



7TH SEA

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This is the rules packet for the *7th Sea* quickstart adventure “*Niech Żyje Książę!*” (or “*Long Live the Prince!*”). Here you will find an overview of the rules as a whole—how to roll dice and count Raises, what Skills cover, and some suggested expanded uses for those Skills. Most of the rules that you need for specific parts of the adventure are included here.

What is 7th Sea?

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

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

Swashbuckling and Sorcery

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

It is also a world of sorcery. Dark magic pulses in the hearts of a few, power that was given to them long ago.

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

Piracy and Adventure

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

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

Diplomacy and Intrigue

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

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

Archæology and Exploration

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

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



Théah

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

Sorcery

Sorcery is a very real power in Théah. Sorcery is powerful and dangerous, each type demanding its own unique cost. It is a discipline that not all can, nor should, attempt to master, but when its power is harnessed, it can change the fate of nations.

The Vaticine Church

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

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

Nations

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

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

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

Eisen: A proud land recovering from a thirty year war. A nation of veterans, Eisen is also a land of horrors let loose by three decades of mass murder.

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

Sarmatian Commonwealth: Two nations bound by a single crown, the Commonwealth is a democratic monarchy where all people are equal, even kings.

Ussura: A Nation torn between traditional isolationism and an ambitious ruler who will do anything to drag his Nation into the future, no matter the cost.

Vestenmannavnjar: A Nation of raiders and warlords who conquered the world's economy by hammering their swords and spears into coins.

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

Secret Societies

The Nations are not the only powers influencing Théah. There are many more clandestine organizations—not beholden to nationality or religion—that move Théan politics, some unnoticed by even the most observant scholars and statesmen. One Hero in this package belongs to a Secret Society: Los Vagos.

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

And that's everything you need to know about *7th Sea* for this Quickstart Package. If you want to know more, sign up for the *7th Sea Society* at our website: www.sailthe7thsea.com!

Drama

This chapter discusses how to resolve Risks in *7th Sea*. Risks are important actions that could impact the story. We talk about Traits (the key to resolving Risks), Skills, the two kinds of Risks (simple and Contested), Hero Points, Raises (which make your Hero awesome), and we finish off with how your Hero handles the Consequences of success and failure.

Traits

Traits are the keystones to resolving dangerous and risky actions. Whenever the outcomes of a character's action are uncertain, look to that character's Traits as a starting point to resolve the action.

Traits describe how quick, nimble, strong, resilient and charming your Hero is. Each Trait has a rank: a number indicating your Hero's competence in that Trait. Traits are typically ranked from 2 to 5, although on rare occasions, they can go as high as 6. The higher the rank, the stronger that character's Trait.

Your Hero has five Traits. Let's take a look at each one.

Brawn is a Hero's strength and physical power.

Finesse measures his coordination and agility.

Resolve is a Hero's willpower.

Wits measures how quickly a Hero thinks on his feet.

Panache is a Hero's charm and personal magnetism.

Skills

Skills represent training and education your Hero has gained in his past. Skills are things like *Diplomacy*, *Ride*, or *Warfare*. Like Traits, Skills have ranks. The higher a Skill's rank, the stronger that Skill is. Skills also help your Hero overcome difficulties and dangers, and are often added to Traits.

AMBUSH

Use Ambush to lay a trap for someone, or to detect or disarm a trap that someone else has laid for you. Use Ambush to attack an unsuspecting victim with a weapon or your fists.

ATHLETICS

Use Athletics to swing across a room on a chandelier. Use Athletics to accurately throw an item, such as a knife or sword or a flask of acid.

BRAWL

Use Brawl whenever you punch or kick someone in the face. Use Brawl when you grab someone and drag them down an alleyway.

DECEPTION

Use Deception when you pass yourself off as someone else using a disguise or fake accent. Use Deception when you convince someone that you're telling the truth when you're really lying. Use Deception when you pass off a forgery.

DIPLOMACY

Use Diplomacy to convince someone to act based on your goodwill and honesty. Use Diplomacy when you convince someone that you're telling the truth when you actually are. Use Diplomacy when you reach a compromise and deal in good faith.

EMPATHY

Use Empathy when you want to tell if someone is being genuine. Use Empathy when you determine someone's general mental state (they're afraid, they're nervous, they're angry).

HEALING

Use Healing when you patch someone up when you're under threat. Use Healing when you mix herbs to create an antidote for a deadly venom.

HIDE

Use Hide when you sneak through a dark room without the guard on watch seeing you. Use Hide when you hide an item on your person, and avoid it being found if you are searched.

INTIMIDATION

Use Intimidation when you make someone do what you want under threat of some action from you, physical or otherwise.

KNOW (TYPE)

Types: Sea Lore, Tactics, Poison, History, Occult, Law, etc.

Use Know when you wax ecstatic about a certain subject matter, either from personal experience or teachings. Use Know when you demonstrate a mastery over a field of study, or otherwise demonstrate your depth of knowledge. Use Know when you consult your knowledge to fill in the details on a certain subject.

PROFESSION (TYPE)

Types: Mercenary, Sculptor, Merchant, Minstrel, Sailor, Prize Fighter, etc.

Use Profession when you look for a job to generate wealth points. Use Profession when you demonstrate expertise or experience in a field of work.

PERFORM (TYPE)

Types: Dance, Rhetoric, Music, Stage Acting, Stunt, Comedy, etc.

Use Perform when you try to captivate an audience with your showmanship. Use Perform to get across a particular message to your audience or to elicit a specific emotion from them through your performance (to make them laugh at your comedy, to make them weep at your tragedy, to rile them up with a motivational speech, etc.).

RIDE

Use Ride when you engage in a high-speed carriage chase. Ride when you ride a horse through the forest at a gallop.

SAILING

Use Sailing whenever you navigate your way through a ship's rigging. Use Sailing when you attempt to steer a ship during a pitched battle at sea, or through a dangerously narrow channel.

TEMPT

Use Tempt when you bribe someone to do something for you that they really shouldn't. Use Tempt when you convince someone to give you a little "one on one alone time."

THEFT

Use Theft when you swipe something from someone's pocket without them noticing. Use Theft when you pick a lock, crack a safe, or something similar.

WARFARE

Use Warfare whenever you need tactical expertise, such as when you're breaching a castle's defense. Use Warfare when you lead an army in battle.

WEAPON (TYPE)

Types: Sword, Heavy Weapon, Traps, Siege, Gun, Archery, etc.

Use Weapon when you attack something with a sword in your hand. Use Weapon when you fire a catapult or cannon at someone or something.

Any melee weapon that focuses more on precision over force (a sword, a knife, a whip) is a fencing Weapon and uses Finesse.

Any melee weapon requiring two hands (a great sword, a two-headed axe, a mace) is a heavy Weapon and uses Brawn.

When using ranged Weapons (flintlock pistol, crossbow, longbow, musket, a cannon), use Wits. All ranged Weapons require an action during a Beat to reload before they can be used again to Attack.

Advantages

Your Hero has a number of Advantages: distinctions that set you apart from everyone else. Each Advantage gives your character special abilities. Be sure to read your Advantages so you can use them during the story.

Risks

When your Hero takes a dangerous or important action—called a **Risk**—you roll dice. Normal actions—such as tying up bootlaces, walking down the street, opening a door, etc.—are not inherently risky, and thus, don't require dice. Unless some element *makes* that action risky, of course.

In *7th Sea*, Risks are either simple or Contested. Simple Risks involve only your Hero's skills and abilities, but when you act against another character, you need to make a Contested Risk.

INTENT

We will be talking about "intent" a lot in this chapter. Your Hero's **Intent** is important when determining the outcome of Risks. Your Intent is most easily defined as "your goal" or "what you want." If you are fighting someone with a sword, your Intent is to defeat him. How you choose to defeat him determines your actions and the Traits and Skills you use.

If you are struggling with defining your Intent, ask yourself, "Why am I doing this?" and "What do I want?" The answers to those questions define your Intent.

SIMPLE RISKS

When you announce an action for your Hero, the GM decides if that action is a Risk. If it is, she tells you two things:

1. Why the action is a Risk, and what your character has to do to **Overcome the Risk**,
2. and the possible Consequences of the Risk.

The GM tells you which combination of Trait and Skill to use. You add up those scores and roll that number of dice. You always want to roll high in *7th Sea*, so the more dice you can roll, the better. *7th Sea* uses ten-sided dice (d10s) exclusively, so when you see us say “Roll dice,” we’re saying, “Roll d10s.”

After you roll, use your dice to create sets of at least 10. Each set of 10 you create is a Raise.

For example, if you rolled: 10, 7, 5, 5, 2 and 2, you could make these sets of 10:

- 10 (one set),
- 5+5 (one set),
- 7+2+2 (one set)

That’s a total of three Raises. Note that the last set (7+2+2) actually equals 11, but without that last 2, you would only have 9, and that can’t make a Raise.

You use Raises to Overcome the Risk and Overcome the Consequences. A single Raise spent to Overcome the Risk ensures that you do what you set out to do—you get your Intent. Raises spent to Overcome the Consequences reduce the side effects, collateral damage, and harm to you caused by the Risk.

If you cannot make one Raise on your roll, something interesting happens. Your Hero doesn’t fail, not necessarily, but something unexpected happens. The GM narrates the outcome.

Here’s an example of a Risk and its resolution. Your Hero runs through a burning room—something that will come up shortly—and the GM says, “That’s a Risk. And the consequence is taking two Wounds.”

You roll your dice and come up with two Raises. You use the first Raise to Overcome the Risk—you get across the room, no matter what harm you may take in the process. You use your second Raise to negate the first Wound. Because you didn’t have a third Raise, you take one Wound from the consequence.

RAISES

On any given Risk, you can spend your Raises a number of ways. Here are the most important:

- Overcoming the Risk and achieving your Intent.
- Overcoming the Consequences.
- Reducing the Wounds suffered by a fellow Hero from a Risk, one Wound per Raise spent this way.
- Inflicting one Wound per Raise on someone within reach.
- Establishing a fictional detail, one per Raise (such as finding a secret door or stealing someone’s sword).

Consequences Examples

When thinking about Consequences, think about the circumstances of the Risk and what makes it dangerous. Injury is a great go-to, but it isn’t always the most appropriate consequence. Don’t stretch yourself coming up with Consequences. Consequences should be obvious to everyone.

Here are some example Consequences for common Risks.

The GM and Consequences

The GM has a huge responsibility. The players came to your table to have fun. Your job is to make sure that happens. You could use Consequences to make the Heroes’ lives more interesting and dramatic, or you could use them to simply screw the Heroes over.

Don’t choose the second option. Ever.

Your players want their Heroes to be just that: *heroes*. They are the protagonists of this story. They want to feel like swashbuckling legends and you should help them reach that goal. Yes, protagonists fail from time to time, but we’re providing a mechanic for players to *choose* when their Heroes fail. Let them use it. *Remind them* to use it.

