back, or indeed, use a pistol at all unless threatened with one. He prefers honest swordplay to the cowardly use of a gun. Obviously, this got him in trouble sometimes, but he always managed to get himself out of it. This tendency continues on his current mission.

Gosse fully intends to destroy the Freighter and snuff out Necros’s unholy light for good. He originally intended this voyage to be his last, and that hasn’t changed now that it has taken on a dark hue. Killing Necros will wipe a blot from the face of Théah and allow the trouble souls of those he loves to finally rest in peace. This drive keeps him going, lifting his flagging spirits even as his body grows frailer.



**Melinda Gosse: Hero**

*Brawn:* 2

*Finesse:* 3

*Wits:* 4

*Resolve:* 2

*Panache:* 4

*Reputation:* 22

*Background:* None

*Arcana:* Reckless

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne (R/W), Vendel (R/W), Appearance (Above Average), Linguist

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Cartography 4, Climbing 4, Knotwork 2, Navigation 4, Pilot 4, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

*Scholar:* Astronomy 2, History 4, Law 2, Mathematics 3, Occult 2, Philosophy 4, Research 2

*Captain:* Diplomacy 4, Gunnery 3, Incitation 5, Leadership 4, Logistics 3, Strategy 3, Tactics 4

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 2, Kick 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2

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

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

*Rogers (Journeyman):* Bind (Fencing) 4, Corps-à-corps 4, Disarm (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 5

*Pirate Tricks:* Over the Side, Quick Draw

The daughter of Philip Gosse, Melinda was raised with a complete education. She learned to pilot a ship, navigate, read and write several languages, and even to fire a pistol. Melinda always had a terminal case of wanderlust. She lived for so many years on the tiny island of Utopia that she ached to go everywhere and see everything. She would often beg Hans and Dupre to take her on their escapades, although they never relented. Naturally, when her Poppa wanted to embark on “one last adventure,” she refused to let him leave without her.

Unfortunately, she’s not always the most sensible person. She barges into dangerous situations without realizing it, and has to either use her impressive fencing skills to extricate herself, or call upon her crew for help. She’s learned to temper her brashness somewhat, but still prefers to rush headlong into situations and worry about the consequences later.

While Philip, her father, retains the title of captain, he only did so at her insistence. She’s truly the captain of the *Uncharted Course*, and the men look to her for their orders. When Poppa acquired a second ship as part of his plan to stop the Freighter, there were no question who would command it. She was horrified at the fate of her cousin Thomas, and has promised herself a quick death rather than endure such horror.

In truth, all she really wanted to accomplish with this journey was to sail around and see the sights, pick up some supplies, and cause some trouble before returning to Utopia to settle down. The Freighter has placed a considerable crimp in those plans, and in her private moments, she mourns the “grand adventure” that Necros has destroyed.



*Advantages:* Avalon, Castille (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne, Combat Reflexes

*Courtier:* Dancing 2, Etiquette 1, Fashion 2, Gaming 2, Lip Reading 3, Oratory 3

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 2, Leaping 3, Rigging 1, Swimming 2

*Aldana (Master):* Feint (Fencing) 5, Riposte (Fencing) 5, Tagging (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 5

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 4, Lifting 2, Side-step 3, Sprinting 2, Swinging 4, Throwing 3  
*Fencing:* Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 5

A tall, fierce man of Castillian descent, Torvo is a master of the Aldana style of fighting. Trained on the island, he grew up somewhat apart from the other children, because his father insisted that he practice swordsmanship for hours every day. He often felt awkward and uncomfortable around other people, and grew up a surly, disagreeable man who lived only for the sword.

It wasn't easy living in the shadow of his father. Trying to meet the expectations of such a skilled swordsman nearly killed him on more than one occasion. He accompanied Gosse on this voyage because it was a chance to finally escape his father's eye, and also to find a swordsman worthy enough to challenge him (he had long since bested every fencer on the island). Naturally, he served as the Gentlemen's weapon master, and has yet to disappoint in his duties.

After they left, Philip explained to him that his father was one of the greatest swordsmen in the world – in fact, he invented the entire Aldana school of fighting. However, the noble for whom it was named stole credit for it and declared Torvo's father an outlaw. The old man drove his son so hard because he wanted to prove that he was still the best swordsman around, if only through Torvo.

When he heard this, Torvo swore to find the "founder" of the Aldana school, and teach him

some manners. He knows that Don Aldana's name will always be attached to the school, and for that, the bastard must die. The arrival of the Black Freighter shifted his priorities somewhat — he cares for Gosse a great deal and his Vaticine upbringing recoils in horror at an abomination like Necros — but he fully intends to confront Don Aldana once the unholy vessel is returned to Legion's Pit.

Of course, "Torvo Espada" isn't a real Castillian name. Philip told him to take on a pseudonym before going out into the real world. His real name is too dangerous to declare openly, at least in Castille. He probably should have taken a less obvious pseudonym, however; most Castillians give him strange looks whenever he introduces himself.

## Gosse's Crewmen

### Andre Braudel: Hero

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation:* 18

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Castille, Crescent, Montaigne

*Hunter:* Ambush 3, Fishing 3, Survival 2, Tracking 3

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Cartography 2, Climbing 4, Knotwork 2, Navigation 3, Pilot 2, Rigging 3, Swimming 2, Weather 1

*Captain:* Bribery 4, Diplomacy 2, Gunnery 2, Incitation 2, Leadership 3, Logistics 4, Strategy 2, Tactics 3

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2, Throat Strike 3

*Heavy Weapon:* Attack (Heavy Weapon) 4, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 2

*Rogers (Apprentice):* Bind (Heavy Weapon) 3, Corps-a-corps 2, Disarm (Heavy Weapon) 4, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 4

*Pirate Tricks:* Sea Legs

Andre is about five and a half feet tall, with sandy blond hair, and broad shoulders. He has a lopsided grin that he flashes at the slightest provocation, and is a capable swordsman and sailor. He's been in love with Melinda for years, as the two grew up together, and they were engaged to be married a few weeks before the voyage was proposed. Andre really only came along on this journey to keep an eye on her. He's by far the more level-headed of the pair, and he was worried about her getting hurt or killed. He doesn't really

care anything for the outside world, as he was quite happy on the island.

Philip saw that Andre had a good head on his shoulders, and made him the first mate, so that even if something happens to him, Melinda will have a sensible advisor. Andre wants to make sure everyone gets back to Utopia in one piece, and provides sound solutions to the Gentlemen's often-impractical problems. He is deeply troubled by the appearance of the Freighter and worries that Gosse will do something rash in order to stop it. If he thought it would do any good, he would tie Philip and Melinda up and force the crew to sail home, but he knows that the Freighter would only follow them there. So he keeps his head, gives the best advice he can, and resolutely fights the growing fear in his belly.

**Dupre: Hero**

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 0

*Arcana*: Exemplary

*Advantages*: Avalon, Crescent, Eisen, Montaigne (R/W)

*Performer*: Acting 2, Cold Read 3, Dancing 4, Oratory 2, Prestidigitation 4, Singing 3

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 4, Leaping 3, Rigging 5, Sea Lore 2, Swimming 2

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

*Athlete*: Break Fall 3, Climbing 4, Footwork 5, Rolling 3, Sprinting 4, Swinging 4, Throwing 2

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Eye-gouge 2, Kick 3, Throat Strike 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 3

*Knife*: Attack (Knife) 4, Parry (Knife) 1, Throw (Knife) 4

**Hans: Hero**

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 2  
*Reputation*: 0

*Advantages*: Crescent, Eisen (R/W), Montaigne

*Performer*: Acting 3, Cold Read 4, Dancing 3, Oratory 2, Singing 2, Story Telling 3

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 5, Leaping 3, Rigging 4, Swimming 2, Weather 3

*Streetwise*: Socializing 3, Street navigation 3, Scrounging 4, Underworld Lore 2

*Athlete*: Climbing 4, Footwork 3, Sprinting 3, Throwing 4, Break Fall 3, Lifting 5, Side-step 4

*Panzerhand*: Attack (Panzerhand) 4, Parry (Panzerhand) 3, Uppercut 4

*Wrestling*: Grapple 4, Bear Hug 3, Break 4, Escape 2, Head Butt 3

Gosse's fore and aft topsmen consider themselves "twins separated by birth," even though Hans is Eisen and Dupre Montaigne. They're physically similar (Dupre is blonde and a little shorter), and have matching tastes in clothes, women and beer. Dupre once squeezed himself into a beer keg on a bet. Hans, on the other hand, lifted the beer keg (with Dupre still in it) over his head with one hand, also on a bet. Moreso than anyone else aboard ship, these two share a close bond of friendship that transcends their differences, which weren't very numerous to begin with.

The two were only sixteen when they joined Gosse's crew and only nineteen when the *Uncharted Course* retired. Of all the Gentlemen, they spent the most time away from the island: taking a small sloop into rowdy ports, drinking and wenching for nights on end, and returning to the isle with abundant supplies and wretched hangovers. They jumped at the chance to get back into action, and even the terrible Black Freighter has yet to dampen their spirits.

As topsman, they're excellent, but it's their status as impromptu morale officers that the rest of the crew truly appreciates. They look out for each other like brothers. If they only have enough money for one beer, they split it. If there's only one pretty lady to dance with, they'll both kiss her, and then dance with each other, much to the amusement of the crowd. And if there's only one fellow to brawl with, one will hold him while the other hits him. Life has always been a game for them — and they don't plan on changing just because the Black Freighter is here.

**Sergei Nyasvy: Hero**

*Brawn* 5, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 2  
*Reputation*: 0

*Arcana*: Courageous

*Advantages*: Crescent, Montaigne, Ussuran (R/W), Large

*Artist*: Musician (Flute) 3, Musician (Lute) 3, Musician (Organ) 2

*Performer*: Acting 4, Animal Training 1, Circus 5, Cold Read 4, Dancing 2, Disguise 1, Oratory 3, Singing 3, Storytelling 2

*Sailor*: Balance 2, Climbing 4, Knotwork 2, Rigging 1

*Athlete*: Break Fall 5, Climbing 4, Footwork 3, Lifting 5, Rolling 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 4

*Wrestling*: Grapple 1

Sergei only recently joined the crew. They came upon him working in an Ussuran traveling circus, wrestling bears for a living. Melinda thought that such a mighty man would make a perfect boarding marine, and hired him away from the circus on the spot.

Unfortunately, it turned out that the bears were shapeshifted Ussurans, taking care not to hurt Sergei. He didn't actually know how to fight, and considered himself an actor by trade. His enormous size (about seven feet tall) proved to be more of a liability than an asset in his chosen profession. He loved to portray famous heroes, but no one wanted to cheer for a hero who outweighs the villain by 150 lbs. Thus, he was stuck in the circus, pretending to wrestle bears. Melinda's offer gave him a chance to play the hero again, but it involved considerably more danger. He didn't care.

Happily for the crew, Sergei is a very good actor. He's so big and fearsome when he charges into battle that no one dares to challenge him. Often, all he has to do is point his sword at someone and demand their surrender in gruff tones, promising terrible vengeance if he's not obeyed at once. Most people want nothing to do with a huge Ussuran berserker, and throw down their weapons.

Still, Sergei has what Hernando Ochoa refers to as a "creative temperament." He pesters the crew whenever possible, telling them about the latest change he wants to make to "his character," and blathering on about the power of his craft. They usually just point him at Melinda. She found him, after all, so she should be the one to put up with his bombast.

### Hernando Ochoa: Hero

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 5, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 2  
*Reputation*: 32

*Arcana*: Inspirational

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Crescent, Théan (R/W), Vendel, Membership (Rilasciare, retired) Ordained, University

*Courtier*: Dancing 2, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 5, Fashion 2, Oratory 5, Politics 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 5

*Doctor*: Dentist 3, Diagnosis 4, Examiner 2, First Aid 4, Quack 1, Surgery 4

*Merchant*: Calligrapher 5

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 3, Rigging 1, Sea Lore 4, Swimming 3



### Gosse's Ship

#### The Uncharted Course (35 point ship)

*Brawn*: 5

*Finesse*: 7

*Resolve*: 4

*Wits*: 6

*Panache*: 6

*Modifications*: Mascot (1), Fine Galley (2), Well-Trained Crew (2), Good Captain (4)

*Flaws*: Old (1)

*Draft*: 4

*Cargo*: 4

*Crew*: 7

*Reputation*: 185



*Scholar*: Astronomy 3, History 5, Law 4, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 3, Occult 2, Philosophy 4, Research 4, Theology 5

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

Hernando was the impetus for the original crew to become pirates. A long-standing member of the Rilasciare, he filled young Gosse's head with ideals of equality for all men, and a world in which men work to make their lives better. Gosse then sold the idea to the crew, and made it a reality — first as a band of gentlemen pirates, and then on the island of Utopia when they retired. Hernando left the Rilasciare to follow Gosse to Utopia and has never regretted the decision.

One of the eldest members of the crew, Hernando served as Utopia's chief advisor during their time on the island. Whenever anyone had a problem, be it a troubled spirit or a broken farming implement, they could come to Hernando for help. While he didn't always know the answers, he had enough common sense to make up for it, and he always exuded an air of knowledge.

He fully intended to die on Utopia, but as time went on, he began to wonder if he could have seen more of the world. His health had begun to decline, however, and he resigned himself to never seeing the rest of Théah again. Then Gosse announced his last grand adventure, and the old priest took advantage of the opportunity.

Hernando came along on the voyage to die. He has the feeling that he's not going to last out the year, and like Gosse, he intends to take the Freighter with him when he goes.



## The Montaigne Navy



**The General: Scoundrel**  
 Brawn: 4  
 Finesse: 3  
 Wits: 4  
 Resolve: 5  
 Panache: 4  
 Reputation: 67  
 Background: True Identity  
 Arcana: Greedy

**Advantages:** Eisen (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Commission (Montaigne Navy), Dracheneisen (Breastplate, Arm Guard (1), Gauntlet (1), Leg Guard (1)), Indomitable Will, Noble, Scoundrel, Toughness

**Courtier:** Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 3, Oratory 4, Politics 3, Sincerity 4

**Commander:** Ambush 3, Cartography 5, Gunnery 5, Incitation 4, Leadership 4, Logistics 5, Strategy 4, Tactics 5

**Eisenfaust (Master):** Beat (Heavy Weapon) 5, Bind (Panzerhand) 5, Disarm (Panzerhand) 5, Exploit Weakness (Eisenfaust) 5

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

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

**Panzerhand:** Attack (Panzerhand) 5, Parry (Panzerhand) 5, Uppercut 3

The man known as the General was born Heinrich von Stutten, the son of a minor baron under Erich Sieger. When Heinrich came of age, he gained control of a small plot of land, a meaningless title, and a suit of dracheneisen. During the War of the Cross, he fought with honor and integrity alongside his lord Sieger for several years. The two of them were determined to forge a united Eisen no matter what the cost.

Towards the end of the war, Heinrich began negotiations with a number of other extremely powerful nobles to try to bring about a united peace. Each of them seemed interested solely in their own power and position. Every one of them

wanted a strong united Eisen, but none of them was willing to make the necessary sacrifices. Heinrich worked desperately to find a solution, but none came. In the end, Castille and Montaigne invaded, Eisen fell apart, and the Emperor hanged himself.

Heinrich was delayed in returning home, and by the time he reached his lord, Sieger had taken steps to ensure that Castille would never claim his lands. He burned his fields and salted the earth of his territory, including the province belonging to Baron von Stutten. This was too much for him. The bitter fighting and petty squabbling had earned him nothing but heartbreak. He buried his armor and left his lands for whichever faction wanted it. He traveled across Théah as a common mercenary known only as the General.

The Empereur of Montaigne found him as he was serving some minor contract for a local marquis. In a fit of pique, the ruler placed the General in charge of the entire Montaigne navy for the sole purpose of hunting down pirates. The general was shocked, but the money was too good to pass up. If Léon wanted him to be a sailor, a sailor he would be.

Initially, the General hated the pretentious manners of his ridiculous officers and the preposterous name for his flagship. He took out his frustrations on his crew, who learned to hate him with an unbridled passion. As time went on, however, his attitude slowly changed. He found himself respecting the crew for the honor and nobility they displayed despite their circumstances. For their part, they slowly began to see through his cruelty to the keen military mind beneath. Together, they formed a formidable team, and under his direction, the fleet became a potent force in a very short time. He was remarkably successful against the Avalon Sea Dogs and other common pirates. He had turned his attention to the Brotherhood of the Coast, who had just made a daring raid of a Montaigne noble's home when the Castillian Armada attacked. The Montaigne blockade — undermanned since *l'Empereur's* command to "hunt pirates" — simply dissolved before the powerful attack. Before the day was out, Admiral Valoix had taken command of the navy, and restricted the General's command to a single boat.

Then the Inquisition found him. They offered him a chestful of guilders if he would betray the crew of his ship. In deep despair over the loss of his command and feeling betrayed by his employers, the General agreed.

But by the time of the meeting, he had changed his mind. Months in the navy had reawakened the spark of his old honor, and he would not betray the loyal men beneath him. He loaded up the chestful of guilders into a cannon and fired it at Orduño's galleon. Orduño was so impressed by the man's honor and courage that he refused to give chase. The Inquisition needed a scapegoat for their plan's failure and they chose Orduño.