Use Consequences to make the story more dramatic. Do not use them to turn a success into a failure. Don’t try coming up with clever ways to turn “Yes” into “No.”

INTENT:

“I WANT TO PICK THE LOCK.”

The circumstance here is picking an old, rusted lock. The door leads to where the guards sleep. There are guards on the other side of the door—some asleep, some gambling—and the player wants to get by the lock. Here are some Consequences...

- Someone on the other side of the door hears you.
- Because this is the guards’ quarters, they’ve installed a poison needle. Got to avoid that.
- The lock is very old and rusted and you may break your tools.

INTENT:

“I WANT TO LEAP TO THAT ROOFTOP.”

Running away from guards across rooftops is pretty standard swashbuckling stuff. In this case...

- Breaking through the thin roof when you land on the other side.
- Dodging arrows or bullets being fired at you.
- Being noticed by guards on the other side.

THE CONTESTED RISK

Use contested risks when two or more Heroes and/or Villains try to accomplish the same Risk or conflicting Risks.

When you announce an action for your Hero, and another Hero or Villain is trying to accomplish the same thing first, or is trying to do something that conflicts with your action, then follow these steps:

1. The contesting players (and sometimes the GM, acting for Villains) announce their Intentions.
2. The GM announces the appropriate Skill and Trait for each player's Risk, along with attached Consequences. Each player might have a different combination for their own Risk.
3. All players involved roll dice and assemble Raises.
4. Each player chooses where to assign Raises, choosing between overcoming the Risk (and getting their Intention), overcoming the Consequences, and any other effect. The player who dedicates the most Raises to overcoming the Risk and getting his Intention gets what he wants.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF A CONTESTED RISK...

A Hero and a Villain are in a room, surrounded by fire. There's only one way out: a door on the other side of the room. Both have the same Intention: they want to get to the door before the other.

The GM says, “Seems like you're both rolling Finesse and athletics. The consequence is taking two Wounds from the fire and falling debris.”

The Hero and Villain gather dice and roll them.

The Hero rolls three Raises and the Villain rolls two Raises. The Hero spends all three Raises to get his Intention: “I get to the door first.” that means the Hero also takes two Wounds because he did not spend any Raises to avoid the consequence.

If the Hero had four Raises, the player could spend three Raises to say, “I get to the door first,” then spend his fourth Raise to say, “And I lock the door behind me.” He would still take two Wounds from the consequence.

The Villain could spend his Raises in any way he could normally spend Raises. For example, he could say, “I stab the Hero for two Wounds on the way to the door.” He could also say, “I grab the Hero's sword from his belt. The one his father gave him.” He could also say, “I find a secret way out of the room.”

The only thing the Villain can't do with his Raises is get to the door first. He can spend his Raises any other way he wants (within the context of the Scene).

Flair

Whenever a Hero makes a Risk, they are encouraged to vary their tactics and to give interesting, heroic, cool descriptions of their actions.

Every time you use a unique Skill (a Skill that you have not used before in this scene) in a Scene, you gain one bonus die. So if you attack with your sword, you gain one bonus die. If you choose to defend yourself by jumping out a window (using your athletics), you gain one bonus die. If you punch someone in the face with brawling, you gain one bonus die. If you then choose to defend yourself by using athletics again, you do not gain a bonus die.

If a player gives a description of their action, makes a clever quip before they roll, interacts with the scenery around them, or otherwise adds to the scene in a fun way they gain a bonus die. A description does not have to be something incredibly in-depth—anything more than “I'm going to use my Sword Skill” should be rewarded. “I go for my sword immediately and charge with a loud battle cry” earns a bonus die. “I scowl at the leader of the gang and tell him that if he wants my money, he can come and pry it from my hand himself” earns a bonus die. “I'll roll intimidate” does not earn a bonus die.

Hero Points

Hero Points are rewards players receive. Players can use Hero Points in various ways: activate special abilities, be spent for bonus dice, or save your Hero from an untimely demise.

GAINING HERO POINTS

A Hero gains a Hero Point when:

- Either he or another player activates his Hero's Hubris.
- Before a player rolls dice, he chooses to say, "My Hero fails." The player still rolls dice and can spend Raises to overcome Consequences and produce other effects, but they cannot spend a Raise to overcome the Risk.
- A player's Hero takes an action or acts in a way as described by their Quirks.
- A player's Hero takes a Risk and rolls a 1 on one or more dice, and the GM decides to "buy" them. The GM gives him a Hero Point, removes the 1s from the player's roll, and adds a number of dice to the Danger pool (see below) equal to the number of 1s the player rolled. Regardless of how many 1s were rolled, the player only gains one Hero Point.

USING HERO POINTS

Players may use Hero Points for the following benefits:

- A player may spend a Hero Point to add one bonus d10 to his roll for a Risk.
- A player may give a Hero Point to another player. This represents the first Hero helping the second in some way, even if it is only moral support. Receiving a Hero Point from another player is worth three bonus dice, but you can only receive a single Hero Point from one player on any given Risk.
- A player may spend a Hero Point to activate a special ability on his Hero Sheet.

The Danger Pool

The GM has a pool of points, as well: the Danger pool.

The GM may use Danger Points from her pool in the following ways:

- She may spend one point from the Danger pool to add two dice to any Villain's die pool.
- Murder. If a Hero becomes Helpless, a Villain can spend a point from the Danger pool to murder that character. See **Helpless** below for more details.
- She may spend a point from the Danger pool to activate a Villain's special ability.
- She may spend a point from the Danger pool to increase a Risk's difficulty, causing each Raise to require 15 points instead of 10. Each point spent in this way only affects a single Hero—multiple Heroes require multiple points. The GM may not increase a Risk's difficulty higher than 15.

Action Scenes

The GM declares the beginning of an **Action Scene** when danger is imminent, either from the environment or enemies who wish the Heroes harm. An Action Scene occurs when the players *take action to change the world around them in the face of imminent danger*.

Action Scenes are divided into **Rounds** and **Beats**. Every time anyone rolls dice, it's the beginning of a Round. Every time someone spends a Raise, it's a Beat. When nobody has any more Raises to spend, everyone rolls dice and you begin a new Round.

A sword fight is an Action Scene. A diplomatic negotiation is an Action Scene. An interrogation by the city guard is an Action Scene. Sneaking through the streets to follow a thief is an Action Scene.

Action Scenes move fast, and sometimes, things can get confusing. In order to maintain the

pace of an Action Scene, the GM tries to keep things moving, but if you get confused and don't understand something, be sure to ask questions. However, don't let too many questions slow down the scene. After all, your character doesn't have five minutes to debate every move...

ROUNDS

We divide an Action Scene into **Rounds**. A Round is as long as a GM needs it to be.

During a Round, every character gets to take make a Risk.

Step 1: Everyone announces Intentions for the Round. The GM tells each player what the Consequences are. If any set of Intentions directly oppose each other, treat them as Contested Risk (see below).

Step 2: Everyone rolls at the same time and counts their Raises.

Step 3: Everyone tells the GM what they rolled. Each player spends a Raise, one at a time, taking turns around the table. Whoever got the most Raises goes first. Whenever a player spends a Raise, it's a Beat. Each player making a simple Risk may use one Raise to overcome the Risk and gain their Intention. Players may use additional Raises to increase the effect of an action, describe how they overcome Consequences, or further describe actions in the Scene. Each player making a contested Risk compares their Raises to those of their opponent; the player with the most Raises devoted to their Intention achieves their Intention.

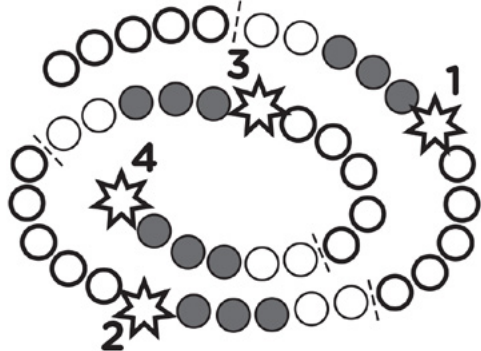
Step 4: The GM narrates the outcome of every character's Risk.

WOUNDS & DRAMATIC WOUNDS

When your Hero takes Wounds, don't worry too much. After all, they're just Wounds!

If a Hero isn't careful, his Wounds can add up and become dramatic Wounds. Heroes with a high Resolve have more control over their Wounds.

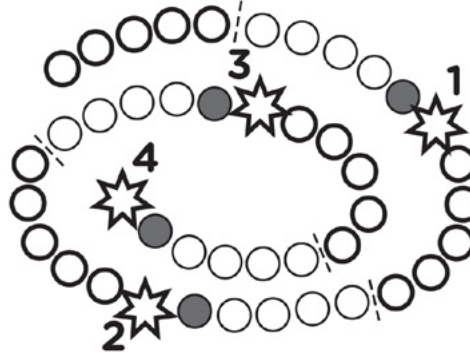
RESOLVE 2 / SEEING RED



Just above is a graphic from your Hero Sheet called “the Death Spiral.” (Always announce the Death Spiral with an overly melodramatic tone and music.) When your Hero takes Wounds, fill in the dots on your Death Spiral. The Death Spiral is divided into tiers called “dramatic Wounds.” When your Hero takes five or more Wounds in a tier, he is **Seeing Red**. Whenever you are Seeing Red, you can choose to take a Dramatic Wound. When you have 5 + your Resolve in Wounds, you *must* take a Dramatic Wound.

For example, this is Prince Aleksy's Death Spiral. (You'll meet him in the adventure, later.) If Aleksy takes five Wounds, he begins Seeing Red. He may then choose to take a Dramatic Wound and move to the next tier. If he takes three more Wounds (his eighth Wound), he *must* take a Dramatic Wound and move to the next tier.

RESOLVE 4 / SEEING RED



If Aleksy had a four Resolve, he could take a total of nine Wounds before he had to take a Dramatic Wound as his tenth. He can still choose to take a Dramatic Wound after Seeing Red.

Dramatic Wounds increase the tension of a dramatic scene. This isn't always bad for the Heroes—Dramatic Wounds keep you focused, remind you of what's important, and they push you to dig deep inside yourself for those inner reserves of strength.

A Hero with one or more Dramatic Wounds gains one bonus die on all Risks. A Hero with two or more Dramatic Wounds grants two bonus dice to any Villain who rolls a Risk against them. A Hero with three or more Dramatic Wounds can treat any dice that roll a 9 as if they rolled a 10. A Hero with four Dramatic Wounds is Helpless.

HELPLESS

Your Hero can only take four Dramatic Wounds (although some Advantages or other abilities might allow you to take more). Once your Hero has taken their maximum number of Dramatic Wounds, your Hero becomes Helpless.

A Helpless character is prone and cannot get to his feet. Also, a Helpless character cannot take *any* risk without spending a Hero Point. He cannot make a Risk and cannot roll dice to defend himself. He is truly *helpless*.

A Villain may kill a Helpless character. He announces as his Intention for the round, “I am killing this character.” His action resolves at the end of the Beat, after all the others. Any player can give up their announced Intention and spend a Hero Point to stop this from occurring before the end of the Beat. The player spends a Hero Point and describes how he plans on stopping the murder. When a Hero decides to stop the murder of another character and spends a Hero Point to do it, the action is *always* successful and does not require a roll. However, the Hero doing the saving must be within reach of the Helpless character and/or have the means to stop the Action. Stopping a murder is a Hero's only action for the Beat and cancels all other Intentions he may have announced before.

“I Dodge”

You may notice there is no “Dodge” Skill. This is intentional. We don’t want any player to ever say, “I dodge.” Why?

Because it’s boring. It’s dull. It’s oatmeal. It’s just as boring as a player saying, “I roll to hit.”

Instead of saying, “I don’t want to get hit,” explain how your character *acts* to avoid getting hit. Don’t just “dodge.” Instead, cut the rope holding the chandelier and swing up to the roof. Jump under your enemy’s blade so you are standing behind him. Kick the candelabra’s hot wax into your enemy’s eyes as he thrusts his sword toward you.

You don’t want to say, “I dodge” because that just maintains the status quo of the scene. A success in that case means that nothing changes. The person who tried to hit you is just going to try to hit you again and you’re just going to say, “I dodge” again. Instead, use your action to change the circumstance of the Scene. Create distance so they can’t stab you or put them in a situation where they don’t want to anymore. Throw a table on them. Make the other people in the room laugh at them for trying to stab you. Demoralize them. Dodge so effortlessly that your opponent thinks it’s futile.

Look at your Skills and figure out creative ways to use them.

Be creative. Don’t be passive. Don’t use your Risk to just say “No.” Use your Risk to *take action*.

BRUTE SQUADS

When the Heroes come face to face with adversity that intends to do them harm, it isn’t always a Villain. Villains have underlings, goons, faceless mercenaries, and other threats that they wield against the Heroes. These threats are called **Brute Squads**.

A Brute Squad has only one statistic—**Strength**—determined by the number of individuals in the Squad. A Squad of five soldiers has a Strength 5. A Squad of eight Guards has Strength 8. A Squad of ten Assassins has Strength 10.

Playing an Action Scene with Brute Squads works differently from playing an Action Scene with Villains. Instead of using the normal steps for an Action Scene, use these:

Step 1: Heroes announce their Intentions in response to meeting the Brute Squad: run away, hide, attack, generally any other thing they want to do.

Step 2: The GM tells each Hero the appropriate Trait and skill combination for their Intent, and the attached Consequences. The Heroes make appropriate Risks. If they succeed, they reduce the Brute Squad’s Strength by one, plus an additional one for each Raise they devote to their Intention.

Step 3: Each Brute Squad attempts to hurt the Heroes. The Heroes say what they do to keep safe from harm.

Step 4: The GM tells each Hero the appropriate Trait and Skill combination for their Intent, and the attached Consequences. Each Hero makes an appropriate Risk to avoid damage. Each Brute Squad inflicts a number of Wounds equal to their current Strength. The Hero reduces the number of Wounds taken by one for each Raise they devote to their Intention.

Heroes act before Brute Squads. If multiple Heroes face multiple Brute Squads, *all* heroes act before *any* Brute Squads.

Once all Heroes and all Brute Squads have acted, the Beat is over. If any Brute Squads remain, the next Beat begins.

“Niech Żyje Książę!”

(“Long Live the Prince!”)

A *7th Sea* Quickstart Trailer by Mike Curry, Rob Justice, and John Wick

Introduction

“*Niech Żyje Książę!*” is a quickstart trailer for the *7th Sea* roleplaying game. We call it “a trailer” because it isn’t a complete adventure: just two scenes from a bigger story. We expect it should take only a single evening to complete (about four hours or less) but it may take longer depending on player choices. Players take the roles of Heroes thrown into a perilous situation. In the midst of a national revolt, they must protect the Prince of the Sarmatian Commonwealth.

Structure

This is not a complete adventure: this is a quickstart peek at the *7th Sea* system wrapped up in two linked scenes from a larger story. We’ll be moving fast and furious, jumping from point-to-point, using a lot of screen wipes. Think of it as an extended trailer from a larger film.

However, like most *7th Sea* adventures, this one begins *in medias res* and ends on a cliffhanger. The Heroes must first escape a burning palace

filled with guards trying to kill them, *then* make their way across the sea, *and then* finally navigate the treacherous world of Vodacce court politics in search of an ally. In other words, a typical day’s work for a *7th Sea* Hero.

We’ve divided the adventure into Episodes. Each Episode contains a number of Action Scenes. Action Scenes focus on just that: action! Players roll dice as their Heroes perform death-defying deeds of derring do.



Background

The Heroes are in the Sarmatian Commonwealth, a land long troubled by internal corruption. Last night, the King made a proclamation that could change all that, finally bringing justice to the Commonwealth.

For nearly half a century, the Commonwealth has been a democratic monarchy. A council of nobles—the sejm (*saym* like the English “same”)—are the true power in the nation, having the ability to vote because of their noble titles. But they have put the Commonwealth on a path of self-destruction. Because any noble on the council has the ability to veto any legislation, the sejm is at a standstill. Grain rots on the docks, the army lacks necessary weapons and tools, funds sit in treasure chests and the Commonwealth slowly dies from within. The King is a living symbol of the nation: lying on his deathbed, unable to assist his people.

But the King’s son—Aleksy Gracjan Nowak—discovered a way to save the Commonwealth. During his research, he found the King has a single power the sejm could not veto: the power to grant noble title. Aleksy brought his dying father—carried on his deathbed—into the sejm for one final proclamation. And there, in front of the council, the King declared *all citizens* of the Commonwealth noble, making each and every one of the Commonwealth’s citizens a knight or a dame. The Prince told the sejm the King’s pronouncement would take effect in thirty days. They had one month to strike the law allowing any member of the sejm to veto any legislation or they would have an entire nation of legal voters with that same power.

Needless to say, the sejm immediately voted to strip themselves of the right to veto.

Unfortunately, a powerful noble—Marcen Sabat—doesn’t want this dramatic change to take

place. He’s put a plan into place: kidnap the King’s son and blackmail the royal family into reversing its decree. He’s put together a strike team of powerful warriors to kidnap Prince Aleksy... just as a delegation from Vodacce arrived to introduce the Prince to his fiancée.



The Heroes

We've provided five Heroes for this adventure. They come from different Nations of Théah and each bring unique strengths and stories along with them.

Aleksy Gracjan Nowak: Prince of the Commonwealth

(Ah-lek-see Graht-see-ahn No-vak)

A young, idealistic Prince who will do almost anything to see his people freed from the bondage imposed by their own nobility. Aleksy has a sharp tactical mind and a great deal of personal charisma, but his political skills leave something to be desired.

You should choose to play Aleksy if...

- You want to solve your problems with a keen tactical mind.
- You want to be the hope of an entire nation.
- You want to play an inspirational leader to your comrades and your people.

Domenica Vespucci: Fate Witch

(Doh-men-ee-ka Ves-poo-chee)

Engaged to the Prince of the Commonwealth. Domenica arranged the marriage herself, using her father's name and seal without his knowledge. Upon seeing the Prince, she immediately insists that they must run, as "a bloody thread" is drawing tight around his neck.

You should choose to play Domenica if...

- You want to solve your problems through cunning political deals.
- You want to be a woman who is far more capable than people give her credit for.
- You want to play a Fate Witch, wielding mysterious and subtle magic against your foes.

Ennio Vespucci: Vodacce Bravo

(En-ee-oh Ves-poo-chee)

The Fate Witch's brother, and a famed Vodacce duelist. He was sent to ensure her safety throughout the wedding and beyond, as well as to make certain that the match is a good one. He's also old friends with Roberto Gallo (the Captain). The two of them were inseparable many years ago, but their duties have kept them apart.

You should choose to play Ennio if...

- You want to solve your problems with the edge of a blade.
- You want to be driven by your emotions and your gut instincts.
- You want to play a swaggering, confident, unrivalled Duelist.

Roberto Gallo: Castillian Captain

(Roh-bear-toh Guy-oh)

A dashing scoundrel with a devil-may-care attitude and a heart of gold, hired initially to transport Ennio and Domenica to Sarmatia. He is old friends with Ennio Vespucci and he wants to convince the duelist to join him on his ship and live a life of adventure once again.

You should choose to play Roberto if...

- You want to solve your problems with cleverness and ingenuity.
- You want to talk about far-away, exotic lands you've visited and will visit again.
- You want to play a rags-to-riches story of a criminal turned adventurous scholar.

Azucena Esquivel: Castillian Bodyguard

(Ah-zoo-see-nah Es-keh-vel)

A member of a secret society called "Los Vagos," she has Maneuvered her way into being hired as the Prince's personal guard. Her objective is to ensure his safety and survival in hopes that he will serve as a symbol for justice and equality.

You should choose to play Azucena if...

- You want to solve your problems with subtlety and stealth.
- You want to be stoic, quiet, and as serious as a heart attack.
- You want to play an idealist willing to do whatever it takes to make the world better.

Sorte

Blessings and Curses

Vodacce men are famous for their outrageous fortune, good or bad. Vodacce women are even more famous for their blessings and curses. The Vodacce are so in tune with the elements of fate, they can actually force its hand. The cost is high, but many times, it is worth it. On their deathbeds, many Vodacce mothers call to their children for one final blessing before they pass into the next world. Likewise, new Vodacce mothers often bless their children moments after they are born.

Enemies of the Vodacce take care never to meet the eyes of a Vodacce woman, just in case. The wrath of an angry fate witch should not be underestimated. In fact, most of Theah's greatest historical and literary tragedies begin with a Vodacce curse.

Vodacce women who wish to pass on a blessing or a curse do so at the risk of great harm to their own fate. The ritual is very simple. The witch looks into the eyes of the recipient and speaks his name three times. Then, she kisses him. If someone interrupts the ritual, the curse or blessing fails.

System

A Blessing or Curse must be linked to a Skill. For example, a witch can bestow a Weapon (Sword) Blessing or Curse. When the witch completes the ritual, she rolls her Resolve+Sorte.

A Blessing gives that character one bonus die (Blessing Die) with a particular Skill until the end of the Scene. A witch can use her Raises to add more Blessing Dice. Each Raise gives the target one more Blessing Die.

A Hero who receives a Blessing Die rolls one extra die with every roll linked to the appropriate strand/Skill. For example, a Sailing Blessing would give the Hero an extra die to roll with every Risk while using that Skill.

If a witch Curses a character, all that character's opponents gain a bonus die when he uses the Cursed Skill. Like a Blessing, the witch can use Raises to increase the number of dice the Cursed character's opponents get when he uses that Skill. For example, if a Hero has a Weapon (Swords) Curse, all his enemies gain 1 bonus die when he uses a sword. If she adds Raises, his opponents gain one more bonus die per Raise.