The General was not done, however. With a newfound sense of purpose and a desire to repay Orduño's gesture, he reclaimed his armor and set out a call to his old crew to rejoin him. Not only did many Montaigne sailors return to his side, but the Eisen soldiers beneath his command pledged themselves to his cause as well.

With the return of his men, his armor and his lost honor, accepted a plea from the Orduño's wife to rescue the Admiral from the clutches of the Inquisition. His plan was daring and audacious, resulting both in the recovery of Orduño and the disappearance of the General's ship into a massive Porté hole (detailed in Chapter One). He has not been seen since, but those who know him do not believe that he is dead. Nothing is impossible for one such as he.



**Admiral Valoix: Villain**

*Brawn:* 3

*Finesse:* 3

*Wits:* 5

*Resolve:* 3

*Panache:* 4

*Reputation:* -50

*Background:* Defeated

*Arcana:* Resourceful

*Advantages:* Avalon, Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Théah (R/W), Commission (Montaigne Navy), Keen Senses, Montaigne Accent (South), Noble

*Courtier:* Dancing 2, Diplomacy 5, Etiquette 4, Fashion 5, Gaming 4, Gossip 4, Mooch 5, Oratory 5, Sincerity 5

*Criminal:* Gambling 5, Quack 1, Shadowing 2, Stealth 4

*Performer:* Acting 3, Cold Read 5, Dancing 2, Oratory 5, Singing 2, Storytelling 5

*Sailor:* Balance 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Navigation 4, Pilot 4, Rigging 2

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

*Captain:* Ambush 3, Bribery 4, Incitation 4, Logistics 3, Strategy 4, Tactics 4

A year ago, Alazais Valoix Praise du Rachetisse III was the High Admiral of the Montaigne Fleet and one of the most desirable guests at any party hosted in Charouse. He was an excellent gambler, a good dancer and a pleasant companion. His tales of swashbuckling and glowing reports of naval supremacy gained him friends among the nobles and ensured his position. A book of short stories had just been published collecting many of his more exotic tales, including one which described how he won the High Admiration of the Fleet in a game of Squares with l'Empereur. His only concern was the time limit that l'Empereur had set him: rid Montaigne waters of piracy by 1670 or die (the order seemed particularly foolish considering that Montaigne was at war with Castille and the navy was engaged in a tenuous blockade at the same time). Still Alazais was living a high life of prestige and privilege and loving every moment of it.

That all ended when Enrique Orduño set out with his Armada from the Castillian harbor of San Felipe. Under cover of fog, they crept up to the Montaigne blockade and attacked without warning. Alazais's first warning came from dozens of Porté sorcerers appearing in the naval offices covered in blood and screaming of an attack. By then it was too late. The finest communications network in Théah enabled Alazais to save the fleet, but the blockade was lost and the ships were scattered across the sea.

His head still reeling with the swiftness of the attack, Alazais received a midnight visit in his apartments from Remy du Montaigne, l'Empereur's personal bodyguard. Remy ripped open a bloody, screaming Porté opening, then grabbed Alazais' hand and pulled him in.

Alazais himself had no Porté powers, and always found traveling by Porté a disconcerting experience. Once inside the Portal, it was everything he remembered: the cold, clammy feel of blood upon his limbs. The unearthly screams from all around. The necessity to keep his eyes sealed shut. The knowledge that something terrible happened to those who opened their eyes.

Alazais had traveled by Portal before. But he had never felt the sorcerer's hand slip away from his own.

The screams around him rose in intensity and he felt something brush up against him. Blood from the Portal seeped into his mouth and he

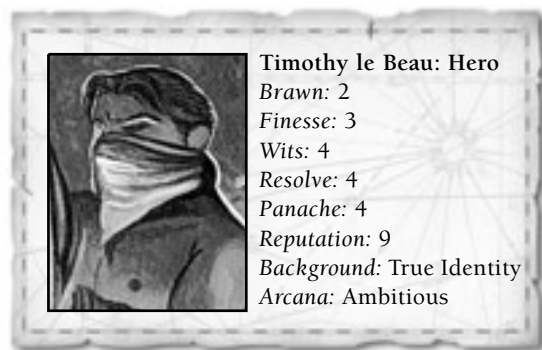
fought the urge to open his eyes. *Things* began caressing him and promising him unholy pleasures if he would only look upon them. The cold, clammy blood seeped through his lacy clothes and into his skin. He laughed hysterically. He screamed. He promised his soul to unholy powers. But still he kept his eyes screwed shut. After an eternity of this, he felt something grab him around the wrist and pull him forward. Then the screams ended and light fell upon his face.

He was covered head to toe in the unnatural blood of the Portal and it dripped off of him onto the floor of a Montaigne ship of the line's cabin. Remy du Montaigne stood in front of him with a moue of distaste. "*L'Empereur* trusts that this taste of his displeasure will convince you of his seriousness," he sniffed. "You will destroy Castille for embarrassing us, or your death will not await 1670. You will find it much sooner." Then Remy turned, ripped upon another Portal and strode into it. Alazais fell screaming at the sight, which was how the surprised servant found him minutes later. Alazais immediately regained his composure and ordered a bath and a cat o' nine tails. The servant brought him both. Alazais beat the poor man to death and then bathed.

Alazais has not returned to land since the night the blockade was destroyed. He has thrown himself into personal command of the Montaigne Fleet with a passion. He stripped the General of command and transferred all of his men to other boats. He has ordered the bombing of every Castillian church or noble's home. He has sent messengers bearing fingers of loved ones to those who oppose him. He has pressed into service every beggar, lunatic or criminal he could find. He is determined to defeat the Castillians at any cost. He has beaten every man who contradicted him in even small matters. Several powerful nobles were outraged to be struck with a whip, but the madness in the Admiral's eyes kept them transfixed.

His madness holds him in an unyielding grip. The only time a portal opened within his sight, he curled into a ball and whimpered for almost half an hour before arising. Every night he returns to his private bedroom and scrubs himself with boiling water by the light of a dozen lanterns. He still sees blood on every inch of his body and it won't come off no matter how much he scrubs. His skin is red and cracked from this abuse, but he doesn't feel any of the pain, only the clammy feel of blood trickling through his hair.

Alazais has been completely broken. He will do anything to prevent ever being punished again. He will destroy all of Castille one man at a time to ensure never passing through another Portal. So far, *l'Empereur* has not responded to any of his actions, although the fleet has enjoyed a fair amount of success under his crazed ministrations. Only time will tell what becomes of the madman, and whether he will ever free himself from the horrible punishment his lord has inflicted.



**Timothy le Beau: Hero**

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 3

Wits: 4

Resolve: 4

Panache: 4

Reputation: 9

Background: True Identity

Arcana: Ambitious

**Advantages:** Montaigne, Commission (Lieutenant)

**Criminal:** Ambush 3, Gambling 1, Pickpocket 3, Prestidigitation 4, Quack 1, Scrounging 4, Shadowing 4, Stealth 4

**Sailor:** Balance 2, Knotwork 3, Navigation 4, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

**Servant:** Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Hagglng 4, Menial Tasks 3, Unobtrusive 4

**Spy:** Conceal 3, Poison 2

**Streetwise:** Socializing 1, Street Navigation 4, Underworld Lore 3

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

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Eye-gouge 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4

**Porté (Master):** Attunement 5, Bleeding 5, Bring 5, Pocket 5, Walk 5

Timothy le Beau has no idea who he is. He grew up on the streets of Charouse as an orphan, and survived mostly due to his Porté talent. He took on the name "le Beau" as a badge of honor, having survived life on the streets with nary a scratch to show for it. At the tender age of fifteen, he joined the navy, and his wits, willpower, and amazing skill with the Portal helped him rise rapidly through the ranks. When the General was stripped of his commission, Timothy was transferred to Admiral Valoix. *L'Admiral* soon

found that Timothy was as sly, ruthless, and cunning as himself, and made him his first mate. Unfortunately for Valoix, le Beau's Porté abilities made him exceedingly uneasy, and the clever sorcerer soon realized that his commander was as mad as a march hare. He returned to the General as soon as was possible, and helped the Eisen engineer Orduño's rescue.

What Timothy does not know is that he is the illegitimate son of Remy du Montaigne (see the *Montaigne* sourcebook). His mother, a noblewoman of surpassing beauty, died during childbirth, and Timothy was left to the mercy of the streets. He is probably the strongest Porté sorcerer in three generations. He has inherited all of his father's speed and grace, and Remy's softness from a life of luxury is completely absent in Timothy. While he could probably train to be as good a swordsman as his father, he has never had any instruction, and has only recently begun formal learning.

Timothy is young, barely nineteen, but you would not know it to look at him. Any traces of softness or sympathy he might have had as a child are long erased, replaced by a cold and efficient sorcerer. He is not villainous so much as callous. Timothy is, more than anything else, a survivor, and intends to stay alive for as long as possible. Everything else is secondary to him.

## Montaigne Crewmen

### Isabeau Dubois du Arrent: Hero

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 8

*Arcana*: Friendly

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Above Average Appearance, Commission (Montaigne Navy), Noble, Servants

*Artist*: Singing 2

*Courtier*: Dancing 2, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 3, Fashion 3, Gaming 2, Gossip 1, Oratory 1, Politics 2

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

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

*Firearms*: Attack (Firearms) 5, Reload (Firearms) 5

Isabeau Dubois du Arrent was the only daughter in a family of six. She learned early on to take care of herself, developing a fierce independence and a penchant for marksmanship.

She enlisted in the Montaigne navy to avoid being sold off in marriage like a prize heifer.

On her first day, her ship ran afoul of a storm. A topman fell from the rigging into a tangle of loose lines and a loop snagged around his throat. Before anyone else could move, Isabeau shot the line in two and freed the sailor. She quickly discovered that she had the tools for this job. She gained the perspective she needed from the top of the forecastle and it enabled her to direct her men's fire down upon the crew's of other ships. Her skills quickly brought her to the attention of her superiors and before long she was transferred to the flagship.

Isabeau is popular with her men. She treats them well and encourages them without fraternizing. She maintains two servants who reload her muskets during combat. She has always respected the General's unorthodox tactics and insights while wishing that he would take more time to get to know his own men.

When Admiral Valoix reassigned her to a galleon, she found the men were sullen and resentful of her and the captain cared only for his own perks. Then word reached her of the General's single shot. She requested leave and rejoined him with her personal servants. While she knows she can never again serve in the Montaigne navy, at least she serves a man she honestly respects.

### Mike Fitzpatrick: Hero

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 0

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Crescent, Montaigne, Ussuran

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Cartography 2, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Navigation 2, Pilot 3, Rigging 4, Sea Lore 3

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

*Athlete*: Break Fall 3, Climbing 3, Footwork 3, Leaping 4, Sprinting 3, Swimming 2, Swinging 3, Throwing 2

*Captain*: Ambush 3, Gunnery 2, Incitation 4, Leadership 3, Strategy 2, Tactics 4

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

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

A short, scrappy Inishman, Mike served in the Avalon navy before being captured by the Corsairs. Despite everything, they didn't break his spirit. He regularly insulted his superiors and endured countless tortures as a result. He was



### The Montaigne Navy's Ships

#### The Grenouille du Grâce (30 point ship)

Brawn: 4  
 Finesse: 7  
 Resolve: 4  
 Wits: 6  
 Panache: 6  
 Modifications: Silk Sails (2), Sturdy Hull (2), Well Trained Crew (2), Decoration (3)  
 Flaws: Cramped (4)  
 Draft: 4  
 Cargo: 6  
 Crew: 4  
 Reputation: 17



#### The Prédateur des Mers (35 point ship)

Brawn: 6  
 Finesse: 5  
 Resolve: 6  
 Wits: 6  
 Panache: 6  
 Modifications: Brig (1), Prow Ram (1), Silk Sails (2), Decoration (3)  
 Flaws: None  
 Draft: 6  
 Cargo: 5  
 Crew: 6  
 Reputation: -10



careful never to cross the line, however, and always remained healthy enough to row. He didn't intend to die until he got revenge on his captors.

He saw his chance during Espera's revolt. When his oarmate attempted to alert the guards, he strangled the man on his own chain and joined the escaping prisoners. He would not remain with them for long, however. A bolt from Inil's crossbow struck him as they stole across the ship's deck, and he tumbled over the railing into the sea.

He would have died were it not for a sudden riptide which swept him away from the ship and towards land. He found himself washed up on a sandy beach, battered and bleeding, but alive. He was found by a band of Eisen mercenaries, returning from Vodacce. They nursed the Inishman back to health and he gratefully agreed

to assist them in their endeavors until he could find a way to destroy Kheired-Din.

As it turns out, the Eisen once followed the man known as the General. Upon their return to their native land, they were reunited with their lord and pledged themselves to his service. Fitzpatrick found himself onboard the General's ship, where his sailing skills were much in demand. He bonded quickly with the other crewmen, and was among their number when the *Grenouille du Grâce* vanished into the Porté hole. Like every other member of that crew, his current whereabouts are unknown.

#### Rosamonde du Montaigne: Hero

Brawn 2, Finesse 1, Wits 4, Resolve 2, Panache 5  
 Reputation: 43

Advantages: Avalon, Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Théah (R/W), Connections (Many) Montaigne Accent (South), Noble, Servants

Background: Obligation

Artist: Drawing 2

Courtier: Dancing 4, Diplomacy 5, Etiquette 4, Fashion 5, Gossip 4, Mooch 5, Oratory 5, Politics 4, Sincerity 5

Merchant: Accounting 3, Weaver 2

Captain: Cartography 3, Diplomacy 4, Leadership 2, Logistics 3, Strategy 1, Tactics 1

The second daughter of l'Empereur Léon was always fascinated by the sea. She often dragged her twin sister Evelyne out the shore, riding in a carriage for hours just to be able to listen to the waves. As she grew older, she begged her tutors to tell her stories of piracy and adventure. Every night, she dreamt of captaining her own vessel and sailing to the Midnight Archipelago in search of plunder.

Unfortunately, while she had a sailor's passions, she lacked a sailor's temperament. Boat trips often made her violently seasick, she never developed real sea legs, and she lacked the patience to learn even basic sailing skills. Even if she had possessed those abilities, a princesse du Montaigne would never be allowed to command a ship. The best she could manage was Inspector General of the Montaigne Navy, a political position that had as much to do with nautical matters as keeping an accounting ledger.

At first, Rosamonde took her frustrations out on her charges. She stationed herself onboard the General's ship and questioned the validity of every decision he made. Though infuriated by her presence, he could do little about it and learned to tolerate her high-handed judgements as best he

could. Her attitude changed during the General's attack on the *Hanged Man*. As she stood on deck and watched the assault, a desperate Brotherhood pirate swung onboard, shot her bodyguard, and was preparing to run the General through. Without thinking, she grabbed a pistol from the nearby deck and blew the screaming Brother's head off.

The act shifted her perceptions forever. She suddenly saw sailing not as some lark or game, but as a serious business where men died if they weren't careful. Rosamonde has since gained new respect for the General and his men, and has not presumed to question him since. Through her lobbying efforts, she has kept the Eisen mercenary safe from *l'Empereur's* mercurial wrath and intends to launch broad reforms within the navy just as soon as the war with Castille is over.

Rosamonde's weak *Porté* abilities allow her to keep in touch with Evelyne through a passed chalkboard. She secretly envies her little sister Ysabelle, who ran away to become a pirate several years ago (see the *Sophia's Daughters* sourcebook for more information). She intends to go out again as soon as she can to look for her.

### **Fierbas Desaix du Paix: Henchman**

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 4  
*Reputation*: 8

*Advantages*: Montaigne (R/W), Castillian (R/W), Commission (Mate), Noble

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

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1, Swimming 3

*Captain*: Strategy 2, Tactics 2, Gunnery 3

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

*Knife*: Attack 2, Parry 1

*Porté (Adept)*: Pocket 5, Walk 4, Bleeding 4, Bring 4, Attunement 3

Fierbas Desaix du Paix is actually Fierbas Desaix Praise du Rachetisse. When *l'Empereur* commissioned the General as a pirate hunter, Admiral Alazais was, needless to say, skeptical, and wanted somebody to keep a close eye on him. His nephew Fierbas was quick, talented, and available. The young man enlisted under the pseudonym, "du Paix," so that the General wouldn't notice any connection. He served well and with distinction as a gunner, his moderate *Porté* talent allowing him to perform convenient tricks (like pulling shot from nowhere).

When *l'Admiral* took the *Prédateur* and began to get more directly involved with the Castillian

war, Fierbas signed on with him quickly, assuming he would get favorable treatment and an easy post. What he found, however, was that his uncle's methods were questionable, and his ethics flexible. While Fierbas has never shirked at combat, Admiral Valoix's Machiavellian methods distressed him, and after being ordered to fire on civilian establishments and vessels, Fierbas joined Timothy le Beau and returned to the General's side. He has been plagued by guilt over abandoning his uncle, but suspects that Valoix is destined for an ugly end, and doesn't want to be anywhere nearby when it happens.

Fierbas has found that he prefers pirate-hunting to warfare, and the rescue of Admiral Orduño gave his noble side a chance to shine. He helped create the giant *Porté* hole through which the *Grenouille du Grâce* escaped, standing on shore with several other *Porté* mages to hold the great rift open. The stunt damaged his psyche, and he has struggled with periodic fits of madness ever since.