A Fate Witch cannot maintain a Blessing and a Curse simultaneously—she must choose.



Outline

This brief outline gives you an idea of the adventure's path.

Episode 1: The Bloody Thread

(Action scene with brief role-playing to start, and then a fight)

The palace is on fire, the Fate Witch's warning bought the Heroes the few valuable seconds required to escape. The Prince is reluctant to flee, but agrees to rally troops in Vodacce to mount a counter-attack. Outgunned and overpowered, the group is chased through the palace to the docks, and the Captain's waiting ship.

Episode 2: In The Cold, Cold Vodacce Night

(Action scene with brief role-playing to start, and then social interaction.)

The group finds themselves in a notable Vodacce court, struggling to find allies and politicking for favor. All of this is in service to raising an army to march back on the Commonwealth. Reluctant to start a war, the Heroes must find an ally and convince them to lend aid to a just cause.

No Plot Survives...

(Or, A Quick Guide to Telling Stories on the Fly)

You've seen the outline for the adventure. If you're an experienced GM, you know what we're about to say, and if you're not an experienced GM, you're about to learn it.

No plot survives contact with the players. None. Nada, zilch, zero.

Writing an adventure for people you've never met before is tricky. We don't know you, we don't know your players, we don't know *anything*. We're just trying to give you an outline and hope your players don't go too far off the rails. After all, one of them could say, "Hey, let's see what happens if we get captured! That sounds interesting!" And with that, the rest of our work doesn't matter at all.

Trust us, **Things Will Go Wrong**. Your players decide to take a left when the adventure says to go right, or even worse, they just turn 180 degrees and go the other direction. Yeah, it's going to happen. Experienced GMs know this. New GMs, you're going to learn it *fast*. So, we've included some advice on how to get the story back on track, how to improvise when you need it, and when to just throw the whole thing out the window.

After all, the GM's job is to entertain the players. If your players don't want to follow the track, they won't. They'll go their own way. And that's what makes a role-playing game different than novels, movies, TV shows, video games, or anything else. The players determine where the story goes. You're not actually leading the story, you're following the players. We're going to show you how to do that.



Episode 1: The Bloody Thread

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

It was supposed to be a private meeting. In Vasa Castle, in the throne room, with the Prince of the Commonwealth. It was a motley gathering: the prince of Sarmatia, a Vodacce bride-to-be and her swaggering brother, an entirely honest Castillian sailor, and a mysterious, stoic bodyguard. It was supposed to be a private meeting, each participant with their own agendas... some of them less public than others.

But then, the Vodacce woman's eyes went wide. "Danger!" she screamed.

Her brother threw himself in front of his sister. The Castillian bodyguard threw herself on the Prince. And the sailor... ducked.

An explosion of gunpowder. Shattering glass. The march of soldiers' feet.

The door blew open and a man stepped through, surrounded by soldiers. He introduced himself as Duke Kazimierz, Marcen Sabat. And he accused the Prince of treason. Arrows flew, swords clashed and you escaped. Barely.

And now, here you are, hiding in one of the castle's many rooms with burning beams and tapestries. If you only had a window, perhaps you could risk a jump.

Weapons drawn. Breathing smoke. Feeling the heat of flame on your skin.

The Prince looks at each of you. You seem like honorable men and women. At least, more honorable than the villain looking for you.

This is a political coup. You've got to get out of here. But where do you go?

The players each have a rundown of their Heroes, motivations, and secrets. At this point, encourage ideas. How are they going to escape with soldiers all through the castle looking for them?

Retreat from the Capital

The palace is on fire and the Fate Witch's warning bought the Heroes the few valuable seconds required to escape.

Pacing is important here. Pay attention to your players. Let them chat a bit so they can get to know each other, but then, when the time is right, throw some action at them.

Escape Your Pursuers

This little encounter teaches your players how to roll and read the dice. Read or paraphrase the text below:

Running through the burning castle, beams fall from above, crashing down all around you. You burst through a doorway into the ballroom, flames licking at the walls. Behind you, guards wearing Sabat colors shout for you to halt. Then, from the balconies above, you see an assortment of crossbows and muskets leveled at you over the railings—too many to fight. You know that if you can make it to the far side of the room and through a nearby study, there is a window that overlooks the docks. If you can make it there, you can surely escape the city before the noose closes around your neck. What do you do?

There is plenty for the Heroes to do here, but their main objective should be to reach the study at the other side of the ballroom. Heroes can use any combination of Skills and Traits they wish,

but there are some choices that are more likely than others.

You've presented the players with a Risk: a dangerous action/choice. Players can use their character sheets (Traits, Skills, Advantages, and other bonuses) to *overcome* the risk and achieve their Intent (in this case, getting to the other side of the room through all that danger). Every Risk in *7th Sea* comes with a consequence: the price for overcoming the Risk. Players can also use their character sheets to *overcome* the consequences.

Follow these steps to run through the Risk.

STEP 1: SETTING THE STAKES

The first thing you do is tell the players what they need to do and what it will cost them to do it. This is *Setting the Stakes* for the Risk.

In this case, the Heroes need to get across the room. Let the players each tell you exactly how they're going to try to get across the room. Give them a little bit of time to decide what they do, but don't dawdle. Any longer than one minute and you should push them to make a decision.

Once they've decided what they want to do, you should inform them of the Consequences of their choice. Because this is their first Risk, we will keep Consequences simple: two Wounds. This means that the cost of getting across the ballroom is that they must take two Wounds.

In this Quickstart, we'll mark out Risks like this:

Risk: Get across the ballroom to the study.

Consequence: Your Hero receives two Wounds.

Tell the players they must now roll dice. Their first Risk!

STEP 2: DICE

Each player looks at their Hero Sheet. The players roll a number of d10s equal to the Trait that is most appropriate to their chosen course of action. Brawn and Finesse are the most likely, but they might have opted for a solution that uses Wits or Panache. They may add a number of dice equal to an appropriate Skill. Athletics is the most likely, although they might choose to use something like Intimidation or Hide. Ultimately, it's the GM's call as to which Trait and Skill are most appropriate.

Players can also get additional dice for a few different reasons described earlier in this Quickstart packet:

- One bonus die if this is the first time they're using that Skill in this scene (which for this very first Risk should be true of all the players).
- One bonus die if they give some cool bit of description for their action.

Each player then rolls all the dice.

STEP 3: RAISES

Now, each player starts making sets of “10.” A 2+8, 3+7, etc. If a combination of dice goes higher than 10—such as 6+8—that still counts as a 10.

Every set of 10 is a Raise. Players use Raises in various ways, but most importantly, players use Raises to *overcome the risk* and *overcome the consequences*. In order to completely overcome the Risk and avoid its Consequences, each player needs 3 Raises:

- One Raise: Overcome the Risk (Get out of the room).
- One Raise: Cancel one Wound.
- One Raise: Cancel one Wound.

If a player gets no Raises, he takes two Wounds, and he doesn't achieve his Intent (getting out of the room). You (the GM) say what happens. Make it interesting and fun, and feel free to put the Hero into a bad spot.

If a player gets one Raise, he can use it to get out of the Room, but does not negate the Consequences: he takes two Wounds.

If a player gets two Raises, he can use them to get out of the Room and negate one Wound, but he still takes one Wound.

If a player gets three Raises, he gets out of the Room and negates both Wounds.

Players can also use Raises to negate the Wounds other Heroes take. For example, the Bodyguard can use one or more of her Raises to negate the Prince's Wounds or the Fate Witch's Wounds.

Players can't spend a Raise to accomplish the goal of the Risk for another Hero. They can help each other and protect each other from Consequences, but they have to accomplish the Risk on their own.

That's the only limit on Raises: Heroes **cannot use** Raises **to overcome** Risks **for other** Heroes. **A Hero must overcome the Risk himself.**

Whenever a player uses a Raise, he describes the action. For example, if a Hero uses a Raise to negate the Consequences of a Risk for another Hero, that player describes how. Heroes can use Raises in various ways to negate the Consequences. A few examples of how a Hero can spend a Raise are to:

- dodge a burning beam that suddenly falls from the ceiling.
- flip a table onto its side and take cover behind it.
- shove a bookcase or armoire in front of the door to stop his pursuers.
- grab a sword from the suit of armor in

the corner.

- fire a few shots at the guards on the balcony to force them to keep their heads down.

After the very first Risk, Heroes will either have gotten to the other side of the room, or they'll have embroiled themselves in new situations by failing to generate any Raises. If a Hero gets separated from his companions during this scene, don't worry too much. Just come up with a brief description of how he gets back on track, and give him a few Wounds to denote his troubles. Make sure you put him back with the others as soon as you can, but don't gloss over what happened. Describe something dangerous (he finds himself cornered with a handful of Sabat's men and escape with some cuts and bruises) or funny (he bursts in on a noblewoman trying to escape, and she screams and hits him with her handbag before he stumbles out) that happened to him in a side room. Then, once everybody is bursting into the study, move on to the next section.

Estera Sabat: “Czarny Kot” (The Black Cat)

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

You burst into the study and throw the door closed behind you. Ennio holds the door shut long enough for Azucena to upend a small bookcase in front of it—Sabat's men won't be getting in that way.

“Witam drodzy,” you hear from the room behind you. “Hello, darling.”

Crouched on the sill of an open window, you see a woman in skin tight black leather trousers, tall boots and a leather corset. Her hair is black and long, flowing over her shoulders. She drops to the floor on the pads of her feet, but stays close to the window. She seems a little apprehensive, but is putting a great deal of effort into seeming at ease.

This is Estera Sabat, the woman the Prince has been refusing to marry for five years. Her objective is political influence, and her favorite methods are theft and espionage. She is the Black Cat.

“I have a proposition for you,” she says in her husky, sultry voice. “I do not know what my father plans, but I know him well enough. His interests usually align with mine... but not this time, I think. Let me go with you. I can help.”

Estera’s goal is simple—she wants to stay close to the Prince and his companions to keep an eye on them. She has her own objectives and ambitions that are not necessarily the same as her father’s. Estera is, in many ways, an opportunist, and here she smells opportunity. The chaotic situation has pushed her to make a bold move in order to stay informed.

Once you have described the scene, you should address Aleksy directly. Hold up five fingers, and explain that he has until the count of zero to make a decision. Then ask him if he accepts Estera’s offer to accompany the Heroes.

If he hasn’t chosen by the time you reach zero, or if he refuses, tell him that he has hesitated and Estera senses it. She is hurt and angry:

“Of all the people I have ever lied to, Aleksy, you were never one of them.” Then she leaps out a nearby window, using her grappling hook to escape.

If he chooses to accept Estera’s offer, she is pleased:

“Then I will see you at the pirate’s ship, my Prince. I would accompany you there myself, but there is something I must attend to before we leave. And besides, as usual, you are in capable hands.” She flashes a quick smile at Azucena, then saunters out a nearby door without a glance over her shoulder.

Depending on how Aleksy and the other Heroes treat Estera here, it will change her presence in Episode 2.

How you play Estera is up to you. Keep your options open. She hasn’t made up her mind which means you don’t have to, either. Not until the last possible moment. Choose one or more of the following character twists for Estera. Remember what you choose but keep it to yourself... at least until the time is right.

- Estera does not love her father—she hates and is afraid of him. Growing up as a Sabat, however, meant that she could not show fear and instead always presented an air of calm control. She sees this as her opportunity to get out from under his thumb.
- Estera is actually a bit of an altruist, and she believes that Aleksy’s idea of Golden Liberty is one of genius. She wants to ensure that his ideals come to fruition, even if she doesn’t get to do that as the Sarmatian Queen.
- Estera likes and respects Aleksy, but her interest in marrying him is only for political reasons. When she says “beloved” she isn’t talking to Aleksy. The person she is truly in love with... is Azucena.

Out the Window

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

Below you, through the window Estera left open, the small courtyard is swarming with activity. More than a dozen of Sabat’s house guard are taking positions down below. In the chaos, they don’t seem to notice you just yet—a few glance up at the windows when they see some commotion, but there is just too much going on right now for all of them to notice. The soldiers move to fortified positions along the walls. It’s clear that they are taking control of the palace, but their attention is mostly focused outward. What do you do?

It’s time for another Risk! Have your players build a pool of dice the same way as they did before, but now the consequence is three Wounds. Encourage them to use a different Trait and Skill than they used to cross the ballroom—and offer them a bonus die on their roll if they accept. Encourage them to do something heroic, to interact with their surroundings in a meaningful way, or to say something clever—and offer them a bonus die on their roll if they do. Players can gain both of these bonuses, but only once each for a maximum of two bonus dice.

Risk: Get down to the courtyard below.

Consequence: Your Hero receives three Wounds.

Follow the same procedure for a Risk as before. Set the Stakes by telling the Heroes that they are trying to reach the ground, and that they will take three Wounds along the way. Ask them how they plan to get to the ground below, and to gather a die pool made up of the appropriate Trait and Skill. Have the Heroes spend their Raises to overcome the Risk, overcome Consequences for themselves or another Hero, or do something else (see examples below). The same rules apply as before—you cannot overcome the Risk for another Hero, you can only help them to overcome Consequences.

The players can spend Raises here in similar ways as they did before. Each Raise allows a player to reduce the consequence they or another Hero suffer, but remember to have them describe how they do so. Some examples might be to:

- leap out the window on a hanging tapestry.
- deliver a flying kick to one of the guards.
- to land harmlessly in a pile of hay or on a cloth awning.
- land in a heap on top of one of the guards below.

- drop down into the courtyard silently and without any of the guards taking notice of them.

If players don't have any Raises, something interesting happens. They land badly and hurt themselves, they fall haphazardly into a pile of garbage and are surrounded by angry soldiers, and so on. If players do not generate any Raises, their Heroes suffer the Consequences. Don't be afraid to come up with your own circumstances for Heroes that fail their Risk, but remember not to punish them. Your job here is to complicate the situation and give them a few bumps to add color and spice to their actions. Whatever situation they wind up in should not, ultimately, derail from the course that carries them to the next Scene.

Captain Filip Kumiega

From where they land it's only a few hundred feet to the docks. Luckily, the King's most trusted guard, Filip Kumiega, is coming to help... Or is he?

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

"Drop your weapons!" Filip Kumiega, Captain of the Royal Sarmatian Guard, marches forward surrounded by his most trusted soldiers, men and women hand-picked to serve at his side. It doesn't take long for you to realize that Filip isn't shouting at the men attacking—he's addressing YOU.

After only a moment—once it becomes apparent that you aren't going to comply—his expression shifts to anger. "I'm sorry, my Prince, but you've made a grave error. Your ideas are dangerous. They go against the very nature of a civilized society." He pivots on a heel and strides toward the castle, making an impatient gesture to the collection of Sabat soldiers and Royal Guard. "Seize them!"

These men are known as Brute Squads: groups of thugs. Heroes have little trouble dispatching them in small numbers, but if there are too many, even the best Hero can get overwhelmed.

Our three Brute Squads each have a Strength of 8. That means we have eight brutes per Squad.

Once you've described the danger to the characters, and what is at stake, you should address Azucena directly. She has an important decision to make. Hold up five fingers, and explain that she has until the count of zero to make a decision. Then ask her if she stays to protect the Prince, or if she chases after Filip. Then start counting.

If she hasn't chosen by the time you reach zero, tell her that she has hesitated and the moment has passed. Her window to pursue Filip has closed. If she chooses to chase Filip, check the sidebar **Through the Fire**.

Here's a step-by-step walkthrough of how to handle the scene.

STEP 1: ANNOUNCE INTENTIONS

Everyone—including the Brute Squads—says what they want to happen next. The Brute Squads want to "Capture the Heroes." More than likely, the Heroes want to "Escape to the Docks" or something similar. Everyone involved says exactly how they're going to pursue their intentions.

STEP 2: TRAIT+SKILL+BONUS

The GM tells the players to roll a number of dice equal to their appropriate Trait + appropriate Skill + any appropriate bonuses. Remember that they don't have to use fighting Skills—they can opt to use athletics to run the brutes ragged around the courtyard, they can use intimidate to scare them into running away, or any other Risk that you judge as appropriate to the setting and the mood at your table.

The GM also tells each player the Consequences, if any, for their particular Risk.

Everyone rolls dice. Every Raise a Hero devotes to their Intent takes out a brute. Make sure each player describes how their Hero takes out brutes. Encourage vivid and exciting descriptions.

STEP 3: BRUTES' TURN

If the players have not taken out all the brutes, it is the brutes' turn to deal out injuries. The brutes inflict a number of Wounds equal to their remaining Strength. Have each Brute Squad attack a different Hero, and then ask the Hero how they try to avoid being injured and have them make a Risk. A player avoids one Wound for each Raise. Make sure each player describes how their Hero avoids being harmed.

STEP 4: AVOID DAMAGE

Players now make a Risk to avoid Wounds. Each player makes a Risk based on how they intend to avoid the Injury; the GM tells each player which Trait and Skill to use, and the Consequences for their particular Risk. Each Raise devoted to their Intent reduces their Wounds by one. Make sure each player describes how their Heroes avoid getting hurt. Encourage vivid and exciting descriptions.

END OF THE ROUND

If there are no more brutes, the fight is over. If brutes remain, begin another Round. Go back to Step 1 and go through all the Steps until no more brutes remain.

SPACE

Do not worry about space or feet or inches or anything like that. The room is small enough that everyone can get to everyone else. Besides, we like the image of Heroes dashing from corner to corner, flashing their blades, taking out bad guys. Don't let inches and centimeters get in the way of that. This isn't a game about accuracy: it's a game about *action!*

WOUNDS

Now is a good time to remind your players to keep their Wounds in mind. Depending on how things have gone so far, they might have a Dramatic Wound, which could change the number of dice they roll.

Through the Fire

If Azucena decides to chase Filip, read or paraphrase the following to her:

You plunge through the doorway and back into the burning palace, hot on Filip’s heels. You never liked the man—too much of a conservative traditionalist, in your eyes. His devotion to the royalty of Sarmatia is one of expectation, almost habit, not one of true loyalty.

You are somewhat surprised when he stops running, and instead turns to face you with a sneer. “Foreigner, you have corrupted my Prince and my people for long enough. You wish to burn my Nation to the ground? Fitting that you’ll die in the literal ruins of the very house you sought to metaphorically tear down. KILL HER!”

From the smoldering, smoky shadows come a handful of men and women. All pretense of association with the Royal Guard is gone—they wear all black, with masks covering their faces and sharp knives in hand. These are not soldiers—they are assassins.

This encounter runs similar to the fight with the soldiers outside, except these men are a single Brute Squad of Strength 6. During the commotion, Filip takes a shot with his pistol and then ducks out of the room.

For Filip’s shot, roll six dice. He deals one Wound for each Raise he makes. Filip gets to roll dice because he is a Villain, not a brute. This isn’t a contested roll, either—don’t have Azucena roll to protect herself.

After that first shot, run the fight according to the steps above. Run the two fights simultaneously rather than separately—just move back and forth between the two scenes, describing the two encounters. Azucena cannot aid the other characters by fighting their Brute Squads, and vice versa. The biggest difference is that the brutes facing Azucena have a different Intention—they plan to kill her, not capture her.

You should mention to Azucena that she can hear sounds of combat outside, maybe the occasional shout of pain or fear. Remind her of the consequence of her choice to abandon the prince and pursue Filip. You should do the same with the Prince—point out that this would be different if Azucena had stayed, but remember to let them reach their own conclusions and feelings on the matter. Don’t tell Azucena she regrets leaving the Prince—show her why she might regret it. Don’t tell the Prince that he is angry that Azucena chased Filip—show him why he might be angry.

Finishing Up

When the Heroes have dealt with the guards, they make their way onto Roberto’s ship and set sail into the harbor. If anyone was separated, bring them back together with a short description. For example, if Azucena pursued Filip into the castle, describe her leaping out a window to safety just as that portion of the castle’s roof collapses.

If the Prince accepted Estera’s offer of help, she is waiting for them on Roberto’s ship.

Episode 2: In The Cold, Cold Vodacce Night

In which our intrepid Heroes find themselves politicking in a Vodacce court. Their goal is simple, raise an army to march on the Commonwealth. If only they can convince the fickle Merchant-Princes of Vodacce to agree...

Introduction

First Step into a Larger World

Things are about to get a little more tricky.

Episode 1 was very direct and, in many ways, simple. We designed it to get you and your players into the game, to let your group jump into the water feet first.

Episode 2 is... different. This part of the adventure is intended to give your Heroes some leeway, to let them stretch their legs a little bit, talk to who they want, go where they want, and pursue their goals in whatever way they want. With that in mind, this Episode is more of a set piece than an established series of events. We've done our best to paint the scene for you, to give you the tools you and your Heroes need to begin to navigate the world of Vodacce court politics.

You might feel a little overwhelmed at first, but don't worry. If you get lost, or if the action slows down more than you'd like, we've included a few events that you can add to the party to get things rolling again.

We trust you. You can do this.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players:

“Why are we going to Vodacce? Why sail across the sea when we still have allies here in the Commonwealth?”

“Everybody knows you shouldn't trust the Vodacce. This makes no sense.”

“Of course, the Witch and her brother couldn't be happier. They didn't want to come to the Commonwealth in the first place.”

“She holds no love for the Prince. It's clearly a trap!”

You've listened to the crew grumble the entire trip. It's as if they forgot how, in the months following the attack on the palace, you sat with no less than four allies of the Prince. Betrayed by those believed friends. Each bought by the Duke Kazimierz's deep coffers.

Every. Single. Time.

Only after all the other options were exhausted, the Prince finally entertained his fiancée's idea of sailing to Vodacce in hope of appealing to her father for help.