### **Louis Sices du Sices: Hero**

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 4  
*Reputation*: 10

*Arcana*: Inspiring

*Advantages*: Eisen (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Vendel (R/W), Above Average Appearance, Commission (Montaigne Navy), Indomitable Will, Noble

*Doctor*: Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Quack 1

*Porté (Apprentice)*: Attunement 1, Bleeding 2, Bring 3, Catch 2

*Captain*: Ambush 2, Diplomacy 4, Gunnery 5, Incitation 3, Leadership 2, Strategy 2, Tactics 2

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

*Riding*: Mounting 3, Ride 3

Louis Sices du Sices' family has only recently been ennobled and given possession of significant holdings by *l'Empereur*. Their sorcery is weak, but they have provided excellent soldiers and courtiers for generations. However, they have not mastered the haughty disdain and revulsion that other nobles hold for all commoners. While this makes them odd ducks among the nobles, it makes them heroes to the common folk.

Louis believes that his men are fully capable of great feats, they just need training and encouragement. Just as he needed training in geometry and chemistry to make him a master gunner, they need instruction in etiquette, courtly behavior, gunnery and other fields. While the other gunners are beating or ignoring their men, Louis is trying to better their lot. He tolerates no

one to abuse his men, regardless of their station or rank. In fact, many still remember his heroic stand alone against a squad of attacking Castillian nobles to give his men time to arm themselves. It is a measure of Louis and his men that they men rallied and charged to assist him in defeating the nobles without orders. Just as he expected.

As a gunner, Louis is known for his epiphany regarding fuses. Rather than lighting a fuse, he has a metal plate placed over the touchspot of the gun and a red hot coal placed upon it. When the gun is ready, Louis uses his weak *Porté* magic to draw the plate to him and leave the coal to light off the gun's charge. This is faster than a fuse and allows for a more accurate shot.



## The Sea Dogs



**Jeremiah Berek: Hero**

*Brawn:* 2  
*Finesse:* 4  
*Wits:* 5  
*Resolve:* 3  
*Panache:* 5  
*Reputation:* 144  
*Background:* None  
*Arcana:* Creative

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Castille, Montaigne, Vendel, Commission (Sea Dogs), Indomitable Will, Noble, Swordsman's Guild

*Courtier:* Dancing 3, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, Fashion 3, Oratory 5, Politics 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 5

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

*Scholar:* History 4, Law 2, Mathematics 2, Occult 2, Philosophy 3, Research 3

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 4, Leaping 4, Rolling 4, Sprinting 2, Swimming 3, Swinging 4, Throwing 2

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

*Captain:* Ambush 4, Incitation 4, Leadership 5, Strategy 5, Tactics 4

*Donovan (Master):* Bind (Buckler) 5, Disarm (Fencing) 5, Riposte (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Donovan) 5

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

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

Everything always came easy for Jeremiah Berek. Born into a wealthy noble family, he was raised and educated among the elite. When Elaine gave out her call to sail for Avalon, he saw an opportunity for quick advancement. His planning and good fortune allowed him to defeat the Castillian armada, and his stint as leader of the Sea Dogs earned him an unsurpassed reputation for luck and bravado.

Nothing seemed beyond his reach. He would dive headlong into the most hopeless situations using a combination of resourcefulness and luck to pull him through. Invariably, they would. The Sidhe took notice of his reckless escapades, and his reputation soon provided him with a Glamour-induced sheen of incredible good luck. Soon, nothing was too dangerous for the cocky Sea Dog. No situation was too hopeless, no odds too great. Though he did his best to remain modest through it all, it was hard to keep a lid on such smug confidence.

His luck ran out, however, when he crossed the Crimson Rogers. The Glamour surrounding Reis was equally as powerful as his, and though he successfully filched the Rogers' latest treasure, he couldn't escape their wrath. The two ships clashed, and Berek leapt over to confront Reis alone. He was grievously injured and tossed overboard while his crew sped away. Some last bit of luck allowed him to survive in the water until help arrived, but his aura of invincibility had been shattered forever.

The Berek that the Brotherhood of the Coast fished out of the sea was a changed man. He saw his life for the delusional fairy tale that it was. The fates didn't owe him success simply because he was Jeremiah Berek, and Glamour couldn't prevent the world from crushing him flat if it wanted. As he recuperated in the Brotherhood's hold, a sense of humility descended upon him, anchoring his once-carefree spirit.

Ironically, it took losing his luck to remind him of his very real talents and gifts. He had always been a resourceful man, and his leadership abilities were second to none. As a Sea Dog, he had developed a retractable keel for hiding in shallow waters, and formulated numerous innovative battle strategies. Freed of his illusions, he began applying his gifts as never before, and found that he didn't need luck to survive.

He currently leads the Brotherhood in their quest to rescue Allende. Though he commands

but a single ship, the men below him have responded to his orders, and trust him to find their lost commander. He remains a Sea Dog at heart, but his experience with the Brotherhood has helped rebuild his lost confidence. It's comforting to know that the crew follows him, not his good fortune.



*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Montaigne, Vendel, Combat Reflexes, Commission (Sea Dogs), Membership (Swordsman's Guild)

*Sailor:* Balance 5, Climbing 4, Knotwork 4, Navigation 3, Pilot 3, Rigging 3, Swimming 4, Weather 4

*Buckler:* Attack (Buckler) 2, Parry (Buckler) 5

*Captain:* Gunnery 3, Incitation 4, Leadership 4, Logistics 5, Strategy 3, Tactics 4

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Eye Gouge 4, Kick 3

*Donovan (Journeyman):* Bind (Buckler) 4, Disarm (Fencing) 4, Riposte (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Donovan) 4

*Fencing:* Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 1

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

*Streetwise:* Scrounging 4, Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3

Cyrus McGee's little girl rarely did what she was told. While her politician father served on the Highland Council in Kirkwall, the willful, impulsive Bonnie chased boys and dragonflies across the hills of their estate. She ran off to become a sailor at age eighteen despite her father's protestations; some say she did it solely because he said she couldn't.

As it was, the sailor's life proved a perfect fit for the stubborn redhead. She learned about responsibility and discipline without tempering her rebellious spirit, and soon proved an able commander. When Bonnie's father saw the woman she had become, he renounced his earlier

opposition and financed her own ship, the *Highland Piper*. Bonnie found herself a captain at the tender age of twenty-five.

Unlike most of her peers, she initially refused to join the Sea Dogs, preferring the independence of her own command. That changed a few years later when the *Piper* ran afoul of the Crimson Rogers. Her crew endured a terrible pummeling at the hands of the *Roger's* cannons, but she refused to give in to despair. As her burning ship sank beneath the waves, she steered the flaming vessel straight into the enemy, and launched a boarding attack.

Though they fought valiantly, her crew was cut down one by one, and Bonnie found herself alone and outnumbered. "What a bloody bonnie lass," Reis commented as he looked upon the rival captain. Rather than face the unkillable captain, she threw herself overboard. Out of sight of the *Crimson Roger*, she managed to swim to her blazing ship, cut down a lifeboat, and row herself to safety.

Her friend Celedoine gave her a commission aboard Berek's ship, the *Black Dawn*. She served there as a bosun for nearly three years, and acted as Berek's *de facto* first mate. Her disciplinary measures were harsh, but never unwarranted, and she endeared herself to the crew by never holding a grudge. She remained fascinated by Reis, however, and by the fact that she actually survived their first encounter. When Berek suggested stealing the Rogers' treasure, she didn't object, half hoping that they would run into the pirate again.

They did. The Rogers attacked with a blind fury, and once again, McGee found herself face-to-face with the infamous Reis. Again she retreated, following Berek's orders and getting the *Black Dawn* to safety. Again, she survived the encounter unscathed. Bolstered by a belief that greater forces were at work, she took command of Berek's crew and led them on a perilous mission to rid the seas of Captain Reis.

Her path took her to the halls of Bryn Bresail where she struck a bargain with the enigmatic Sidhe. The Sidhe's Glamour had made Reis an invulnerable villain, but she had faced him and lived. If they would give her the ability to destroy him, she would give them a story they could tell forever. The Sidhe agreed, and Bonnie returned to Th  ah with newfound strength. She doesn't know what will happen when she meets Reis for a third time, but she's dying to find out.

Bonnie is a small, pale-skinned Highlander with a mischievous smile and a quick temper. She remains an iconoclast, but never lets her rebellious nature blind her to reality. She doesn't hate her nemesis, at least not deeply. Reis is as much an attraction as an enemy: more a challenge to overcome than a hated foe. She burns for revenge because she is *supposed* to; the Sidhe expect it and she wouldn't want to disappoint them. After all, they may have given her the key to slaying the most notorious pirate in Théan history.



**Celedoine: Hero**  
*Brawn:* 2  
*Finesse:* 2  
*Wits:* 4  
*Resolve:* 3  
*Panache:* 3  
*Reputation:* 0  
*Background:* None  
*Arcana:* None

**Advantages:** Avalon (R/W), Montaigne, Théan, Commission (Sea Dogs), Inheritance, Noble, University

**Courtier:** Dancing 4, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette 4, Fashion 3, Oratory 2, Politics 3, Sincerity 4, Seduction 3

**Glamour: (Adept):** Greenman 4, Jack 4, Robin Goodfellow 4, Thomas 4, Archer: Attack 3, Fletcher 2

**Scholar:** History 3, Law 3, Math 3, Philosophy 1, Research 1, Theology 3

**Athlete:** Break Fall 3, Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 4, Swimming 3, Throwing 2

**Rider:** Ride 3, Trick Riding 4

Also known as Celedoine the Seven-Blessed, she is the bastard child of a young noble woman and a Sidhe lord, raised by her mortal grandfather as his own daughter. The old man hired tutors to instruct the girl, and soon enough, she showed talent for Glamour. But on Celedoine's tenth birthday, her mother was found drowned in a lake on her grandfather's lands. This event would mark Celedoine for the rest of her life. She grew to resent the Sidhe and her own talents.

Her grandfather died when she was sixteen and left all his lands to his young granddaughter. Celedoine promptly cut her ties with the Sidhe and focused her attentions on more mundane

activities. Lady Celedoine proved a much better seneschal than sorcerer, and her father's lands soon blossomed with unprecedented profit.

She met Jeremiah Berek in the Queen's court and admired his quick wit. The two were lovers for a short time, but while their passion burned brightly, it faded quickly. Their affair ended, but their friendship continued to grow. When the Queen announced her need for ships, Berek came to her with a proposition. "Where would I be without my Lady Celedoine?" he asked her with his rakish smile. She agreed and joined him aboard his newly re-fitted ship.

Once aboard, Celedoine's demeanor began to shift. She listened to the sailors singing their songs and telling stories of leviathans and the Queen of the Sea and surrounded by their tales, the Glamour she denied for so long began to boil in her blood. After spending many years on Berek's ship, Celedoine came to terms with her Sidhe heritage. She has powers most Glamour mages only dream of, including making the *Black Dawn* itself a powerful source of Glamour.

She also engendered a close friendship with "Bloody" Bonnie McGee, one of the only female captains in the Glamour Isles. Their ties enabled Bonnie to join the *Black Dawn's* crew when the Highlander's ship was lost, and Celedoine readily conceded leadership to the fierce red-head after Berek fell to the Rogers. She has given McGee invaluable advice on Sidhe behavior, and continues to support her quest to rid the seas of Captain Reis. Celedoine mourns for Berek, but knows that she cannot give in to anger and hate. Glamour swirls around their mission like a fog. Without a clear head and firm guidance, it could destroy them all. Celedoine is determined not to let that happen, and is the only Sea Dog with the power to do something about it.

## Sea Dog Crewmen

### "Brother" Mattias Brewer: Hero

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 2  
*Reputation:* 0

*Arcana:* Worldly

**Advantages:** Avalon (R/W), Crescent, Eisen, Montaigne, Théan, Able Drinker, Commission (Sea Dogs), Faith, Linguist, Ordained, University

**Doctor:** Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Quack 1, Surgery 3

**Merchant:** Brewing 3, Hagglng 4, Scribe 3

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1, Sea Lore 5

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

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

*Pugilism*: Attack (Pugilism) 4, Footwork 3, Jab 2, Uppercut 2

Many sailors suspect that Mattias Brewer is at least half-Eisen, or perhaps even half-Ussuran, but the truth is that he is all Avalon. Brewer's family has always been involved with the Avalon Church, and Mattias is no exception. He devoted nearly a decade to the Church, but when he heard Elaine was actually paying ships to go out and raid Castillian treasure fleets, he signed up on the first ship he could find. That ship was the *Black Dawn*.

Having spent almost half his life in a monastery, Brewer is a font of information ("A font that won't shut up," complains McGee). His knowledge of natural philosophy, astronomy, geography, and countless other subjects pulled Berek's fat out of the fire on too many occasions to count.

In addition to serving as the *Dawn's* chief counselor and the ship's chaplain, Brewer's main preoccupation is with alcohol. He has devoted entire journals to his experiments, using rare Syrneath herbs and Crescent spices to brew the world's most perfect beer. So far, he isn't satisfied with the results, but failure hasn't dissuaded him.

#### **Nicole Cowbey ("Tom Toblin"): Hero**

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 0

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Montaigne, Combat Reflexes, Commission (Sea Dogs)

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

*Sailor*: Balancing 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

*Scholar*: History 3, Math 1, Philosophy 2, Research 1

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1, Leaping 3

*Buckler*: Parry (Buckler) 3

*Donovan (Journeyman)*: Bind (Buckler) 4, Disarm (Fencing) 4, Riposte (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Donovan) 4

*Fencing*: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 2

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

Tom Toblin was born Nicole Cowbey, daughter of renowned Swordsman Nicholas Cowbey. Unfortunately, Nicholas was also a drunkard and a gambler who let his vices mingle a bit too often for his own good. When she was seventeen, Nicole told her father the man that she loved had asked for her hand in marriage. Her father rejoiced at the good news and took out a loan to cover her dowry. A year after the happy day, she discovered that the man who had loaned her father the money had put a sword through his eye. She went looking to avenge her father's murder, but came home unsuccessful a month later. She returned to find the man had not only taken her father from her, but her husband as well.

That man was John Fox, a confidence man and compulsive liar. Nicole knew that he would come looking for her as well, and she also knew she would be no match for him when he found her. So she cut off her hair, put on a pair of trousers and joined up on the *Black Dawn*, calling herself "Tom Toblin." The disguise would buy her enough time to train herself in the ways of the sword and also let her keep an eye on Fox.

The disguise worked. Fox had no idea who she was and the rest of the crew accepted her as Tom Toblin. It even took Berek a couple of years to figure out her secret, though he found a suitably outrageous way to reveal it when he did (just before facing Captain Reis, he planted a fierce kiss on "Tom's" lips, revealing her identity to the crew). By then, however, she was a trusted companion — and Fox never let his suspicions show.

It took two more months for the situation to resolve itself. The crew's troubles with the Rogers kept Nicole from challenging Fox, and Fox lacked the nerve to confront her. Rather than risk an open attack, he attempted to assassinate her in the middle of the night — and found her ready for him. In the ensuing struggle, she managed to stab him in the shoulder and he fled the ship rather than risk a confrontation with the crew.

At first, she cursed herself for not finishing the job, but when she heard the Rogers killed him, she relaxed. Vengeance had been served, and she could now let her family's spirits rest in peace. She has no idea what she's going to do now. She'll help Bonnie avenge Berek, and after that — she'll have to learn to live without anger in her heart.



## “Lyin” John Fox: Scoundrel (Deceased)

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 4  
*Reputation*: 10

*Arcana*: Loyal

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Montaigne, Vendel, Appearance (Above Average), Keen Senses, Scoundrel

*Courtier*: Diplomacy 5, Etiquette 2, Fashion 2, Oratory 5, Scheming 3, Sincerity 5

*Criminal*: Gambling 3, Pickpocket 2, Quack 4, Scrounging 4, Shadowing 2, Stealth 2

*Performer*: Acting 4, Cold Read 4, Dancing 1, Oratory 5, Singing 1

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Cartography 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 1, Navigation 4, Pilot 3, Rigging 1

*Streetwise*: Socializing 4, Street Navigation 4, Underworld Lore 3

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

The late Johnathon Fox ultimately died by the sword he lived with. For many years, he served as Berek's paymaster and one of the slickest shysters that ever walked on two legs. A compulsive liar, his amazing ability to keep his face straight earned him a king's ransom — and far too many enemies for his own good. He could never face the consequences of his actions, however, and his innate cowardice made it easier to flee a bad situation than brass it out. He joined the Sea Dogs in the hope that Berek would provide him with a safe haven.

For a while it worked. Fox endeared himself to the crew, using his creative lies to keep them well-stocked and in touch with the latest rumors. He never betrayed Berek's trust (fearful of the consequences if he did) and eventually became one of the most loyal members of the crew.

Unfortunately, his past had a way of catching up to him. He was on shore leave one night when a group of criminals he had tricked found him. They demanded the money he had bilked them out of; in order to get it, he tried to collect an old gambling debt from an alcoholic swordsman named Nicholas Cowbey. A fight ensued, and Fox ended up stabbing the old drunk through the eye. He took Cowbey's money purse, paid the criminals, and fled back to the *Black Dawn* as quickly as he could. He said nothing about what had happened.

Less than a year later, on a second shore leave, he was forced to confront Cowbey's son-in-law. This time, he shot the man in the chest and again fled to the *Dawn* — only he left a witness. Cowbey's daughter Nicole had spent a year

searching for him, and returned home just in time to watch him murder her husband. In his haste to escape, he never noticed her.

Cowbey signed aboard the *Black Dawn* disguised as a man, planning on watching Fox and preparing for revenge. Her true identity was revealed shortly before the loss of Berek, forcing Fox's hand again. He knew that she was there for him, and he also knew that her testimony could see him swing for murder. One night, as the rest of the crew slept, he slunk up to her bunk, planning to shoot her dead and frame her for sabotage.



## The Sea Dogs' Ships

### The *Black Dawn* (30 point ship)

*Brawn*: 5

*Finesse*: 5

*Resolve*: 3

*Wits*: 5

*Panache*: 5

*Modifications*: Mascot (1), Good Captain (4), Retractable Keel (6)

*Flaws*: Cramped (4)

*Draft*: 3 (1)

*Cargo*: 3

*Crew*: 4

*Reputation*: 54

*Note*: The *Black Dawn* has had the Master level St. Roger's Glamour Knack used upon it. For details, see either page 46 in the *Pirate Nations* sourcebook, or page 104 of the *Avalon* Sourcebook.



### The *Hurricane* (30 point ship)

*Brawn*: 3

*Finesse*: 7

*Resolve*: 3

*Wits*: 6

*Panache*: 5

*Modifications*: Reinforced Masts (1), Silk Sails (2), Good Captain (4)

*Flaws*: None

*Draft*: 3

*Cargo*: 3

*Crew*: 7

*Reputation*: 16



Cowbey, however, was ready for him. Months of serving aboard the *Black Dawn* had given her a swordsman's instincts, and she woke before he could pull the trigger. A fight ensued, and Fox's cowardly instincts took over. He found himself fleeing the vessel in a commandeered lifeboat rather than face the scrutiny of the crew who had trusted him for so long. Alone and without friends, he was soon discovered by the Crimson Rogers, who made a grisly example of the wayward liar.

### Roger Gaffrin: Henchman

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 5, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 4  
*Reputation*: 0

*Advantage*: Avalon, Castillian, Montaigne, Vendel, Commission (Sea Dogs), Small, Pirate Trick (Belay That)

*Artist*: Composer 5, Musician (Lute) 3, Musician (Flute) 4, (Bodhran) 2, Singing 5, Writing 3

*Performer*: Acting 3, Cold Read 2, Dancing 2, Oratory 4, Prestidigitation 2, Singing 5, Storytelling 4

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Cartography 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Navigation 4, Pilot 4, Rigging 4, Swimming 2

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Eye-gouge 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3

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

Roger Gaffrin is a small, thin fellow with a voice that's ten times as big as he is. He's been the ship's shanty man for almost a decade now, which also makes him the seniormost member of the crew. Gaffrin can play any instrument he gets his hands on and composes complete arrangements at the drop of a hat. Like any other bard, he also produces colorful and biting insults with keen alacrity.

While crews from other nations wonder why Berek has a shantyman on board, anyone who knows anything about Glamour knows why. Gaffrin is a skilled songwriter and performs regularly before the Queen. Every song he writes about the Sea Dogs adds to their Reputation, which also adds to their Glamour.

### "Long Tall" Harry: Henchman

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 6, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 8

*Background*: Lost Relative

*Advantages*: Avalon (R/W), Castille, Théan, Commission (Sea Dogs), Legendary Trait, Large

*Performer*: Acting 3, Cold Read 3, Dancing 1, Oratory 1, Singing 2, Storytelling 4

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Climbing 5, Knotwork 4, Leaping 5, Rigging 5, Swimming 2

*Scholar*: History 2, Math 1, Occult 3, Philosophy 2, Research 3

*Athlete*: Break Fall 4, Climbing 5, Footwork 4, Sidestep 3, Sprinting 3, Swinging 4, Throwing 2

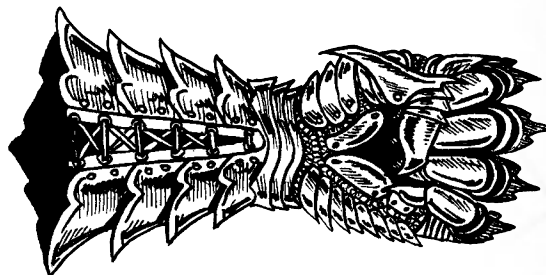
*Fencing*: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3

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

One of the *Black Dawn*'s most experienced crewmen, Harry is over six and a half feet tall and slender as a rope. By the way he moves, it is evident that the man has not a single bone in his body. Harry is one of the quickest men on the rigging and has absolutely no sense of self-preservation.

Harry is also a tinkerer. His father and mother are both scholars and long-standing members of the Explorer's Society, and provided him with all sorts of wonderful toys when he was younger. Harry fiddles with Syrneth artifacts with the same reckless joy that he finds climbing in the rigging. He has a small collection of baubles "salvaged" from sinking ships and he's even managed to make a few of them work.

Harry's position on the ship is Master of the Tops, a status he is very proud of. Of course, he's willing to hand it over to anyone who can do his job better than he can. Unfortunately, that means that they have to climb up the rigging and work the sails with one hand tied behind their back during a lightning storm. He's also been known to leap from the *Black Dawn*'s rigging to the rigging of another ship, cause a little damage, then leap back. In his seven years as head topman, Harry hasn't had anyone challenge his position.



## The Vesten Raiders



**Advantages:** Avalon, Montaigne, Vendel (R/W), Vodacce

**Courtier:** Dancing 2, Etiquette 2, Fashion 2, Oratory 4, Sincerity 4

**Hunting:** Fishing 3, Skinning 2, Survival 4

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Cartography 5, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Navigation 4, Pilot 4, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

**Lærdom (Master):** Fornuft 5, Nød (Weather) 5, Sinne 5, Stans (Weather) 5, Tungsinn 5, Villskap 5

**Captain:** Ambush 5, Incitation 5, Leadership 4, Logistics 3, Strategy 4, Tactics 5

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

Yngvild Olafssdottir was born to Olaf Arninbjornson in a small fishing village. Her first five years were quiet and blissful, until her father refused to sell his farm to a Vendel merchant. They found him face-down in a lake, his throat cut ear-to-ear. Her father's death ruined Yngvild's mother. She did not speak, eat, drink or move for three days. By the end of the week, she was gone. A Vendel merchant purchased the land from her mother's father and the little girl went to live with her grandparents.

When Yngvild was twenty, her grandfather died, and a Vendel merchant offered to purchase the land for a healthy sum of money. Yngvild told him she would sell, but only if he doubled his offer. The merchant smiled, they bargained, and they settled on a price. He told her he would be back in one week to purchase the property.

When he returned, seven of Yngvild's massive cousins beat the merchant within an inch of his life, threw him in a fishing boat and pushed the boat into the center of a lake. The young

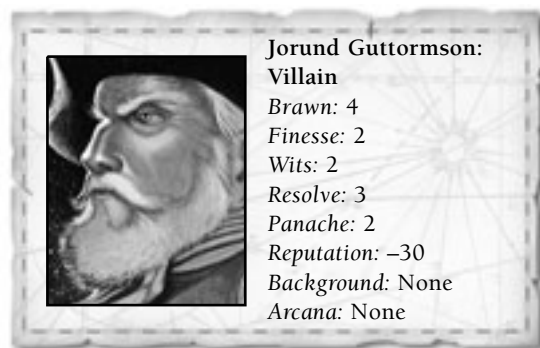
Vestenmannavnjar maiden took the merchant's money and used it to purchase the *Revensj*. Since then, she has become the terror of the Trade Sea, sinking or capturing nearly a dozen Vendel ships.

Olafssdottir's reputation often exceeds her. As the most renowned (or infamous) Vesten Raider, she is considered by some to be a Valkyrie incarnate. In truth, she's only five and a half feet tall with slender shoulders and small hands. Yngvild is completely devoted to the men who serve her. She sees the adoration in their eyes and she does her best to return it. The ocean and its mysteries do not intimidate her; the brutal life of a pirate has hardened her deep blue eyes.

She's seen ships burning in the night and heard the screams of the crewmen as they drowned or burned to death, watched schools of mermaids eat men alive and ordered Vendel merchants to be tortured within an inch of their lives. Despite that, Yngvild is not a naturally violent woman, nor does she relish the sight of blood. Even Guttormson's betrayal has not stirred her to the depths of fury that others embrace indiscriminately. But she is a woman bent on revenge. Her people have been victims of Vendel greed for far too long, and she will die in order to make them pay.

With Guttormson's betrayal, Yngvild no longer believes that she can do that alone. The Vendel are too strong and the Vesten too divided to truly challenge them. It would take something cataclysmic to change the balance of power — something on the order of Ragnarok itself. The High King has told her about Cabora, and she intends to seize its power and open the gateway to Valhalla. With their ancestors at her side, she can destroy the Vendel for their arrogance.

She does not care about what comes after.



**Advantages:** Castille, Montaigne, Vendel (R/W)

**Courtier:** Dancing 3, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 3, Fashion 2, Oratory 3, Sincerity 4

*Performer:* Acting 4, Cold Read 4, Dancing 3, Oratory 3, Singing 2

*Sailor:* Balance 2, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2

*Spy:* Bribery 3, Conceal 2, Cryptography 2, Disguise 3, Lip Reading 4, Shadowing 3, Stealth 4

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 2, Throat Strike 4

*Heavy Weapon:* Attack (Heavy Weapon) 4, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 4

Jorund Guttormson grew up in Kirk, the son of a prominent actor. He had a sailor's temperament, but also show his father's flair for the dramatic (even though he never performed professionally). He served aboard several Vendel merchant vessels with distinction before Guildmaster Allen Trel noticed his knack for imitation and offered him a job.

Trel needed someone to infiltrate the Vesten Raiders, a man who could appear as one of them, earn their trust, and keep the Guild apprised of their plans. When the time was right, the spy would have to turn on his adopted crew and ensure that they faced "proper Vendel justice." If Jorund could perform these duties adequately, Trel promised him a rich reward and command of his own ship. Guttormson instantly agreed. He grew his hair long, affected Vesten mannerisms and headed north to integrate himself with an appropriate crew.

He found Yngvild Olafssdottir and the *Revensj*. His ruse worked perfectly and Yngvild's men soon accepted him as one of their own. He worked closely with them for many months, attacking several Vendel vessels and fighting bravely at their side. By the time Trel had prepared a suitable trap, the crew had accepted Guttormson as one of their own.

The betrayal went off almost flawlessly. The Vesten boarded a Vendel ship — secretly full of marines — and Guttormson turned on them just as their guards were lowed. He shot and killed Yngvild's second-in-command, and might have captured the captain herself had the Vesten not fought back with such intense fury. Unfortunately, no one had counted on Yngvild counterattacking so strongly. The *Revensj* was able to escape the trap, leaving Guttormson and the Vendel behind. Although there was little more he could have done, Jorund considered himself personally responsible for the failure

True to his promise, Trel gave him command of his own vessel. Of course, it was understood that

Guttormson must use his new commission to finish the job he was paid for, and send his former crewmates to the bottom. Jorund is currently pursuing the *Revensj* south towards the Mirror, and would have done so even if the Vendel League weren't breathing down his neck. He knows that Olafssdottir will come after him someday. Better to kill her before she gets the chance.



**Red Thorfild: Villain**

*Brawn:* 3

*Finesse:* 4

*Wits:* 4

*Resolve:* 3

*Panache:* 3

*Reputation:* -33

*Background:* Vow

*Arcana:* None

*Advantages:* Castille, Montaigne, Vendel (R/W)

*Merchant:* Farmer 3, Haggling 2

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 3, Navigation 4, Pilot 5, Rigging 2, Sea Lore 4

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 4, Leaping 4, Side-Step 3, Sprinting 3, Throwing 3

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

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Kick 4, Throat Strike 3

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

Yngvild's first mate is tall, handsome as the devil and just as cunning. Thorfild's blue eyes are always half-covered by his curly red locks that hang down as low as his chin. His full beard also hides his features, making them even more difficult to discern. However, those who have served with him know it isn't difficult to measure his motives: Revenge. Revenge. Revenge. Thorfild's thirst for blood may only be bested by Reis himself.

Thorfild is the ninth son of a farmer. One night, when he was twelve, he snuck out of the house to steal kisses from the pretty blonde girl down the hillside. When he returned, he found his entire family slaughtered. Thorfild doesn't know who killed his family, but he is certain why. Just a week later, Vendel merchants claimed the untenanted land for a penny an acre and turned it into a hot spring resort.

That pretty blonde girl was Yngvild Olafssdottir. Three years later, when the Vendel came to purchase her farm, she turned to Thorfild for help. The Vestenmannavnjar gathered up eight of Yngvild's cousins and when the merchant returned, they pounded him into the ground, stole his money and (at Thorfild's insistence) bought a ship, the *Revensj*.

If Yngvild is the heart of the *Revensj*, Thorfild is its fury. Thorfild is very straightforward: he wants to exterminate any creature that calls itself Vendel. He also wants to butcher anyone who helps, aids or otherwise supports them. The merchants have sold out his nation and his people, trading their souls for luxury. In his eyes, there is no greater crime, and no punishment that can mete out the proper justice.

He despises the Vendel and urges Yngvild to kill every last man, woman and child she finds on a Vendel ship. "The men will survive to perpetrate further evils," he tells her. "The women carry the seed of Vendel's future; and the children... if you don't kill them, they will grow up remembering your name, seeking to avenge their fallen fathers." He lost his left hand during Guttormson's betrayal and replaced it with a sharpened harpoon. He has focused all his rage into destroying the cowardly turncoat. He fully approves of Yngvild's plan to open the gates of Valhalla, and will make whatever sacrifice required to see that it succeeds.

## Vesten Crewmen

### Rognvald Brandson: Hero

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 0

*Advantages*: Montaigne (R/W), Théan, Vendel (R/W), Vodacce, Appearance (Stunning)

*Artist*: Musician (Bodhran) 3, Musician (Flute) 4, Musician (Lute) 4

*Courtier*: Dancing 4, Etiquette 3, Fashion 3, Oratory 4, Diplomacy 3, Sincerity 4

*Performer*: Acting 3, Dancing 4, Oratory 4, Singing 3, Storytelling 5

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2

*Skald*: Diplomacy 3, History 5, Oratory 4, Riddles 4, Singing 3, Storytelling 5, Theology 1, Writing 1

*Heavy Weapon*: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 2, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 1

Rognvald Brandson is a skald — a storyteller, a keeper of history, the Vestenmannavnjar version

of the Inish bard. His curly red hair falls over his slender shoulders and his pale skin and clean features make his blue eyes flash in the sunlight. Other sailors only make the mistake of ridiculing his "pretty face" once. Soon enough, the sailor hears the crew being led by Rognvald in a scathing song featuring a character that sounds a little too familiar.

Brandson spent a brief period telling stories on shore before coming aboard the *Revensj*. He much prefers the seaman's life to wandering from town to town. With the Raiders, he can still travel, only he takes his home with him and his friends all come along for the ride. He marvels that other skalds want to spend time on land at all.

Rognvald is still young, still idealistic. He believes that bloodshed and gore will expel the prissy Vendel and restore Vestenmannavnjar to its former glory. He has yet to understand the implications of Yngvild's plan, or the treachery of Jorund Guttormson. Simply put, he's blind to the practical realities of the situation. He sees this voyage as great fodder for an epic poem, which he plans on composing as soon as he gets back to port. The idea that they all might die — or indeed, that Yngvild's plan might bring about Ragnarok — has yet to sink in.

### Fid Blue-eye: Henchman

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 2  
*Reputation*: 0

*Background*: Vow

*Advantages*: Avalon, Vendel (R/W),

Montaigne, Small, Syrneath Artifact (Knife)

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Climbing 4, Knotwork 2,

Navigation 2, Pilot 3, Rigging 2, Swimming 2

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

Side-step 4, Sprinting 3, Swimming 2, Throwing 3

*Whaler*: Balance 4, Knotwork 3, Throw

(Harpoon) 5, Poison 4, Sea Lore 4

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack

(Improvised Weapon) 3, Eye-gouge 3, Kick 4

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

Parry (Heavy Weapon) 3

*Knife*: Attack (Knife) 4, Parry (Knife) 2

Fid never reached full Vestenmannavnjar height, but he was a perfect fit for a sailing ship. He's spent a decade on the waves, following in the footsteps of his father, who was an infamous Vesten marine. It was his last voyage that marked him forever.

When his ship was attacked by Vendel pirate hunters, one of the marines put a knife into his eye — a knife made of Syrneath steel. Though half-

blind and mad with pain, Fid somehow slew his attacker and claimed the weapon as his own. When he rose the next morning, the eye that had sliced in two was healed... and had turned bright blue. No retina, no pupil, just pure blue. Later that night, he also discovered the eye allowed him to see in the dark.

Now serving on the *Revensj*, Fid spends long hours looking at his Syrneth knife, wondering what would happen if he put out his other eye with it. He has yet to act on those impulses, but he never lets the knife leave his sight, just in case he ever decides to satisfy his curiosity.