Now the topman calls out that he's spied the port. The decision has been made. The die cast. You've opted to take the risk of finding allies in a foreign court. No matter how deadly you fear it may become.

While the heroes have traveled from the Commonwealth to Vodacce, that doesn't mean things haven't happened in the previous months. Wounds from the first Episode are gone; they've had time to heal.

First, ask each player—one-by-one—to describe a dangerous situation from the previous months to show there was no help to be found in the Commonwealth or a short adventure that happened along the way to Vodacce. This situation should involve that player's Hero making a mistake, stepping into danger, or helping out in a supporting role.

Second, the person to that player's right describes how his Hero saved the day. Perhaps one Hero rescued the other or one Hero overcame danger with his companion's aid. Follow up each description with a quick Risk and encourage the players to narrate their daring escapes from the clutches of Duke Kazimierz and his allies. When players describe their dilemmas, assign appropriate Consequences for each Risk.

Remember that the Hero who sets the scene is *not* the Hero who saves the day. The goal here is to bring the Heroes together, and to show that they have grown to rely on and trust one another in their journey. When setting a scene, if you feel a player puts their Hero in significant danger, displays a meaningful flaw or shortcoming, or otherwise does an exemplary job of showing another Hero to be awesome, offer them a Hero Point.

Each of these Scenes should only involve a single Risk. Don't linger too long, just a few quick flashes to the troubles the Heroes have endured. Of course, if your players are having a lot of fun, don't pull the rug out from under them. Just remember to keep things moving.

Arriving in Vodacce

Paraphrase the following to your players.

When the heroes reached Vodacce, they received terrible news: Domenica and Ennio's father, the Count Vespucci, was greatly angered by the announcement of Golden Liberty. Unable to call off the marriage, Count Vespucci is unwilling to aid the deposed Prince and his allies. The safe haven they expected to find is gone and they are left out in the cold.

It's time to find new allies, to secure a patron, and raise an army to march on the Commonwealth and reclaim the Prince's throne. There's only one problem: the Vodacce nobles are unwilling to involve themselves in the upheaval of their neighbor for fear that marching an army across the borders would be seen as an act of war.

As luck would have it, a more understanding Vodacce noble—the Marquis De Rege—is throwing a gala masquerade ball. The group has secured their invites and costumes, and is making its way through the main gate.

De Rege's estate, nicknamed the Rainbow House, is gorgeous on any day, with high spires that look out over the city and the Trade Sea. The architecture is inspired by classic Numa, but with contemporary Vodacce flair and color that gives it a life and identity of its own. The courtyard is paved with stones of varying colors, forming a bright mosaic arranged around a massive central fountain. On the water's surface, countless paper lanterns float back and forth, and similar lanterns are hung around the courtyard as a whole, giving the entire place a feel of something out of a fairy tale.

The people gathered are no less fantastical—the political and social elite of Vodacce, all decked out in clothing and costumes of the highest quality with masks from the simple and elegant to the extravagant and unbelievable, wander to and fro, sipping drinks and engaging one another in conversation.

A line of attendees stretches back from the gate. Some are on foot. Others are on horseback, riding in carriages, and one group even arrives on a palanquin carried by four brawny servants. The estate has its own dedicated docks, as well, and numerous small boats and pleasure yachts can be seen either already moored or waiting to dock.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Ask the players to describe their entrance to the grand ballroom. A Herald announces the party and all eyes are on them. A brief moment to win the attention of any would-be patrons in attendance... or avoid the notice of would-be spies and enemies, if you're the paranoid sort.

Ask each player to describe how their Hero enters the party. Do they try to make a splash, or avoid drawing too much attention? Are they in disguise, or using a false identity?

Use the descriptions to set the tone for following interactions and to color the scene, unless a player has an explicit goal or he requests a Risk. If he does, you can feel free to have him roll dice, but remember that Risks should not be made unless there is an explicit element of danger or something is immediately at stake. You shouldn't make a Risk to make a good impression on the crowd, for example, because that's not about anything immediately happening—you should, however, make a Risk to convince a noble to share a juicy piece of gossip.

Inside the Rainbow House

Read or paraphrase the following to your players.

Once you are inside, the scene is no less magnificent. The main ballroom is awash in light and color, with cloth tapestries hanging from the balconies that line the walls. A full symphony plays on a stage off to one side, and servants carrying trays of drinks and food meander through the room, offering refreshments to guests. There are buffet-style tables set out in various places around the room as well, and a few dozen small circular tables with chairs set around them.

The center of the room is dominated by an open space that looks as if it's being used as a dance floor. More than a score of dancers are currently spinning and twirling about in intricate patterns of formal dance.

Everyone—and I mean EVERYONE—is wearing a mask and costume of varying intricacy and expense. You do see some guests entering and leaving through other rooms, and after making a few quick circuits, you discover that these are mostly sitting rooms that have been set aside for quiet, more intimate conversation. One appears to be a small library or study, one is a sitting room with a number of very comfortable-looking red leather couches, and another is a trophy room adorned with various stuffed animals, mounted animal heads, and ornamental weapons in glass display cases.

There are other doors as well, but they appear to have guards stationed nearby. These guards do not seem to be particularly aggressive—you see a few other guests draw close to these guarded doors, and they are gently turned away but otherwise not harassed or bothered.

Working the Room

You may feel tempted to avoid Brawn and Finesse Risks because this is primarily a social scene. Don't close yourself inside of a box; there is plenty of potential here for less socially oriented Heroes to participate and contribute. Below are suggestions for some outside of the box uses for Traits.

Panache: Making a splash at the gala and, generally, trying to get along with the upper crust.

Wits: Outflanking their peers and knowing just when to drop the right words in the right ears or figure out who's most likely (and able) to help them.

Resolve: Resisting any temptations or offers that would distract the group from their goal.

Finesse: Physically Maneuvering through the crowds, slipping off to explore the manor for clues.

Brawn: Puffing your chest out and showing off, drawing attention, creating distractions or impressing a mighty noble.

SKILL EXPECTATIONS

A quick glance over the character sheets should prepare you for this scene. Below is a brief reminder of some of the higher ranked skills you should be expecting the characters to try, or suggesting for the players to consider.

Prince Aleksy Gracjan Nowak:

Diplomacy and Know (Tactics)

Domenica Vespucci: Diplomacy and Tempt

Ennio Vespucci: Intimidation and Empathy

Roberto Gallo: Deception and Know (Law)

Azucena Esquivel: Deception and Theft

ADVANTAGE EXPECTATIONS

Be prepared for the Advantages your group may bring into play. If your first reaction to anyone invoking an Advantage is to say no, stop yourself now. Advantages are going to help hook the player's into the scene even deeper. Here are a few to keep an eye out for, or suggest the players consider using.

Prince Aleksy Gracjan Nowak: Leadership, Reputation (Principled), Connections (Military)

Domenica Vespucci: Connections (Vespucci Vassals), Come Hither, Friend at Court

Ennio Vespucci: Left-Handed, Indomitable Will, Membership (Duelist's Guild)

Roberto Gallo: Able Drinker, Ordained, Castillian Education

Azucena Esquivel: Connections (Underworld), Second Story Work, Membership (Los Vagos)

The Guests

Four characters are in attendance who have both the means and motive to help the group. When the Heroes make a Risk to investigate their potential allies, consider what they are doing and how they are doing it. If they *overcome the risk*, they learn one of the **True** statements below. If they fail a Risk, they learn one of the **False** statements instead.

Below you'll find three truths and one lie about each of the NPCs, along with what they want in exchange for helping the players. Their personality is not spelled out but you can infer details about their temperament from the details below. This is intentional. As a Game Master you should adapt these characters to fit with your player's personalities.

THE MARQUIS CESARINO DE REGE, THE HOST

- **True:** The Marquis has the largest army of those in attendance. Surely he can part with a garrison to help the deposed Prince.
- **True:** The Marquis owns numerous lucrative trade routes with the Commonwealth. Surely he doesn't want any further disruption to the Commonwealth's commerce.
- **True:** The Marquis attended the Ambrogia dueling academy. Surely he'll ally with any fellow graduates. (Ennio Vespucci also attended Ambrogia.)
- **False:** The Marquis made his title through underhanded mercantile trade and the only thing he respects is the Senator. Surely if you offer to inflate his coffers he'll sell his swords to war. (The Marquis might be one of the few honest merchants in Vodacce, and prides himself as such. Any bribes will be an insult to this pride.)

Marquis Cesarino De Rege wants nothing in return but honesty. He'll commit his forces if the Heroes properly explain the situation to him. The fewer details left out of the story, the sooner he will act. Any attempts to mislead or manipulate him will sour his mood and make him unlikely to commit his army to action. De Rege leads a Regiment (1000 soldiers).

THE COUNT NICOSTRATO GUTTUSO, THE LOVELORN

- **True:** The Count has never married and has a soft spot for love stories. Surely hearing of how they were driven from their home on the day of their engagement will win his affections.
- **True:** The Count earned his title in battle, his army having defeated numerous enemies of Vodacce years ago. Surely he'll want to relive his glory days one last time.
- **True:** The Count secretly supports El Vago, having hosted the infamous vigilante in his home on numerous occasions. Surely he'll lend aid to anyone helping fight for the people. (Azucena Esquivel is a member of Los Vagos)
- **False:** The Count desperately wants to be married. Surely if you can arrange an engagement for him he'll gladly lend his aid. (The Count has only ever loved one woman, and she's long since passed. Any offer of marriage he'll take as an insult to her memory.)

Count Nicostrato Guttuso wishes to attend the wedding of Prince Aleksy and Domenica Vespucci. He'll commit his forces if he's offered a role in the wedding. The bigger the role, the easier he will be to convince. Any conflict between Aleksy and Domenica, or any other couples that may be forming within the party, will turn his mood and make him less willing to assist. Guttuso leads a Battalion (500 soldiers).

THE BARONESS ROSA SANTINA MANCO, THE ARRIVISTE

- **True:** The Baroness is ambitious. Having recently acquired her title, she seeks the approval of her peers. Surely she'll jump at the chance to prove herself in battle.
- **True:** The Baroness hates bullies, and has a soft spot for an underdog. Anyone who thinks they can win any fight they face via tenacity and aggression is likely to win her favor. Surely she'll be eager to knock the usurping Duke down a peg.
- **True:** The Baroness was recently humiliated at a dinner party hosted by Count Vespucci. Surely she'll want to meddle in the Count's affairs for his affront, and be drawn to anyone who has successfully outmaneuvered him in the past. (Domenica has gotten the better of her father in political dealings.)
- **False:** The Baroness seeks to win lands from the Commonwealth to expand Vodacce's influence. Surely if offered a parcel of land she'll commit her forces. (The Baroness is still trying to maintain control over her current lands, she'll take any offers for additional lands as an insult to her ability to manage her domain.)