**“Lucky” Vandrad Hallvardson: Hero**

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 0

*Background*: Vow

*Arcana*: Fortunate

*Advantages*: Montaigne, Vendel (R/W), Eagle Eyes

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 4, Rigging 5, Weather 4

*Streetwise*: Shopping 3, Socializing 3

*Athlete*: Break Fall 5, Climbing 4, Footwork 5, Leaping 3, Sprinting 4, Swinging 4, Throwing 3

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

*Heavy Weapon*: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 3, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 1

Vandrad is a young man, only twenty-two, out on his third voyage. He currently works as the master of the tops. Vandrad has never fallen from the rigging. Not once. Not ever. He attributes his luck to a rune his mother gave him when he left home for the first time. She told him it would protect him, and considering his current lucky streak, he has no reason to doubt her.

Vandrad has other reasons to consider himself lucky. While standing next to two other men during a broadsides, a cannonball flew directly through the group, knocking them to the deck. When Vandrad awoke, he discovered the other two men were dead, killed from the concussion of standing so close to the passing cannonball. Vandrad just lost his hearing for a week.

The crew think of him as their good luck charm, and believe that fortune will smile as long as he is among them. Because of this, they take steps to keep him safe in combat, and make sure he never has to face an enemy alone. Vandrad understands their concerns, but quietly chaffes under their attention. He's a Vesten just like the



**Vendel and Vesten Ships**

**The *Revensj*** (35 point ship)

*Brawn*: 4

*Finesse*: 4

*Resolve*: 5

*Wits*: 5

*Panache*: 5

*Modifications*: Oars (1), Prow Ram (1), Boarding Party (5), Scarlet Launch (5)

*Flaws*: None

*Draft*: 5

*Cargo*: 5

*Crew*: 4

*Reputation*: -32



**The *Sea Lion*** (30 point ship)

*Brawn*: 3

*Finesse*: 7

*Resolve*: 3

*Wits*: 6

*Panache*: 3

*Modifications*: Concealed Gunports (2), Extended Keel (3), Smuggling Compartments (3)

*Flaws*: None

*Draft*: 7

*Cargo*: 6

*Crew*: 7

*Reputation*: 0



rest of them, and good luck is no reason to shirk his warrior's duties.

**Orm Greybeard: Hero**

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 3

*Reputation*: 0

*Background*: Vow

*Arcana*: Loyal

*Advantages*: Eisen, Ussuran, Vendel (R/W)

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

*Streetwise*: Scrounging 3, Socializing 4, Street Navigation 4

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

*Leegstra (Journeyman):* Beat (Heavy Weapon) 4, Corps-a-Corps 4, Lunge (Heavy Weapon) 4, Exploit Weakness (Leegstra) 4

*Firearms:* Attack (Firearms) 3, Reload (Firearms) 1

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

*Wrestling:* Grapple 3, Break 4, Bear Hug 4

The oldest man on the ship, Orm Greybeard lost his wife and his daughters to a Vendel merchant. The man made advances toward his daughter, the girl refused, the situation got bad when she struck the man and the merchant's Swordsman ran her through. Orm tried to avenge his daughter, failed, and lost everything. The Vendel beat him senseless, stripped him of his family's ancestral sword, and dumped him in the streets of Kirk. His wife died soon after and Orm went to the sea in an effort to forget his past.

Orm is old, but not old enough to forget how to put an axe in someone's head. Having spent the first half of his life as a soldier, he provides Yngvild with a vast knowledge of hiding places and safe ports. He also gives her a devotion that none on the ship can equal. Orm sees his eldest daughter in Yngvild and has almost become a surrogate father to her. Orm will throw himself on a sword rather than watch another daughter die.

At the same time, he has recently come to accept the notion that death is a part of life, and that he doesn't necessarily have any control over it. Yngvild's path may very well kill them all and Orm understands that now. He will do anything to keep his captain safe, but in the end, her fate will be determined by the gods, not him. If they choose to take her, then nothing he can do will prevent it.

#### **Gris Hallisdottir: Hero**

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 2

*Reputation:* 0

*Background:* Vow

*Arcana:* Misfortunate

*Advantages:* Avalon, Vendel (R/W), Vodacce  
*Merchant:* Cooking 4, Gardener 2, Weaver 3

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Cartography 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 1, Rigging 2, Swimming 3

*Servant:* Etiquette 2, Fashion 2, Gossip 3, Hagglng 2, Menial Tasks 4, Unobtrusive 3

*Streetwise:* Scrounging 4, Shopping 4, Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3

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

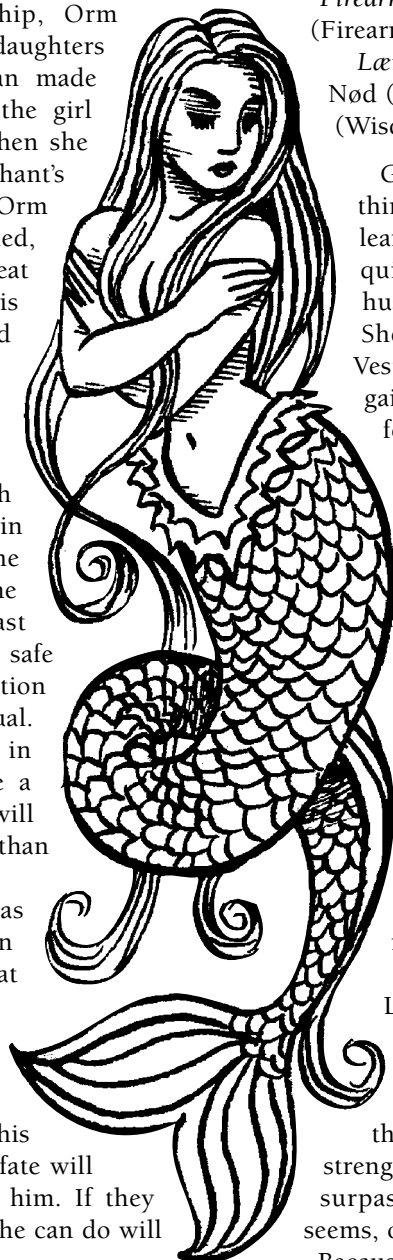
*Lærdom (Apprentice):* Fjell 2, Kjött 3, Nød (Weather) 2, Sterk 3, Velstand (Wisdom) 3

Gris is a tall blonde woman, nearly thirty. She spent the first half of her life learning rune magic, but could never quite master it. Ten years ago, her husband and children died of a fever. She sold her land and wandered Vestenmannavnjar, seeking the path to gain mastery over her art. She traveled for twelve years, finding no answers to her questions. The runes never gave her the solace her soul sought, so if she couldn't ease her pain with sorcery, perhaps the bottle would suffice.

She was lost for five years before Yngvild found her. The young girl gave Gris new hope, a chance for redemption. She served as Yngvild's apprentice onboard the *Revnsj*, and for the first time in her life, she didn't feel the weight of her limitations on her shoulders. She learned to accept that her gift was not as great as others, but still must be cherished.

Her acceptance allowed her Lærdom to flourish in ways she never dreamed possible. The ancestors seemed to speak to her much more clearly, and felt more like a comfort than a burden. Her powers have since strengthened considerably, and may even surpass Yngvild's someday. Mastery, it seems, only needs the right guide.

Because of this, she is loyal to Yngvild unto death, and supports her apocalyptic plan despite some personal misgivings. Olafssdottir gave Gris her life back; as far as the older woman is concerned, it belongs to her captain.



## Unaligned Crew



**Advantages:** Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Scoundrel

**Courtesan:** Acting 3, Dancing 4, Etiquette 4, Fashion 4, Gossip 4, Jenny 4, Masseur 2, Mooch 4, Politics 4, Seduction 5, Sincerity 4, Unobtrusive 1

**Performer:** Acting 3, Dancing 4, Oratory 1, Singing 1

**Scholar:** Astronomy 3, History 3, Mathematics 2, Occult 4, Philosophy 2, Research 2, Theology 3

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Climbing 4, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

**Sorte (Master):** Arcana 5, Coins 5, Cups 5, Staves 5, Swords 5

**Streetwise:** Socializing 1, Street Navigation 1

**Cappuntina School (Apprentice):** Pin (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 4, Trick Shooting (Knife) 3, Exploit Weakness (Cappuntina) 1

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

Lucrezia – also known as Snowheart the courtesan — was raised by fishermen on the coast of Vodacce. Her parents found the babe among the rubble of a shipwreck, and raised the little girl as their own. Unknown to them, the child they called Lucrezia was noble – and possessed Sorte magic – a fact which would lead to the girl's dark fate.

When she was thirteen, Lucrezia was sold to the courtesan's school in Guarre de Portofino, where she dazzled the nobility throughout Vodacce. Her beauty, skills, and wit were a shining example of the best that courtesans had to offer, but her laughingly "cold heart" made her a target for every enthusiastic noble who wished to woo her. She was the uncourtable courtesan, the prize no one could attain. Many nobles tried, betting

against her emotions for their own amusement, but Lucrezia always stayed one step ahead. Her love was not for sale.

Then she met Giuseppe Vestini, and she was lost in his eyes. He was her sun and moon, the only man she had ever loved – and her love was so consuming that she couldn't see anything else. But Giuseppe was not a wealthy man, and could not purchase her contract. All of his money belonged to his ancient and hideous wife, Sofane, and she would never allow her young husband to keep a courtesan under her roof.

But Lucrezia would not be swayed, and she confronted Sofane at a party held in the honor of Giovanni Villanova. Angry, Sofane began to use her Sorte to tear apart the arrogant courtesan's soul. As she was dying, without knowing how, Lucrezia struck back. Her own hidden ability with Sorte surfaced, shattering Sofane's spell and causing the hag to be lashed to death with the strands that she once controlled. Courtesans were not allowed to have Sorte. Fate Witches could not be taught to read or write, as courtesans were. Considered a blasphemy and a heretic, Lucrezia reached to Giuseppe, begging him to love her as the guards dragged her away for her torture and execution. He struck her violently, repulsed, and said his last words to her.

*"You will be burned..."*

The Tessatore, powerful Fate Witches, could not hold Lucrezia for long. Spurred by her lover's rejection, her madness tore through her mind and opened a well of immeasurable power. Fleeing Vodacce, she went once more to Giuseppe, planning to beg him to come with her. When she awoke from her mad frenzy, his blood was on her hands, and his body lay torn and broken at her feet. She hardly remembers murdering him – only that she sought to hold him, and he kept *sliding* through her fingers.

Lucrezia's mind is shattered, holding on to the last thread of her lover's life. She followed it, somehow, and discovered that it led to a place beyond Théah, beyond the world in which she lived and the reality she understood. Peering beyond the shroud and into the source, she saw the 7th Sea – and understood it. Lucrezia knows about the Island of the Sunken Eye and believes it leads to the land of death. She assumes that if she can open and control the gate, or if she can find someone with the power to do so, she will be able to rescue her dead lover's soul and return him to life. This is the one thought that consumes her,

gives her purpose and helps her hold on to whatever fragments of sanity she still has left.

She needs another Fate Witch to do it. She's found an ideal candidate.

### Jens Bjørn: Scoundrel

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 3  
*Reputation*: 10

*Arcana*: Willful

*Advantages*: *Avalon* (R/W), *Eisen* (R/W), *Montaigne* (R/W), *Vendel* (R/W), *Connections*, *Membership* (Merchants Guild), *Scoundrel*

*Merchant*: *Accounting* 5, *Appraising* 4, *Haggling* 4, *Innkeeper* 3, *Jenny* 2, *Scribe* 3

*Servant*: *Etiquette* 3, *Fashion* 2, *Gossip* 3, *Menial Tasks* 1, *Unobtrusive* 4

*Streetwise*: *Scrounging* 3, *Shopping* 5, *Socializing* 3, *Street Navigation* 4, *Underworld Lore* 4

*Spy*: *Bribery* 4, *Forgery* 4, *Interrogation* 3, *Shadowing* 4, *Sincerity* 4, *Stealth* 4

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

The Vendel Guilds do not maintain their control of the northern trade routes with words and contracts alone. Occasionally a more direct hand is needed to counteract competitors and threats. Several Guild agents are employed for this purpose. They have a broad mandate to investigate and deal with anything counter to the Guild and its goals.

One of the best is a woman named Jens Bjørn. Her curly blonde hair frames a face which is too cold and stern to ever be considered pretty. She has a quick intelligence and a ruthless ability to gather facts. While not brutal, she does strive for efficiency, using whatever means are the most expedient to achieve her goals. She has been known to bribe officials to harass non-Guild merchants, hire ruffians to destroy shops and beat smugglers, organize strikes, or even manipulate the market to the detriment of her opponents. She is very sensitive about her masculine name, which her father gave her when she wasn't born a son. Thankfully, few outside of Vendel seem to notice.

Currently Jens is in Kirk trying to track down Yngvild Olafssdottir's informants. If she can capture them, she believes she can lead Yngvild into a trap from which the pirate will be unable to free herself.

### Red the Adventurer: Hero

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 5  
*Reputation*: 15

*Arcana*: Fortunate

*Advantages*: *Avalon* (R/W), *Castille* (R/W), *Montaigne* (R/W), *Appearance* (Stunning), *Contacts*, *Foul Weather Jack*

*Criminal*: *Ambush* 3, *Gambling* 3, *Lockpicking* 3, *Quack* 1, *Shadowing* 3, *Stealth* 4  
*Streetwise*: *Socializing* 3, *Street Navigation* 4, *Underworld Lore* 4

*Captain*: *Ambush* 3, *Bribery* 3, *Cartography* 3, *Diplomacy* 2, *Incitation* 3, *Leadership* 3, *Logistics* 1, *Strategy* 3, *Tactics* 3

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

*Firearms*: *Attack* (Fencing) 4, *Reload* (Fencing) 2

Red the Adventurer was one of a score of children in a small orphanage in Mon du Mar, Montaigne. Every night the children gathered to tell stories of their heroes amongst the Musketeers or the Eisen guards or Gosse's Gentlemen. They dreamed of a day when their heroes would come and rescue them from the orphanage. One thin girl named Red always laughed at the other children's stories. "They may be heroes, but they're not going to save the likes of us." When the other children asked who her heroes were, she declared loudly, "Pirates! They'll come. Just wait."

Just as she was beginning to develop into a woman, pirates did land at her small village. They rampaged through the village, raping and pillaging. Several of them came to the orphanage looking for loot and found her instead. She convinced them to take her with them. Hours later, one of the men tried to rape her, but she pulled out a dirk and threatened to make him sing like a bird. All of the other men laughed and one declared that she had "a spirit born for adventure." Red liked the sound of that and began calling herself Red the Adventurer.

The pirates found plenty of uses for young Red: she was quick on her feet and extremely sneaky. When she was twenty-two, the pirates captured a small schooner in poor shape named *Spirit*. Red fell in love with it and took the boat as her share of the loot. She took some supplies and a few other crewmen with her and they formed a crew loyal to her. She sailed west into uncharted waters and returned weeks later with a load of Syrneth artifacts. She was able to parley them into a bigger boat, which she also named *Spirit*. and there's been no stopping her. It seems the more trouble she finds, the more risks she's willing to take.



**Arturo Rodriguez: Hero**

Brawn 3, Finesse 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4, Panache 3  
Reputation: 0

Background: Obligation

Arcana: Loyal

Advantages: Avalon, Castille, Montaigne

Sailor: Balance 3, Cartography 3, Knotwork 3, Navigation 2, Pilot 1, Rigging 3, Sea Lore 3

Spy: Shadowing 2, Stealth 2

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

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

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

Rogers School: Bind (Fencing) 1, Corps-à-Corps (Fencing) 2, Disarm (Fencing) 1, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 2

Pirate Trick: Sea Legs

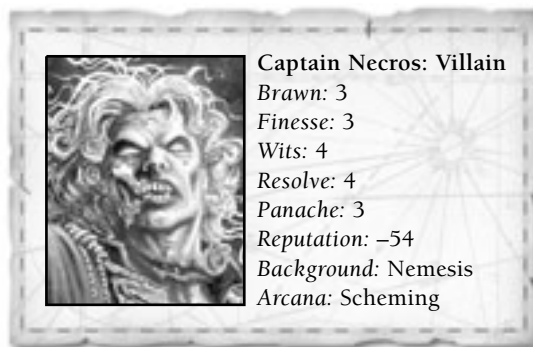
Arturo Rodriguez is a tall Castillian with a fierce mustache and a wry look upon his face. He was a topman for a Castillian merchant until the Sailor's Guild asked him to join. He declined, stating that he wasn't interested. The Guild began pestering him in an effort to convince him to join. They forced the merchant to fire him and spread the word that no one was to hire him. No member of any Guild would serve him. After weeks of this harassment, he told them that now it was a matter of principle and he would never join their silly guild. Thugs ambushed him that night and almost beat him to death as an example to others who refused the Guilds.

Luckily for him, a sprightly pirate named Red happened upon them. She fired her grappling gun straight into one of the thugs and quickly dispatched the other two. When it was down to Arturo and one thug, he stopped her and said that it was his fight now that the odds were even. Although he could barely stand, Arturo dueled the thug for several minutes before slamming the haft of his cutlass down upon his brute's head. Red applauded and offered him a job. Arturo took the job quickly and became Red's first mate.

Arturo works with a fierce dedication and a strong sense of fairness which the crew respects. The only friction is his morality. He has insisted on the ship operating as gentlemen pirates and not just ruffians. This attitude has brought them to the attention of Philip Gosse who sees a little of himself in the crew of the *Spirit*.



## The Black Freighter



**Captain Necros: Villain**

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 3

Wits: 4

Resolve: 4

Panache: 3

Reputation: -54

Background: Nemesis

Arcana: Scheming

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Vodacce, Undead (Demon Eyes)

Courtier: Dancing 3, Diplomacy 2 Etiquette 3, Fashion 4, Oratory 3, Politics 2, Scheming 4, Seduction 2

Captain: Ambush 2, Bribery 4, Cartography 2, Gunnery 3, Incitation 4, Logistics 3, Strategy 5, Tactics 3

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

Sailor: Balance 4, Cartography 2, Climbing 4, Gunnery 3, Knotwork 4, Navigation 4, Pilot, 3, Rigging 4, Sea Lore 3, Swimming 3, Weather 5

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

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

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3, Reload (Firearms) 1

Ride: Ride 3

Comte Robert Méchant wasn't the most infamous pirate of his day, but he made up for it in bloodthirsty wit. His high-pitched giggle hid a keen intelligence, which he used to perpetrate a series of cunning but brutal crimes. His chief adversary was Philip Gosse, the gentleman pirate who made it a priority to thwart the crazed Montaigne's schemes. The two crossed swords numerous times, with Gosse inevitably emerging the victor.

Méchant had always been dangerously unbalanced, but when Gosse retired, his madness spun into an all-consuming dementia. He couldn't allow his foe to exist unharmed. He had to destroy Gosse, or at least wound him to the core of his soul. It took him years to locate Utopia; by the time he had, he knew exactly what to do

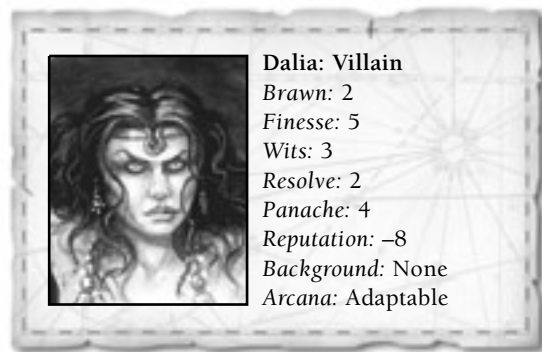
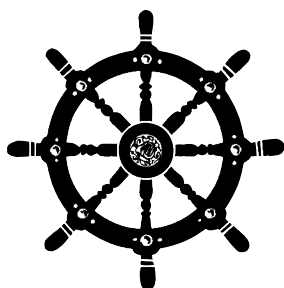
Méchant kidnapped Gosse's wife Clarissa from the midst of their island paradise while Philip was out hunting with his friends. He knew that Gosse wouldn't have the stomach to kill him, so he made no effort to hide his course. It took two weeks for the Gentlemen to catch up with him. In the meantime, he subjected Clarissa to the most horrendous tortures imaginable, raping and punishing her body beyond all endurance. As his crew surrendered to the *Uncharted Course*, he finally slit the woman's throat before arranging her body for Philip to find.

Méchant thought that Gosse's code would prevent the man from killing him — that as a gentleman, Gosse would be honor-bound to spare Méchant's life. He thought wrong. The sight of Clarissa's broken, defiled body was too much for the retired pirate to take. He spent several hours torturing the Montaigne villain before binding him to the mast and setting his ship alight. He offered Méchant's crew the option of perishing from the flames with their captain, or diving into the nearby waters, which were teeming with sirens.

Gosse's men were shocked by his brutality, but none dared question their captain. They left Méchant's vessel burning and his men facing two equally horrible deaths. As the *Uncharted Course* sailed away, Méchant howled out a thousand curses at his foe, promising to return from the grave and wreak a horrible vengeance. He offered his soul to Legion itself, if only he would have the opportunity to destroy Philip Gosse.

And the Freighter was listening.

Twenty years later, Méchant has returned, commanding the undead vessel in a quest to avenge himself upon his old enemy. His undead condition has calmed him somewhat, and he no longer lapses into bouts of insanity. He sees his goal calmly and clearly, and has utilized the Freighter's horrifying resources in order to reach it. He intends to draw out Gosse's pain like a razor, inflicting as much suffering as possible before finally crushing the old man's soul.



**Advantages:** Castille, Crescent (R/W), Montaigne, Combat Reflexes, Commission (Corsairs), Dangerous Beauty, Undead

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

**Performer:** Acting 2, Cold Read 4, Dancing 5, Oratory 2, Singing 3

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Leaping 4, Rigging 1, Swimming 2

**Athlete:** Climbing 3, Footwork 5, Leaping 3, Side-step 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 2

**Yael (Apprentice):** Disarm (Fencing) 3, Double Parry (Fencing) 4, Feint (Fencing) 3, Exploit Weakness (Yael) 2

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

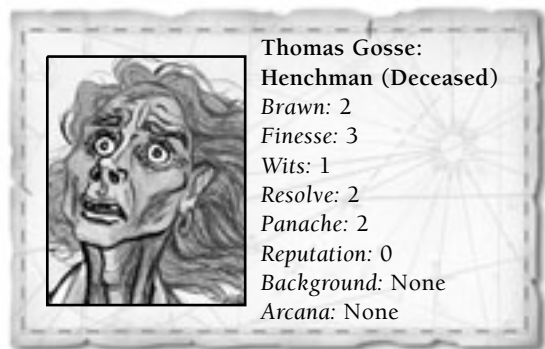
Dalia's swordsman school allows her to spend 2 Actions to make 2 Attacks at the same time; only 1 of the Action dice needs to be showing this Phase; her second Action die can be showing a later Phase. Thus, in Phase 4, if she has a 4, a 7, and a 0, she can spend the 4 and either the 7 or the 0 in order to attack an opponent twice.

Dalia hails from the Crescent Empire, trained as a seductress and assassin by an obscure order of fanatics. Her father sold her into servitude when she was eight — old enough to remember life before the order, but not too old to embrace their brutal code of ethics. She hid her fear and loneliness behind a mask of cruelty, and soon became one of the order's best killers.

A few years ago Kheired-Din permanently purchased her services for the Corsairs, and she served aboard the *Strange Skies* as a marine. In time, she embraced her new lord's quest and soon came to believe that Din was truly the Prophet's chosen. She also caught the eye of the captive pilot, Espera. Though quietly flattered by his attention, her training did not allow her to acknowledge his love. She delighted in tormenting him, using a combination of enticement and rejection to drive him mad with desire.

The Black Freighter caught her on a scouting mission, far from her companions on the *Strange Skies*. Though she fought valiantly, her assassin's skills were no match for Necros's men, and she was soon inducted into the Freighter's unholy legions. She currently serves as Necros' consort, indulging his unholy appetites and punishing those who displease him. It was she who gave Necros the idea of seizing Cabora, and she who provided the directions to the lost island. Her loyalties have shifted yet again, and this time, no amount of training could change them.

Dalia has been trained in an obscure fighting style called Yael. Like the Aldana style, it combines dance with the art of the sword, but it uses the flowing, twirling dances of the East instead of the leaping, bobbing dances of the West. Her body is as big a distraction to her opponents as her fighting technique. Her undead status has yet to blemish her beauty and her too-pale skin remains as desirable as ever. Dressed in silk scarves that scarcely cover her curves, Dalia reveals enough to make her enemy stare at the parts of her that aren't holding scimitars.



**Thomas Gosse:**  
**Henchman (Deceased)**  
 Brawn: 2  
 Finesse: 3  
 Wits: 1  
 Resolve: 2  
 Panache: 2  
 Reputation: 0  
 Background: None  
 Arcana: None

**Advantages:** Avalon, Montaigne, Eagle Eyes, Undead (Emaciated)

**Performer:** Acting 2, Dancing 2, Oratory 1, Singing 2

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Climbing 5, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2, Swimming 3, Weather 4

**Athlete:** Break Fall 3, Climbing 5, Footwork 4, Leaping 3, Sprinting 4, Swinging 4, Throwing 2

**Servant:** Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Menial Tasks 3, Unobtrusive 3

Thomas was the oldest son of Philip's sister. He was a bit thick in the head, but his sister wanted him out of her hair for awhile, so Philip gave him the safest job he could think of – lookout. Thomas climbed like a squirrel and had pretty sharp eyes, so he was ideal for the post. Best of all, he never grew bored of the job like the other men. He stood

in the crow's nest for hours watching for any sign of another ship or dangerous waters without complaint. Philip gave him a small telescope to use, and Thomas wore it like a badge of honor, proudly showing it off to everyone he met.

Unfortunately, even the sharpest lookout could not have anticipated the attack which killed him. Necros used the Spear of the West Wind (see pages 61–62 and 79), to drown the boy as he returned to the *Uncharted Course*. Normally, such a pure soul would never appear on the Freighter, but Necros' intense will allowed him to resurrect the boy as his undead thrall.

He sent Gosse to slay his uncle Philip, knowing that the older man would be forced to slay his corrupted kin. The sight of Thomas pleading with his uncle to kill him — even as his nails dug into the elder man's throat — was enough to push Philip to the brink. He managed to destroy the abomination Thomas had become, but his soul would forever feel the taint. He prays to Theus nightly to be forgiven for leading the boy to such a ghastly fate.

## Black Freighter Crewmen

### Denny La Bree: Henchman

**Brawn** 3, **Finesse** 4, **Wits** 2, **Resolve** 2, **Panache** 3

**Reputation:** 0

**Background:** Vow

**Arcana:** Misfortunate

**Advantages:** Castille R/W, Montaigne, Undead

**Criminal:** Cheating 2, Gambling 3, Quack 1, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

**Streetwise:** Scrounging 3, Socializing 3, Street Navigation 1, Underworld Lore 2

**Sailor:** Balance 4, Climbing 4, Knotwork 3, Rigging 4

**Athlete:** Break Fall 4, Climbing 4, Footwork 2, Leaping 4, Sprinting 2, Swimming 3, Swinging 4, Throwing 2

**Dirty Fighting:** Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Eye Gouge 1, Kick 3, Throat Strike 2

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

**Rogers (Apprentice):** Bind (Fencing) 2, Corps-à-Corps (Fencing) 2, Disarm (Fencing) 1, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 1

**Pirate Trick:** Death from Above

Every man has a weakness and for Denny that weakness was liquor. He promised his mother that he wouldn't follow the path of his drunkard father and he believed that whenever he broke that promise, ill luck followed him and his boat.

The night after the first time he had a drink, the captain sent him down to bring up the hardtack for the men. It was full of weevils. The night that he broke open one of the crates of wine they were hauling for a merchant and drank it down, the ship ran aground and almost sank. And the night that he drank a toast to the health of the king, a Castillian inspection officer discovered the Crescent Empire goods his ship was smuggling and sent the entire crew to *La Bucca*. In prison, Denny vowed that if Théah would free him and his fellow prisoners, he would never partake of the blasted stuff again. Shortly thereafter, Allende engineered the escape which led to the creation of the Brotherhood of the Coast.

For two years after, Denny did not drink a single drop of liquor the day when he and Reggie Wilcox snuck into a Montaigne mansion and stole an Ussuran noblewoman's goods back. Denny saved Reggie's life that night and Reggie insisted on splitting a bottle with him. Flushed with success, Denny agreed. Within hours of the first taste, the General's boat was sighted off the stern. Denny and Reggie staggered up to the deck and scrambled for the rigging.

While adjusting the lines, Denny became so tangled that he was still working on them when the Montaigne guns opened up. Minutes later, the ships were bound together and the Montaigne marines were leaping across. Denny tried to launch a boarding net on the first group across, but he slipped from the rigging and fell overboard, taking a half dozen Montaigne with him. That should have been the end.

But Denny awoke screaming as rats gnawed the flesh off of his dead bones. Captain Necros of the Black Freighter welcomed him aboard and ordered him to the rigging. Denny found himself condemned to obey every order of Necros. Whenever they catch a ship, Necros orders Denny to bring them about so more of the Freighter's guns can bear on the hapless ship. Denny does as he's told, but demands a bottle of rum every day. He drains each bottle dry, praying that his luck holds true and disaster befalls the abomination he has been condemned to. The other undead don't care; they just like to stand beneath him and drink the rum that trickles from his decayed guts.

### Gilles Allaix du Crieux: Villain

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

*Reputation: -20*

*Background: Hunted*

*Arcana: Arrogant*

*Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Noble, Puzzlesword (Spreading Blade, Poison Reservoir), Undead*

*Courtier: Dancing 3, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 1, Fashion 4, Gaming 4, Gossip 3, Oratory 3, Politics 2, Scheming 4, Seduction 3*

*Captain: Ambush 2, Bribery 4, Gunnery 3, Logistics 3, Strategy 3, Tactics 3*

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

Born to one of the wealthiest families in Montaigne, Gilles was educated and trained by the best tutors available. He treated them with disdain and cruelty. He lit his language instructor's hair on fire and handed him a glass of Ussuran vodka to douse it. He sexually assaulted his literature teacher and broke his music teacher's hand. He was especially hard on anyone who mentioned his hated dull bone white hair. Throughout all of this, he freely admitted his crimes to his doting parents, but they simply laughed off the incidents as schoolboy pranks.

Upon reaching his majority, he enlisted with the Montaigne navy to avoid taxes. Here he found that he was expected to look down upon the common crew and order them about. He loved



### The Black Freighter

*Brawn: 9*  
*Finesse: 7*  
*Resolve: 6*  
*Wits: 5*  
*Panache: 5*  
*Modifications: Reinforced Masts (1), Sturdy Hull (2)*  
*Flaws: None*  
*Draft: 6*  
*Cargo: 6*  
*Crew: 7*  
*Reputation: -189*

*Notes: The Freighter automatically heals one Dramatic Wound every round; this cannot be prevented so long as the figurehead remains attached to the ship. The Freighter has a Fear 3 effect on anyone catching sight of it. The storms surrounding it inflict 3k3 damage every hour to vessels coming within one mile of the Freighter (the ship itself ignores this damage).*



every moment. His first two captains feared his political connections so much that they allowed him to get away with murder.

Finally when his ship was escorting a diplomat to the Avalon court, Gilles stopped in at a small pub and ordered a cup of tea. The serving lad tripped and spilt the tea upon the furious noble. Tea dripping from his beard, Gilles marched the boy back to the kitchen and before an unbelieving cook, dumped him into a boiling pot of soup. He left before anyone could react to his cold blooded murder. His boat left Avalon that afternoon. Queen Elaine herself put a price upon his head despite the diplomatic immunity he possessed at the time. Although many men have tried to claim it, none ever captured the man the Avalons call Snowbeard.

Shortly after that, Gilles came to the attention of the General as an accomplished officer. But even the General, used to the brutal discipline of the Eisen armies, was disturbed by the man's bloodthirsty zeal. The General was happy to see him go when he was transferred. He was even gladder to hear of Gilles death at the battle of San Felipe. His body was unceremoniously tossed overboard, and the Black Freighter quickly claimed him as one of its own.

#### **Don Deanna: Villain**

*Brawn 3, Finesse 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Panache 3*  
*Reputation: -20*

*Background: Dispossessed*

*Advantages: Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Combat Reflexes, Noble, Roving Don, Undead (Revolt)*

*Artist: Drawing 2*

*Courtier: Dancing 3, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 3, Gaming 1, Gossip 3, Mooch 3, Oratory 2, Scheming 3, Seduction 3*

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

*Aldana (Master): Feint (Fencing) 5, Riposte (Fencing) 5, Tagging (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 5*

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

*Riding: Animal Training 2, Mounting 1, Ride 3*

Don Deanna del Ochoa lost all of his holdings when the Montaigne invaded, but he lost his hopes and morality long before that. When he was a teenager, he fell in love with a beautiful peasant woman named Maria. He declared his love for her on a soft summer night and the two embraced passionately. Days later, he discovered her in the arms of his father. Furious, Deanna swore to never

love again and threw himself into his fencing studies. He returned a year later and challenged his father to a friendly duel to display what he had learned. During the fierce interplay of blows, his father was stabbed in the chest. Three times. Deanna inherited his father's meager holdings and refused to even see Maria.

Soon, a neighbor offered to pay Deanna for his services as a Swordsman in a duel. Deanna agreed and embarked upon a life as a dueling sellsword. Spending his money as fast as his flashing blade, he was always in need of a job and willing to do horrible things to force men to duel him. When the Montaigne invaded, Deanna was offered a position in the Castille navy to train the crews how to fight. He accepted with a shrug. His lessons were brutal and many sailors still bear scars from his tutelage.

Then at the battle of San Felipe, he fought Gilles Allaix du Crieux. Allaix stabbed Deanna with a poisoned blade, but before he died, Deanna gutted Gilles. Both men were simply tossed overboard after the battle, but Legion was not yet ready for them. Deanna was fished out of the waters and brought aboard the Black Freighter with Gilles' puzzle sword still buried in his chest. Any movement of the blade causes Deanna agony, but Necros warned him that if the blade is removed from his chest, he will instantly go to Legion's Pit. The agony of the puzzle sword has convinced him to kill every sailor he encounters to avoid ever feeling Legion's torments personally.