Baroness Rosa Santina Manco demands credit for the defeat of the usurping army. She'll commit her forces if she is promised a high place in the account of the battles and guaranteed prominence in helping the Commonwealth during this turbulent time. The more glory promised her, the faster she'll rally her men. Manco leads a Company (250 soldiers).

ADMIRAL CARMEN CRUZ, THE AMBASSADOR

- **True:** The Admiral has a strong sense of justice and righteousness, even if her definitions of those things are a little more "rough" than most. Surely she'll lend her aid to a cause she believes is just.
- **True:** The Admiral is in Vodacce to forge stronger ties for her patrons back in Castille. Surely earning a favor—a BIG one—from the crown prince of the Commonwealth would make her employers very happy.
- **True:** The Admiral is a former pirate captain turned privateer. She managed to ingratiate herself to the Castillian royalty and secured a high ranking position within the Armada. Surely she'll be swayed by another "independent captain" who wants to go legitimate. (Roberto Gallo is also a former pirate who seeks legitimacy.)
- **False:** Carmen's play at legitimacy is all a ruse—she's interested in gold, and by any means necessary. Surely if offered a sizable monetary reward she'll commit her flotilla to action. (Carmen has found something more important to her than coin. Any insinuation that she is nothing more than a pirate will be seen as an insult to her honor.)

Admiral Carmen Cruz is a sucker for a redemption story. She'll commit her forces if she believes the Heroes have been wronged and want to serve up some poetic justice, especially if it sounds like it will be a good story. Carmen leads a Flotilla (250 soldiers and 10 ships).

What if...?

In Episode 1, your Heroes were presented with a few different options that could impact how this scene plays out or what resources are available to them. Here we'll give you a few guidelines on how to keep those things in mind, or to bring them back into play if you'd like.

ESTERA SABAT

How did your Heroes treat Estera, and how have they treated her in the interim? If the Prince declined her offer for help, you can have her appear alongside Zyta at the end of the episode. Emphasize her regret at this course of action, but stay resolute in her belief that Aleksy is the cause. If he'd allowed her to help, perhaps she could have prevented this.

If the Prince accepted her offer to help, she does what she can to schmooze the other guests and butter them up for the Heroes. If a Hero approaches one of the guests with Estera, offer them the chance to re-roll any one die in a Risk they make. If they let her work the room on her own, she returns to them with one or two facts about the other guests. She can also hint at her father having an agent present, but she isn't sure who it is.

“Be careful, my Prince. My father has many knives, and all of them are sharp.”

FILIP KUMIEGA

Did Azucena pursue Filip back into the palace? If not, then he isn't here—Filip is busy back in the Commonwealth, helping to secure Sabat's new hold over the nation.

If Azucena chased him into the palace, then you can have him resurface if you want. He's abandoned his post in the Commonwealth and come looking for revenge. Filip has tracked the Heroes here, and managed to secure his own invitation—and a mask to cover the nasty burns

that now scar his face. He blames Azucena for his disfigurement in addition to his previous claims that she's corrupted Aleksy and turned him against tradition. While Filip is angry with the Prince, he truly hates Azucena, and his primary goal here is to lure her out of the party and kill her. He will try to catch her eye without anyone else noticing, or to do something suspicious that might encourage her to follow him out of the ballroom where he can lay in wait.

Filip is a Villain with a 6 Strength. That means that he always rolls six dice for any Risk he takes. It also means that after taking six Wounds, the next Wound (his seventh) is a Dramatic Wound. If he takes six Dramatic Wounds he is defeated. Filip is, however, also a coward—if he takes more than two Dramatic Wounds, he'll attempt to flee and look for his revenge some other day.

When a Villain makes a Risk, there are no Consequences. Well, there are Consequences for the Hero, but not for the Villain.

He isn't a Duelist—and neither is Azucena—so he has no intention of engaging her in an honest sword fight, and instead favors just shooting her or stabbing her unceremoniously. He's not here to put on a show, he's out for blood.

Be creative with how you handle Azucena's encounter with Filip, just remember that he does everything he can to keep it out of the ballroom (he doesn't want anyone else to interfere) and he isn't personally motivated to hurt anyone else (but he will if they get in his way). He keeps his identity a secret until the last possible moment.

“You have corrupted my Prince, and you have scarred my face. For that, I will make you SUFFER before you die!”

Seal the Deal

Depending on how interactions with these three characters turn out, you may have a one or more candidates to sponsor the groups return to the Commonwealth. Since each of these patrons want something different it is possible to enlist the aid of more than one... or none at all.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Did your Heroes really think that he would just sit back and wait for them to marshal their allies against him? It's time to disabuse them of that notion.

Once the players have succeeded in winning an ally or two—or they have failed in spectacular fashion—the Duke's allies make their move.

COLD, NAKED STEEL

Zyta Kurowski is Sabat's personal bodyguard and enforcer. Zyta is notorious as a brutal and cruel swordmaster who takes special pleasure in inflicting pain and humiliation on those she is sent to deal with. She is well known by the Sarmatian elite. She's been dispatched to send a message to the Prince and any allies he may have won here tonight.

Zyta is a Rank Strength 8 Villain, and so she rolls eight dice for any Risk. After taking eight Wounds, the next Wound (the ninth) is a Dramatic Wound, and she can take eight Dramatic Wounds before she is defeated. Zyta can gain bonus dice, most likely from any Dramatic Wounds that Ennio has or may receive in the course of the duel or from Danger Points that the GM has accrued in the course of play (two bonus dice for each Danger Point spent on a Risk).

If the Heroes made an ally of the Marquis, Zyta targets him. If they did not, she targets another ally they earned. If they made no allies, she targets them directly. Adjust her dialogue and actions however you feel is necessary.

Read or paraphrase the following to your players.

“How touching. The exiled pauper-prince finds a sympathetic ear amongst the people of his whore fiancée.” The woman’s Sarmatian accent is thick nearly to the point of caricature. She lurks nearby, her red lips twisted into a cruel smirk. Aleksy knows her on sight—Zyta Kurowski. Sabat’s personal swordmaster and executioner.

“I have come for the traitor.” She turns her steely gaze upon the Marquis, smirking. “You will give him to me. We will return to the Commonwealth, where he will face a trial, he will be found guilty, and he will be executed for treason. After all, here he is, plotting with foreigners to stage a military coup... and overthrow his father.”

The guests give out a collective gasp, but the Marquis seems unmoved. Zyta pauses for a

moment, then steps toward him... and backhands him across the jaw. “Then I will fight for him. I challenge you to a duel, old man. And when I defeat you, I take the traitor.”

The Marquis wipes a trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth, then raises one hand and signals his guards to halt. “You have insulted me in my own home... but more importantly, you have insulted the honor of my guests. I am glad to defend them.”

He turns his gaze to Ennio. “But I think one of their own number is more than up to the task.”

If your players want to gang up on Zyta, or approach this in a way that isn’t heroic, gently remind the Prince that Zyta is proud and bold, but not stupid. She probably isn’t alone, and if her demand for a duel isn’t answered, she’s certainly willing to resort to other, bloodier methods. She is, after all, a member of the Duelist’s Guild. If she

issues a challenge for a duel and then doesn’t live up to the terms after the fact, she would suffer dire Consequences. Zyta is not interested in dueling to the death, neither hers nor theirs. This is a duel of honor.

The fight with Zyta is a duel. Because she is a Strength 8 Villain, every eight Wounds she takes causes her one Dramatic Wound. Once she has taken eight Dramatic Wounds, she is defeated.

The Duel with Zyta is HARD, and it’s intended to be. So far, your Heroes have mostly only interacted with brutes, or with Villains in passing (like Filip) or indirectly (like the Duke). This is the first time they’ve ever had one really draw steel and step up to the line against them, so to speak. They need to learn that Villains have teeth.

Ennio certainly has a chance to beat Zyta if he fights well, but it’s entirely possible that the Sarmatian enforcer will get the better of him.

Dueling

When two sword fighters come face-to-face and enter one-on-one combat with one another, we have a duel.

A duel is broken down into Rounds, a Round consisting of Beats: at least one for each Duelist. Often, a Round may consist of multiple Beats.

Both Duelists gather Duel Dice based on the weapon of choice. This always involves a Weapon Skill; you cannot use ambush, you cannot use brawl or any other Skill. Both Duelists roll their Duel Dice and make Raises. This is before the Round has officially started, and they won’t re-roll until the next Round. Hero Points may be spent as usual, either before or after the roll is made, but cannot be spent within a Round in order to generate more dice.

The consequence of a Duel is getting injured and defeated by your opponent, so the GM

doesn’t assign Consequences during the duel, and the participants don’t have to spend Raises to overcome Consequences.

Each participant in the duel then spends some amount of Hero Points (for Heroes) or Danger Points (for Villains) for speed. The first Beat of the Round goes to the Duelist who spends the most. Some effects may influence this (such as the *Combat Reflexes Advantage*). If neither Duelist is willing to spend Hero or Danger Points for speed, the first Beat goes to the Duelist with the most dice.

In a Duel, during her Beat, a Duelist uses one or more of his Raises to perform a single Maneuver. After performing a Maneuver, the other Duelist then responds on his own Beat, using one or more Raises to perform a Maneuver. A Duelist cannot perform the same Maneuver

on two consecutive Beats—for example, if I perform a Slash and you perform a parry, I cannot perform another Slash immediately and your next Maneuver cannot be parry.

Beats move back and forth, from player to player, until all Raises have been spent or some other effect causes the Round to end (such as the disengage Maneuver). Once all Raises are spent, the Round is over.

If the duel continues for whatever reason, the above steps repeat. Players gather Weapon Die Pools, roll dice, and trade Maneuvers.

Basic Maneuvers may be performed multiple times in a Round, but can never be performed twice in a row. Advanced Maneuvers can only be performed once a Round. If an effect causes you to lose your next Maneuver, you effectively do nothing on that Beat.

Dueling and Dueling Styles

Duel Styles grant the Duelist who knows them benefits in a duel, from changing the function of some Maneuvers to granting additional uses of Advanced Maneuvers. At the beginning of each Round, before rolling, a Duelist chooses which style he wants to use and gains the Dueling benefit of that style.

Step by Step Dueling

1. Select a Duel Style, gaining the Dueling benefit of that style.
2. Roll your duel Risk (Trait + Weapon). Spend Hero Points or Danger Points for speed.
3. Determine which Duelist gains the first Beat.
4. Count and declare how many Raises you have.
5. Spend Raises during Beats, alternating Beats, to perform Maneuvers until both Duelists have no Raises remaining.
6. Banter, demand surrender, take a drink of wine, and determine if the duel continues. If so, return to step 1.

Basic Maneuvers

Basic Maneuvers can be performed by any character who picks up a weapon, regardless of their training, talent, or other abilities. A Basic Maneuver may be performed as many times in a Round as the character wishes, but never twice in a row. For example, you cannot perform a Slash, and then perform another Slash on your next Beat.