#### **Victor of Luthon: Villain**

*Brawn 4, Finesse 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Panache 3*  
*Reputation: -84*

*Background: Cursed, Hunted*

*Arcana: Cruel*

*Advantages: Avalon, Combat Reflexes, Keen Senses, Large, Toughness, Undead*

*Criminal: Ambush 5, Gambling 2, Quack 1, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5*

*Spy: Poison 5, Conceal 4, Interrogation 4, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5*

*Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 4*

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

*Captain: Gunnery 2, Strategy 1, Tactics 2*

*Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 5, Kick 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4, Throat Strike 4*

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

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

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

There are some people who surpass the term “Villain” and go straight to “Living Nightmare.” These are the worst of the worst of humanity. Victor of Luthon made them look downright friendly. Back when Luthon was capital of Avalon (around 1650), Victor was known as the deadliest, most vile assassin who ever knifed a man in an alley. He worked for anybody who would pay him - Avalon, Montaigne, Castillian, he didn't care; in truth he worked solely to satisfy his bloodlust. Victor learned early on that killing was the one thing he truly enjoyed. However, he had a hair-trigger temper, and was often as dangerous to his patrons as to his victims.

Victor never found out who hired him for his last job, although it wouldn't have made much difference. The payment was enormous and he eagerly anticipated the challenge. He had never killed a legend before, but if it were possible to kill Mad Jack O'Bannon, Victor would do it. He left a trail of dead Highland blacksmiths, rumored to be descendants of the MacEachern clan (see the *Avalon* sourcebook for more information), until he finally forced one to make him a cold iron blade. Victor never got to use it.

After spending weeks tracking down the O'Bannon, Victor finally traced him to a small village in the middle of Inismore. That night, he received a visitor: a beautiful, regal woman who floated above the ground and shined like the moon. She told Victor that the O'Bannon was under her protection, and that she wanted no interference from the likes of him. Just before fading out of sight, she laughed and asked him how it felt to be the prey for once.

For the next three days, Victor saw shining beings with pointed ears and naked swords wherever he went, and he knew they were following him, toying with him. Somehow, he made his way back to Luthon, where the authorities were waiting for him. By the time they managed to subdue him, he was more dead than alive, and half of a full company of guards would never see daylight again. Victor recovered just enough to be conscious for his hanging, after which he was thrown into the ocean, to face Queen Maab's justice.

The Freighter was more than happy to deny it. At least until they finished with him.

### **Reinheart the Ripper: Henchman**

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 2  
*Reputation:* 0

*Background:* Vendetta

*Advantages:* Eisen (R/W), Montaigne

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Cartography 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Navigation 3, Pilot 3, Rigging 5, Sea Lore 3, Swimming 2, Weather 2

*Streetwise:* Scrounging 2, Shopping 2, Socializing 3, Street Navigation 2, Underworld Lore 2

*Pugilism:* Attack (Pugilism) 2, Footwork 1, Jab 2

Reinheart was a quiet Eisen topmen onboard the merchant ship *Desperate*. This ill-fated ship fell afoul of a storm that blew up out of nowhere and engulfed the crew while they were still working on lowering the sheets. Sleet and gale-force winds slashed at the sailors until they had all taken shelter below except for Reinheart. He continued to work on the lines until a bolt of lightning smashed into the mast beneath him. Splinters filled the air and pierced his body in a dozen places as he fell. A loop of line caught him around the neck as the top half of the mast toppled far over the side. As the lines caught the mast, Reinheart jerked to a halt and his neck broke. He dangled there from the lines as the storm raged around him.

The storm finally died out the next day. The crew was horrified to find Reinheart still hanging there staring unblinkingly at them. But the mast seemed liable to break loose at any moment and there was no easy way to cut him down until the mast had been cut loose. That took another two days. When Reinheart and the mast finally toppled into the waves, the sailors didn't even whisper a prayer for the silent Eisen. But his spirit still clung to his battered body and after three days it had memorized every man on board the *Desperate*.

When the Black Freighter rose from beneath the waves, Reinheart stood in the crow's nest and was the first of the crew to breathe salty air again. He commands the undead topmen with gestures because he can barely croak out even simple words. He made sure that the first vessel to encounter the Black Freighter was the *Desperate*. His vengeance almost made an eternity of damnation worth it. He went into a rage and launched himself at them before the ship's were even grappled together. He was stabbed a dozen times, but he kept killing until they were all dead. Then he made sure that Necros inducted each of hapless sailors into the ranks of the undead.



## Brotherhood Cremen

### Donna: Hero

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

*Reputation*: -7

*Arcana*: Hot-Headed

*Background*: Wanted 3

*Advantages*: Avalon, Castille, Crescent (ACQ),

Combat Reflexes, Large

*Criminal*: Gambling 3, Quack 1, Shadowing 2, Stealth 3, Ambush 4, Cheating 2

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 3, Rigging 4

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Eye-gouge 3, Kick 4, Throat Strike 5

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

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

*Pugilism*: Attack (Pugilism) 3, Footwork 4, Uppercut 4, Jab 2

On la Bucca, a Vodacce pilot once asked this huge, tattooed fellow what his name was. He replied, "Donna."

The Vodacce pilot replied: "That's a woman's name!"

The Vodacce was dead before he hit the ground and Donna was in the stockades for a month.

No one ever told him he had a woman's name again.

No one's really sure where Donna comes from, how old he is or what he did to get sentenced to la Bucca. No one bothered to ask. Not until Allende did.

Donna now serves as a marine on Allende's ship. No one's really sure how he won the tattooed man's favor, and no one's asking.

### Thom Brunner: Henchman

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

*Reputation*: 18

*Advantages*: Eisen (R/W), Castille, Montaigne, Crescent, Academy

*Background*: Wanted

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Rigging 3, Navigation 2, Pilot 3, Sea Lore 2

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 3, Lifting 3, Side-step 2

*Captain*: Strategy 2, Tactics 3, Ambush 4, Gunnery 5, Incitation 4, Leadership 3

*Firearms*: Attack (Firearms) 5, Reload (Firearms) 5

*Heavy Weapon*: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 4, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 2

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

*Pugilism*: Attack (Pugilism) 2, Footwork 4, Jab 3, Earclap 4, Uppercut 3

Two years ago, Thom Brunner was the master gunner on an Eisen river-runner. The Castillians captured his ship and sent him to la Bucca, where he earned the nickname "that Eisen bastard." Despite his disposition, Brunner earned a position on his ship as Master Gunner.

Brunner is always shouting, even when he is in conversation. Years of standing next to cannon lines have stolen almost all his hearing. It could be said that Brunner has a personal vendetta against Death. During battles, his men can hear him shouting — not at opposing navies, but at the Enemy ("der Feind"). He saw hundreds of boys killed during the War of the Cross because of inexperience and carelessness. Every man he loses is another victory for Death. It's a war Brunner can't win, but he'll die trying.

### Fyodor Zastienchivy: Hero

*Brawn* 5, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 3

*Reputation*: 12

*Arcana*: Comforting

*Background*: Wanted

*Advantages*: Ussuran (R/W), Théan (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Vendel, Avalon (ACQ), Castille (ACQ), Crescent (ACQ), Linguist, Ordained, Faith, Large

*Hunter*: Fishing 3, Skinning 2, Survival 2

*Doctor*: Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Quack 1, Dentist 2, Surgery 3

*Merchant*: Scribe 3, Calligraphy 2

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 1, Knotwork 3, Rigging 1

*Scholar*: History 5, Mathematics 3, Philosophy 4, Law 3, Research 3, Natural Philosophy 2, Occult 3, Theology 5

*Pugilism*: Attack (Pugilism) 3, Footwork 4, Uppercut 2, Jab 2

Fyodor, an Ussuran Orthodox priest, is the largest man on the Hanged Man. He is also its most soft-spoken, kind hearted and forgiving. Fyodor does not drink, gamble or swear and blushes in the presence of jennys. One day, McCorley called him "the Bashful Bear" and the nickname stuck.

Years ago, the First Prophet appeared to him in a dream, telling him to go to la Bucca and "fulfill your destiny there." Fyodor traveled across country to the Mirror and boarded a merchant ship for the prison island.

Once he arrived, he set up a small mission, hoping to further the prisoners' spirituality. He spent most of his time fishing rather than saving souls, but earned a reputation among the prisoners as a trustworthy man.

Fyodor had no prior knowledge of the coup, but when it happened, the prisoners spared his life. Allende recognized the man's good heart and also recognized the need for a chaplain aboard his ship. He offered the position to Fyodor, and the Ussuran accepted.



## Castille Crewmen

### Padre Esteban: Hero

*Brawn: 3, Finesse: 2, Wits: 2, Resolve: 3, Panache: 2*  
*Reputation: 7*

*Background:* Obligation (support his siblings)

*Arcana:* Friendly

*Advantages:* Castillian (R/W), Commission, Faith

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 1, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

*Scholar:* History 1, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 2, Research 1, Theology 3

*Firearms:* Attack 2, Reload 1

*Captain:* Strategy 1, Tactics 1, Gunnery 2, Incitation 2

Padre Esteban has only recently joined the Castillian Navy. He is serving as a gunner aboard the Corazón de Castille, a position he never expected to be in. While he is quite happy aboard the Corazón, his originally calling was something far different.

From a very early age, Alejandro Esteban wanted to be a priest. He was born and raised in a small village in southern Castille, where he spent most of his time in the village church. By the time he was thirteen, Alejandro knew that Theus had a special purpose for him, and he was going to accept that responsibility joyfully. When he was twenty, his father died, and he found that Theus had a different intention for him than he had originally thought.

Faced with a brother and two sisters who needed support, Alejandro joined the Navy, using his education within the Church to get a position as chaplain's assistant aboard the Corazón. Shortly after he signed on, the Corazón engaged the Montaigne Navy, and during the battle, the ship's chaplain & several gunners' mates were killed. Faced with a decided lack of manpower, Enrique Orduño ordered every sailor still standing to man the cannons or get off of his boat. Esteban, like every other able-bodied man on the ship, complied. As he loaded and fired desperately, Esteban constantly mumbled prayers to Theus. His faith evidently paid off, as every shot unerringly hit the enemy dead-on. After the battle, Orduño ordered him permanently stationed as a gunner aboard the Corazón.

Esteban is still a very pious man, as he plans to one-day reenter the clergy. Despite his position change, he is still treated somewhat as a chaplain aboard ship, and the crew often come to him with personal problems. While he would rather return to his studies, he knows and accepts that Theus has a purpose for him, and believes that when it is time for him to go back, Theus will let him know.



## Corsairs Crewmen

### Hamish: Henchman

*Brawn 7, Finesse 4, Wits 2, Resolve 6, Panache 4*

*Reputation: 0*

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes, Large, Toughness

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 5, Sprinting 4,

Throwing 4, Leaping 4, Lifting 5, Side-step 4

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 5, Eye Gouge 5, Kick 4, Throat Strike 5

*Wrestling:* Grapple 5, Bearhug 4, Break 5, Escape 3, Head Butt 5

**Note:** Hamish's barehanded damage is 0k2.

It is whispered among the crew that Hamish was once perfectly sane. Then his ship stumbled upon the 7th Sea. While they sailed under its sun and moon, strange winged creatures with fiery eyes and talons as long as a man's arm attacked the ship. Hamish was knocked overboard into the silvery water just as the last of the flying creatures were driven away. He choked and opened his mouth, swallowing some of the filthy brine. He went under while the crew of his ship watched in horror, and they assumed he was dead. They began to row away, but Hamish thrust his hands out of the water and hauled himself back onto the ship using his fingernails.

He had undergone a sea change. He was half a foot taller, and much more muscular than before. The whites of his eyes had been washed away, leaving inky blackness that reflected only living creatures in its depths. Lastly, his mind was gone, replaced with that of a savage beast. They subdued him and brought him home, since it is a sin to kill a man whose mind has been touched by the Second Prophet. Even so, Hamish would have ended his days as a dangerous beggar if it weren't for Kheired-Din, who befriended him with gentle words and gifts of food.

Although Hamish has had to be kept in chains aboard ship since the time he slaughtered six men while they slept, he makes an effective boarding party all by himself. They simply unhook his chains and drive him forward onto the other ship using a lash, and he unleashes his savagery on the enemy crew, tearing them to bits with his hands and teeth. That's the plan, at least. Hamish will turn against anyone he can get his claws on except Kheired-Din, who is the closest thing to a friend such a monster can have.

### Andres Donovanich: Henchman

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 2

*Reputation*: 0

*Advantages*: Ussuran (R/W), Castille (PG), Avalon (PG), Crescent

*Background*: Pressed into Service

*Hunter*: Skinning 4, Survival 4, Tracking 3

*Merchant*: Furrier 4, Appraising 2, Hagglng 2

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

*Streetwise*: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 2, Shopping 3

*Archer*: Attack (Bow) 4, Fletcher 4, SnapShot 3

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 3, Sprinting 4, Throwing 2, Lifting 5, Rolling 2

*Knife*: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 2, Throw (Knife) 4

An Ussuran by birth, Andres was stolen away at a young age, and has served on Kheired-Din's ship ever since. Over time, he came to believe the Captain's tales of a holy quest. He's proud to be a part of such a grand enterprise; he will make no efforts to escape, and would forcibly resist a rescue attempt. He hates his benchmate, Mike Fitzpatrick, and takes every opportunity to make his life even more miserable.



## Crimson Roger Crewmen

### Volta: Henchman

*Brawn* 5, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 2

*Reputation*: 0

*Advantages*: Crescent (R/W), Montaigne, Large

*Hunter*: Fishing 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Ambush 3

*Sailor*: Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 4, Rigging 4, Swimming 3

*Spy*: Shadowing 3, Stealth 4, Conceal 3, Hand Signs 4, Lip Reading 3

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 3, Leaping 5, Rolling 4, Side-step 3

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

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Kick 5

Standing nearly seven feet tall, this Crescent warrior joined the crew when Reis found him marooned on a tiny island in the Forbidden Sea. His tongue had been cut out many years before, and Volta (the name of the Old Republic god of the underworld) is the nickname that a particularly sharp-witted sailor burdened him with. Not a year after Volta joined the crew, one of the sailors came to

the Captain with a tale that he had heard Volta talking in his sleep in a strange language. It was never proven, and the sailor earned twenty lashes for his trouble.

Volta and Jemy have become fast friends because of their shared silence. However, while Jemy is peaceful in his ways, Volta is a terror in a fight, a danger to friend and foe alike with his wildly swinging scimitar.

### Domingo: Henchman

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

*Reputation*: -13

*Advantages*: Vodacce (R/W), Montaigne, Castille, Crescent, Keen Senses, Pirate Trick (Quick Draw)

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Climbing 2, Knotwork 2, Rigging 3, Cartography 3, Swimming 3, Weather 2

*Scholar*: History 1, Mathematics 4, Philosophy 2, Research 2, Astronomy 3

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 3, Sprinting 2, Throwing 3, Lifting 4, Side-step 3

*Captain*: Strategy 3, Tactics 1, Ambush 4, Bribery 2, Gunnery 5, Logistics 3

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Kick 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4, Throat Strike 3

*Firearms*: Attack (Firearms) 5, Reload (Firearms)

A gruff, no-nonsense man, Domingo served in the Vodacce navy for ten years as a gunner. He was possibly the best they ever had, but was passed over again and again for promotion because the officers were too busy promoting their relatives. Finally, he left the navy in disgust, and managed to join up with the Crimson Roger, where his talents were more appreciated.

Domingo learned early on to make do with whatever he had at hand – nails, broken bottles, pieces of wood, whatever. He just packs it tightly into the cannon and fires. This has made him extremely popular with the Captain, since proper cannonballs are often in short supply.

### Paule du Paix: Villain

*Brawn* 3, *Finesse* 4, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 2

*Reputation*: -6

*Arcana*: Arrogant

*Advantages*: Montaigne (R/W), Castille, Crescent, Able Drinker

*Criminal*: Gambling 3, Quack 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Cheating 4, Pickpocket 3

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 3, Rigging 2, Cartography 3, Navigation 2, Pilot 3, Swimming 2

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 3, Leaping 3, Rolling 3, Swimming 4, Swinging 2

*Captain*: Strategy 1, Tactics 2, Ambush 3, Cannon 4, Leadership 1

*Fencing:* Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 4  
*Firearms:* Attack (Firearms): 4, Reload (Firearms) 4

Paule was once a pirate captain himself, elected to the position because of his skill with the sword and pistol. He showed a distinct lack of business sense, however, and his men eventually turned him over to a Castillian man-o'-war in exchange for their freedom. He swore revenge upon his crew, but they just laughed at him as they sailed away.

The man o' war, disguised as a merchant ship, was on its way to deliver him to jail when the Crimson Roger attacked it by mistake. It might've been the end of Reis and his crew if not for Paule, who escaped and threw a slow match into the powder room before diving overboard with an empty barrel. The man o' war exploded, and Reis, impressed with Paule's tale, offered him a position on the crew. Paule agreed, provided they sank his old ship. Ten days later, the crew that had laughed as they turned him over to the authorities were floundering in the water as Paule fired shot after shot into them, laughing the whole time. He is content to serve under Reis now, having had his fill of captaining.



## Gosse's Crewmen

### Gaspar: Hero

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 3, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 4  
*Reputation:* 10

*Advantages:* Montaigne (R/W), Castille (AQ), Crescent (AQ), Pirate Trick (Belay That)

*Artist:* Musical Instrument (pipes) 3, Singing 2

*Merchant:* Cooking 5, Haggling 4

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 4, Rigging 3, Leaping 2

*Servant:* Menial Tasks 3, Unobtrusive 2

*Streetwise:* Socializing 3, Street Navigation 2, Shopping 5, Scrounging 4

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 2

One of the original crew, Gaspar used to be a topsman, at least until he lost his leg to a cannonball. After that, the only job he was really any good for aboard ship was the Ship's Cook, and he was a terrible cook. So finally, the men took up a collection and sent him to a fine Montaigne Chef's school in Paix. After six months, he was a changed man. He had found his new calling in life – something he was actually good at, once he was given the proper training. The men were astounded at the difference in the rations, and morale went up and stayed there. Of course, there

were a few inconveniences, such as having to call Gaspar "Ship's Chef" instead of "Ship's Cook," but it was worth it to have such fine fare served on the ship.

When the plan was announced to refurbish the old ship, Gaspar was one of the first to volunteer. He wanted to take the opportunity to visit some exotic ports again and pick up some spices and ingredients that he couldn't find on the island. As it turned out, it was a good thing he went along.

When they called for the surrender of the first ship they came across, Gaspar went over with the negotiation party, and while the others were discussing terms with the Captain, he went into the ship's galley and began preparing a stew. Before long, he had a crowd of salivating sailors standing at the galley entrance waiting for a bowl of whatever it was that smelled so good instead of manning their posts. Upon learning of this, Melinda added three days of meals prepared by Gaspar to the agreement, and the Captain shook on it, surrendering his ship to the pirates for three days.

### Belit: Ship's Mascot

*Brawn* 1, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 4, *Resolve* 1, *Panache* 4

*TN:* 25 (15 on ground)

*Attack Roll:* 5k3 Bite

*Damage:* 1k1 Bite

*Footwork* (Flying) 4, *Footwork* (Ground) 2

Belit is a female asprey that Melinda found while exploring some islands near Utopia in a small boat she built. Belit took a liking to Melinda when she fed her some of her lunch, and has defended her fiercely ever since. Melinda takes care to keep Belit warm in cold weather, and feeds her rats and other small animals. Considering the rat population on the average ship, she's less likely to go hungry than the human crew.



## Montaigne Crewmen

### Pepin: Henchman

*Brawn* 2, *Finesse* 3, *Wits* 5, *Resolve* 4, *Panache* 3

*Reputation:* 0

*Advantages:* Eisen (R/W), Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Vendel (R/W), Commission (Montaigne Navy), Legendary Trait (Wits), Short

*Arcana:* Propitious

*Servant:* Etiquette 4, Fashion 3, Menial Tasks 4, Unobtrusive 4, Accounting 2, Valet 4

*Scholar:* History 3, Mathematics 3, Philosophy 3, Research 3, Astronomy 3, Law 4, Natural Philosophy 3, Theology 2

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2, Cartography 4, Navigation 4, Sea Lore 2, Swimming 3, Pilot 2

*Captain:* Strategy 4, Tactics 4, Ambush 2, Cartography 4, Diplomacy 4, Gunnery 2, Logistics 4

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

Pepin was born the son of a poor sharecropper. By the time he was eight, it was obvious that he was extremely intelligent but would never be able to gain an education as long as he and his family worked the fields from dawn till dusk every day. So his family spent their last money to buy him an indentured position as a servant in the Montaigne navy. In the course of three years, he had paid off his debts and begun to send money home to his family. He was quiet, industrious and very lucky. In the course of five years, his employer was killed three times.

But each time he was selected by another, higher ranked noble. This has allowed him to work in a variety of position and to learn an enormous amount about how the Montaigne navy operates. Then when the General was placed in command of the Montaigne Navy, the General picked Pepin at random to be his only servant. While the General knew nothing of commanding a naval ship, Pepin was quite experienced. He helped the new captain to avoid making a fool of himself until he'd at least learned the names of all of the sails. For that noble act, the General has always been silently grateful. Under the General, Pepin had far more responsibility than a normal servant and every member of the Montaigne flagship learned that when Pepin held the General's complete confidence.

Then the Admiral reassigned all of the General's men to other vessels. Pepin was transferred to the Admiral's own staff. Even the General admitted that this was a huge promotion, although he remarked that the Admiral didn't deserve Pepin several times. Pepin's departure was a hard blow for the Eisen.

In his years with the navy, Pepin has learned a lot. He knows where a few orders can double a crew's efficiency. He understands astronomy, navigation, chemistry, military orders and three languages. But mostly he has learned that nobles and commoners may both be human, but they are different creatures entirely. And a commoner who forgets that is likely to pay dearly for that mistake.

Pepin has always been small for his age, but he since his last birthday, he has grown over a foot. Luckily years of service aboard ships has given him a sense of ease and grace quite unusual for a boy growing into a man before his employer's eyes.

### **François Gaulle dul Motte: Henchman**

*Brawn:* 2, *Finesse:* 3, *Wits:* 3, *Resolve:* 4, *Panache:* 3

*Reputation:* 18

*Background:* Obligation (Montaigne & her people)

*Arcana:* Willful

*Advantages:* Montaigne (R/W), Castillian, Commission (Mate), Indomitable Will, Noble

*Artist:* Writing 3

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 2, Knotwork 2, Rigging 2, Cartography 3

*Scholar:* History 4, Mathematics 5, Philosophy 3, Law 3, Research 4, Occult 4

*Captain:* Strategy 3, Tactics 3, Bribery 2, Diplomacy 2, Gunnery 4, Leadership 3, Incitation 4

*Fencing:* Attack 3, Parry 2

*Knife:* Attack 2, Parry 3

*Valroux (Apprentice):* Double-parry 2, Feint 2, Tagging 3

François is a gentleman first, and a soldier second, but not by much. He was raised firmly believing in the right of the nobility to lead, but believes equally as much in their responsibility to those under them. The Gaulle dul Mottes are often mocked in court for their concern for the peasantry, but François considers it a solemn and sacred duty. He believes equally that the nobility have a responsibility towards Montaigne as a whole, which is why he enlisted in the military.

François is far more comfortable serving under Admiral Alazais than he would be under the General. He has nothing but contempt for a man who answers only to money, and believes that the General cannot be trusted, because he has no loyalty to Montaigne that wasn't bought and paid for. He considers Alazais, however, to be a dedicated Montaigne patriot, and has no problems following the man's orders. Anything l'Admiral does, François knows he does for Montaigne.

François is a very intense man. When he speaks, he speaks passionately, and is unusually serious for a Montaigne. In a fight, he is almost always at the cannons, where he has a particular knack. However, in a pinch he is also a competent Valroux fencer.



## Sea Dog Crewmen

### Phalen Cole: Henchman

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

*Reputation: 0*

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Montaigne, Able Drinker, Commission (Sea Dogs), Eagle Eyes, Synchronicity Artifact (Ornate Glove and Throwing Knife)

*Artist:* Singing 3

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

*Streetwise:* Socializing 1, Street Navigation 4, Scrounging 4

*Athlete:* Climbing 4, Footwork 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 3, Swinging 3, Break Fall 2

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

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 2, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 4

The crew's quietest member is a young man they call "Phalen." The only reason they know his name is because that's what McGee calls him. He is quiet but diligent, working in the rigging day in and day out. He seldom sleeps and never rests.

Phalen is Harry's second in all matters involving the sails and rigging and has no desire to replace the daring Captain of the Tops. He keeps to himself, up high in the rigging. In fact, Harry often brings his meals up to him. If the Captain of the Tops ever retires, Phalen will be the first in line for the position.

His quiet nature makes him a deadly asset in combat. Typically, Phalen remains in the rigging during a fight, tossing knives down onto the heads of the Black Dawn's enemies.

### The Beast: Hero

*Brawn 4, Finesse 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Panache 3*

*Reputation: 16*

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Castille, Montaigne, Commission (Sea Dogs), Toughness, Swordsman's Guild, Merchant's Guild

*Arcana:* Friendly

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 5, Rigging 3, Swimming 2, Sea Lore 3,

*Merchant:* Carpenter 5, Sail maker 4, Hagglng 4

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

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

*Courtier:* Dancing 1, Etiquette 1, Fashion 1, Oratory 2, Gossip 3, Gaming 2

*Streetwise:* Socializing 4, Street Navigation 2, Shopping 4

The ship's carpenter is a large half-Castillian man with thick, curly black hair and a full black beard. For as long as anyone can remember, there's only been one name for him: "The Beast." Of course, his nickname has nothing to do with his nature; he's one of the kindest men on the Seven Seas. He got it when his mother, a tiny Castillian woman, met him on the pier and told Berek, "Thank you for bringing back my little beast." Berek didn't stop laughing for a week.

The Beast and his carpenter crew keep Berek's ship afloat during storms and battles, and he helps McGee train the marines during doldrums. He's a highly skilled swordsman, and a journeyman in the Aldana style. He also speaks fluent Castillian, which helps the Black Dawn slip unnoticed into Castillian ports.



## Vesten Crewmen

### Sigvaldi Sveinson: Hero

*Brawn 3, Finesse 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4, Panache 3*

*Reputation: 0*

*Background:* Vow

*Advantages:* Vendel (R/W), Avalon (ACQ)

*Sailing:* Balance 2, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Rigging 3, Swimming 1

*Athlete:* Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 5, Throwing 3, Lifting 3, Rolling 4

*Leegstra (Apprentice):* Feint (Heavy Weapon) 3, Disarm (Heavy Weapon) 4, Riposte (Heavy Weapon) 3, Exploit Weakness (Leegstra) 1

*Heavy Weapon:* Attack (Heavy Weapon) 4, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 4

*Wrestling:* Grapple 4, Bear Hug 3, Break 4

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

**Note:** Sveinson is immune to Fear.

Those who see him for the first time estimate Sigvaldi's age at fifty or sixty. Actually, he's only about twenty-two.

When Sigvaldi was just a boy, he went to the top of the world (as his father did before him) and spoke with the North Wind. She tested him and made him a berserker. Now, whenever Sigvaldi calls upon his gift, it sends him into a bloody rage that no mortal man can stop. It also ages him every time he uses it.

Sigvaldi has no fear of death. He knows that when his soul leaves his body, he will meet his father and grandfather in Paradise, where he will drink and revel until the end of

the world. His eyes show this to the rest of the world and the ship's crew stays well out of his way, especially just before a boarding action when a cold wind from the north spills into the sails and Sigvaldi's lips start spitting froth.

### Hoskuld Hardrada: Hero

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

*Reputation*: 24

*Arcana*: Commanding

*Background*: Vow

*Advantages*: Vendel (R/W), Eisen, Castille, Combat Reflexes, Pirate Trick (Belay That)

*Sailor*: Balance 4, Climbing 3, Knotwork 5, Rigging 4, Cartography 3, Swimming 4, Weather 4

*Captain*: Strategy 2, Tactics 4, Bribery 4, Diplomacy 4, Gunnery 5, Incitation 3, Leadership 4, Logistics 5

*Athlete*: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 4, Throwing 2, Break Fall 3, Leaping 5, Swinging 4, Side-step 3

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Eye-gouge 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4

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

*Heavy Weapon*: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 4, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 2

Hoskuld doesn't remember which one of the crew gave him his nickname ("Hard-Law") to him ages ago, but it has stuck. As Yngvild's bosun, he has to be a hard man who doesn't tolerate laziness. The enemies they face are too deadly. They cannot afford to be careless.

He is almost six feet tall with blonde hair he keeps in a single long braid down his back. When new recruits ask about him, the old salts say, "When the seas are calm, so is Hoskuld. When they are rough, so is Hoskuld." The Revensj's bosun is soft-spoken when the ship has no pressing duties, but when it comes time to fight, his breast swells like it's holding a thunderstorm in check.

Every crewman knows that Hoskuld and Thorfild do not get along. They stand on either side of their captain, each advising her on different courses. Hoskuld encourages her to be merciful toward the women and children she captures, while Thorfild's bloodthirsty rage demands no mercy whatsoever.

Hoskuld is Yngvild's second most important crewman. He is directly responsible for the crew's performance, a fact that Thorfild does not let him forget.

## Unsigned Crew

### Thomas Metzger: Hero

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 3, *Panache* 3

*Reputation*: 10

*Background*: Vow

*Advantages*: Castille, Eisen (R/W), Montaigne, Vendel, Combat Reflexes, Large, Toughness

*Streetwise*: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3, Shopping 3, Underworld Lore 2

*Commander*: Ambush 3, Artillery 3, Cartography 3, Gunnery 3, Incitation 3, Leadership 3, Tactics 3, Strategy 3, Logistics 1

*Athlete*: Climbing 1, Footwork 3, Leaping 3, Lifting 4, Long Distance Running 3, Sidestep 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1

*Panzerhand*: Attack (Panzerhand) 5, Parry (Panzerhand) 5, Uppercut 5

Thomas Metzger is an Eisen mercenary who has worked for the Castillians, the Montaigne, and the Vendel. He is willing to take anyone's money so long as their cause is somewhat worthy. Unlike many mercenaries, Thomas has not given up on his honor or dignity, and refuses to take commissions which involve obvious evil acts.

Thomas was trained briefly in the Eisenfaust school. When he displayed no true skill with a blade, he was encouraged to enlist in some Baron's army rather than wasting his instructors' time. That was fine with him. He'd already been introduced to the panzerhand, the weapon that would become his hallmark. He honed his skills during constant warfare for the next several years as he fought for various warlords across Eisen. After the collapse of the Thirty Years War, Thomas continued in the only profession that he knows: combat. He currently works on the Castillian front, working for whichever side pays the most.

Thomas has vowed that he will no longer fight another Eisen. He has spilt too much Eisen blood already. If forced to fight, he will subdue his opponent's rather than break this vow. He will also not stand by while an Eisen is in danger. By defending them, he continues the struggle he waged so long for unity in a deeply divided country.



## Black Freighter Crewmen

### No Leg William: Henchman

*Brawn* 4, *Finesse* 2, *Wits* 2, *Resolve* 2, *Panache* 3

*Reputation*: -10

*Advantages*: Ussuran (R/W), Castille, Montaigne, Toughness, Large

*Whaler*: Balance 4, Knotwork 2, Leaping 2, Poison 2, Sea Lore 2, Swimming 4, Throw Harpoon 4, Weather 2

*Dirty Fighting*: Attack 3, Attack (Improvised) 2, Eye Gouge 2, Throat Strike 2

*Sailor*: Climbing 2, Rigging 2, Cartography 4, Navigation 3, Pilot 3

*Captain:* Strategy 2, Tactics 2, Ambush 3, Gunnery 3, Incitation 3, Logistics 3

“Peg Leg” William Gaston was a huge Ussuran whaler who sailed the seas for over a decade after a shark ripped off one of his legs below the knee. Whalers still tell the tale of how he grabbed a harpoon as his longboat was capsized by a great white shark. When the shark came back for him, he rammed the harpoon down through the shark’s jaws and broke off the harpoon’s shaft. The crew pulled out the survivors and William had the harpoon shaft made into a peg leg for his severed leg.

Ten years later while sailing in La Boca, William and some of his crew put out in a longboat to bring a leviathan they’d killed alongside. Out of nowhere, an enormous shark overturned the boat. William ordered the other men out of the water and a lit grenade dropped to him. Just as William began climbing, the shark erupted out of the water. Its twisted jaws were easy to see as William dropped the grenade between them. They clamped onto his waist and with a sickening twist, the shark ripping him in half before the grenade exploded within the shark’s belly.

Neither Williams nor the shark’s body were recovered.

A few survivors of the Black Freighter’s attacks have mentioned a gigantic man without legs among the crew calling himself No Leg William. He is strong as an ox and as agile as a monkey. He rips the legs of his victims off and then straps them onto himself. He seems even stronger when he doesn’t need to use his arms to move his body around. The legs only last a short time before they collapse under his bulk.

## **Ulrich the Unholy: Henchman**

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

*Reputation:* 0

*Arcana:* Judgmental

*Background:* Crisis of Faith, Cursed

*Advantages:* Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W), Théah (R/W), Faith

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

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

*Priest:* Diplomacy 3, Oratory 3, Philosophy 2, Theology 4, Writing 2

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

Ulrich the Unholy was an Eisen priest traveling to Avalon to bring the Vaticine religion back to the faithless natives. He was a stern and solemn figure with an unwavering belief in the power of his words. His superiors

believed him too rigid to be a good missionary, but thought that failure would bring him some much needed humility. He was traveling through the Trade Sea upon a Vendel merchant ship when pirates appeared off the port bow.

Before the crew could react, lightning sprang from a clear sky and shattered the mast. A thick fog began to cover the seas and the ship’s captain screamed out contradictory orders in panic. Moments later, the two ships drew together. Ulrich took his place upon deck and called upon Theus to push back the infidels.

The Vestenmannavnjar pirates leapt past him and rushed the crew. All except one large man who grinned evilly down at him. Ulrich shouted out holy scripture and called upon Theus to smite down this foe. The pirate grabbed him, poured lantern oil over the priest, and lit it on fire. Throughout Ulrich continued to call upon his faith until the pain grew too great to bear and he shouted out “Legion take you!” At that, the pirate seemed to finally tire of this game and threw the priest overboard. As he sank beneath the waves, the priest remembered the words of the Second Prophet who spoke of forgiving those who wronged you. He cursed anyway.

He reappeared aboard the Black Freighter. His burned visage and blasphemous declarations shock the most devout into a stunned paralysis. He has discovered that he can not utter the divine name or any of the true teachings of the Prophets. And without the intervention of the Prophets, no man can come to Theus so Ulrich knows that he is cursed to Legion’s mercy for all eternity.

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