DISENGAGE

Spend *all* of your Raises. At the beginning of your next Beat, before you can perform a Maneuver, the Round ends. Note that your opponent still has a Beat this Round.

PARRY

You may use this Maneuver in two ways. First, you can use raises to cancel wounds caused by your opponent: one wound per raise. Second, you can cancel Hero Points they generate: one Hero Point per raise. Parry must be used immediately after the Maneuver causing wounds—you cannot wait until the end of the round and simply parry all of the wounds you have taken.

SLASH

Use this Maneuver to attack your opponent. You can spend a Raise to either inflict a Wound or generate a Hero Point. With five Raises, for example, you could generate three Hero Points and inflict two wounds.

ASIDE

Use this Maneuver to accomplish something else in the scene that does not directly affect your opponent (to cut the bindings holding another character's hands, for example). You must spend a Raise in order to overcome the Risk, as per normal Risk rules, with your aside. Each additional Raise you spend is considered a Raise for a Risk appropriate to the action you take.

Advanced Maneuvers

Advanced Maneuvers are refined, learned combat strategies only available to characters who have attended a Duelist Academy or otherwise attained some specific training or tutelage. You must find a teacher to learn and perform Advanced Maneuvers.

An Advanced Maneuver may only be performed once per Round.

BASH

Using your strength, you attempt to push your enemy's weapon away to get a better attack. When you declare a bash, spend a number of Raises up to your Brawn. You deal your opponent that many Wounds. Bash cannot be countered with Parry, but can be countered with Riposte.

FLOURISH

When looking good is as important as being good, a Duelist uses a flourish. When you declare a flourish, spend a number of Raises up to your Panache. You gain that number of Hero Points. Your opponent takes a number of Wounds equal to half the Hero Points you gain.

LUNGE

A Lunge is an aggressive attack that leaves you open for a counter. When you declare a Lunge, spend a number of Raises up to your Finesse. You inflict two Wounds, plus additional Wounds equal to the amount of Raises you spent. You cannot perform a Maneuver next Beat.

RIPOSTE

A Riposte is a parry followed up immediately with a counterattack. Spend a number of Raises up to your Wits. You prevent that number of Wounds, and inflict half that number on your opponent.

Aftermath

If **Ennio defeats Zyta in the duel**, read or paraphrase the following to your players.

Zyta drops her sword and falls to one knee, holding a hand over the nasty cut in her side. She glares up at Ennio through her disheveled hair. “So be it. The traitor remains free for now, but he cannot escape justice forever. Betrayal cannot go unanswered. Your people cry out for justice, Aleksy.”

Give your players the opportunity to quip back at her, but end the scene afterward with Zyta being marched from the room, her hands bound.

If **Zyta defeats Ennio in the Duel**, read or paraphrase the following to your players.

Zyta smirks, stepping toward the slouching Ennio. “Your reputation was unearned, Vespucci. I expected better.” Using the tip of her boot, she nudges him gently and Ennio, lacking the strength to stay upright, falls onto his back. His sword clatters to the ground, and Zyta turns her attention to Aleksy. “You are mine, traitor, by your own promise and by the word of honor of your Vodacce protector. Resist no further. You are under arrest.”

Give your players the opportunity to quip back at her, but end the scene afterward with Zyta marching Aleksy out of the room, his hands bound.

Closing Up Shop

This is the end of “*Niech Żyje Książę!*”

If you intend to keep playing with the same group of Heroes, you can use this as a cliffhanger. “Can our Heroes rescue the Prince before he falls into the hands of the Duke? Will Domenica see her betrothed alive again? Can Ennio get his revenge on the wicked Zyta, the only person to defeat him in a Duel since his graduation from Academy? Find out next time, on *7th Sea!*”

No matter what you have planned for your players in the future, there are some questions that you should get into the habit of asking at the end of any game session, even if you aren’t playing *7th Sea*.

Did everyone have fun? The entire point of playing a role-playing game is to enjoy yourself. If someone didn’t have fun, you should ask them why and try to keep it in mind in the future, so you can do better. Remember that you should answer this question yourself, as well—your enjoyment is as important as any player’s.

Is there anything that was confusing, or that you didn’t understand? If it was confusing on purpose (because it’s a mystery the Heroes haven’t solved yet, for example) then that’s one thing. Sometimes, however, the leaps in logic that you expect the players to make just don’t happen, and things can get a little turned around. Use this opportunity to clear the air, and make sure everyone knows what happened.

Is/Was the story interesting? If your players aren’t interested in the story that’s being told, it’s probably a good idea to start telling a different one or to concentrate your effort on finding a way to get them interested in this one. Either way, this is a very important question.

Is there anything that would make you feel more a part of the story? In any role-playing game, “sharing the spotlight” is something that everyone at the table needs to accept as a reality. Sometimes, however, it’s difficult to gauge just how much attention each player is getting. It’s probably impossible to keep things entirely even all the time, but if a player feels like their Hero is being neglected, you should do what you can to address it.

We hope you’ve enjoyed your first look at *7th Sea*. Whether you’re a fan returning to an old favorite or a newcomer, it is our hope that you’ve enjoyed the time you’ve spent in Théah so far. Tell your friends about the game, about the quickstart guide, and about the upcoming full release!

Fair winds and smooth sails until we meet again. And remember, take all you can carry, give nothing back!

Alexsy Gracjan Nowak

SARMATIAN COMMONWEALTH, VATICINE

TRUSTING (Hubris): You receive a Hero Point when your Hero trusts what someone tells her, regardless of how suspicious it may be.

WILLFUL (Virtue): Activate your Virtue and target a Villain. Until the end of this Scene, you cannot spend Hero Points and the Villain cannot spend Danger Points.

REPUTATION: Principled 2

WEALTH: 3

STORIES

TRAITS

- Brawn ●●●●○
- Finesse ●●○○○
- Wits ●●●○○
- Resolve ●●○○○
- Panache ●●○○○

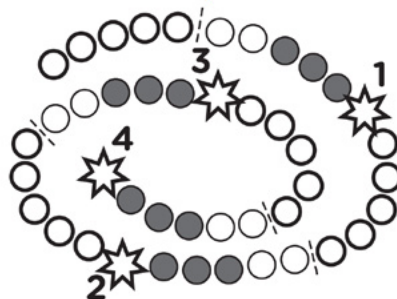
SKILLS

+1 BONUS DIE FOR EACH ●

- Athletics ●●○○○
- Diplomacy ●●○○○
- Know (Fashion) ●○○○○
- Know (Tactics) ●●●○○
- Perform (Dancing) ●○○○○
- Ride ●○○○○
- Warfare ●●●○○
- Weapon (Sword) ●●○○○

REROLL
REROLL

WOUNDS



- 1: +1d6 to all risks.
- 2: Villains gain 2 bonus dice against you.
- 3: Your 9's count as 10's during Risks.
- 4: You become Helpless.

BACKGROUNDS

Army Officer: You take command to organize other characters toward a single goal.

Aristocrat: You appeal to your bloodline, breeding, or family name to solve a problem.

ADVANTAGES

LEADERSHIP: Spend a Hero Point to inspire a group to action. The group must be able to hear you, but if they can and they are either of neutral or better disposition, they will do whatever you command so long as it is reasonable (they are unlikely to all throw themselves off a bridge to certain death, for example). You can do this once per game session.

CONFIDANTS (MILITARY): You have a connection with a particular NPC or minor faction. Confidants are people you trust, and will help you with minimal payment as long as it isn't likely to cause them harm or cost them dearly.

INDOMITABLE WILL: Spend a Hero Point. You cannot be intimidated, seduced, or otherwise goaded into acting a way that you do not wish. You can do this once per game session.

REPUTATION (PRINCIPLED): When you attempt to use your reputation to your advantage in a Social Risk, you gain 2 bonus dice. You can do this once per game session.

LARGE: All of your Intimidation Risks have one extra die. Any Physical Risk you take that would benefit from your size (lifting large or heavy objects, for example) gains one extra die.

Domenica Vespucci

VODACCE, VATICINE

PROUD (Hubris): You receive a Hero Point when your Hero refuses an offer of aid.

PERSPICACIOUS (Virtue): Activate your Virtue to predict what a character's very next action will be.

REPUTATION: Resourceful 1

WEALTH: 2

TRAITS

- Brawn ●●○○○
- Finesse ●●○○○
- Wits ●●●●○
- Resolve ●●○○○
- Panache ●●●○○

SKILLS

+1 BONUS DIE FOR EACH ●

- Deception ●●○○○
- Diplomacy ●●●○○
- Empathy ●●○○○
- Hide ●●○○○
- Know (Fashion) ●○○○○
- Know (Occult) ●○○○○
- Perform (Dancing) ●●○○○
- Tempt ●●●○○
- Weapon (Whip) ●●○○○

REROLL
REROLL

BACKGROUNDS

Fate Witch: You talk about another character's "Destiny," regardless of whether it's true or not.

Courtier: You solve a problem by making promises, trading political favors, etc.

ADVANTAGES

ALLY (VESPUCCI VASSALS): You have a connection with a particular NPC or minor faction. An Ally is a close friend who would walk through fire for you.

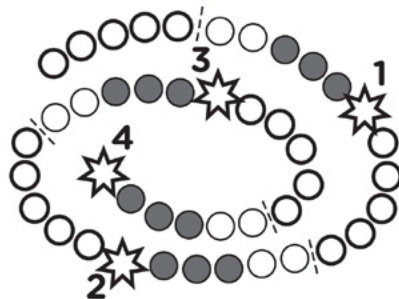
FRIEND AT COURT: When you are at a ball, feast, or similar high society function, spend a Hero Point to reveal you have a close friend also in attendance. You can do this once per game session.

COME HITHER: Spend a Hero Point to lure another character into a private room and leave said private room without them, removing them from the scene. They may be rescued later, after you're long gone. You can do this once per game session.

REPUTATION (RESOURCEFUL): When you attempt to use your reputation to your advantage in a Social Risk, you gain a bonus die. You can do this once per game session.

LINGUIST: You speak, read, and write all Thean languages. Even the dead ones.

WOUNDS



- 1: +1d6 to all risks.
- 2: Villains gain 2 bonus dice against you.
- 3: Your 9's count as 10's during Risks.
- 4: You become Helpless.

STORIES

Ennio Vespucci

VODACCE, VATICINE

HOT HEADED (Hubris): You receive a Hero Point when your Hero flies off the handle and loses her temper.

UNCANNY (Virtue): Activate your Virtue. For the next Risk, when you determine Raises, every die counts as a Raise. At the end of the Round, you become Helpless.

REPUTATION: n/a

WEALTH: 3

DUELING ACADEMY (AMBROGIA):

- Use Panache instead of Finesse when attacking with a Sword.
- If you successfully Defend then you may use any leftover Raises to inflict Flesh Wounds on the Brute Squad who attacked you. You may only do this once per Round.
- You gain one Hero Point when you perform the Parry Maneuver.

STORIES

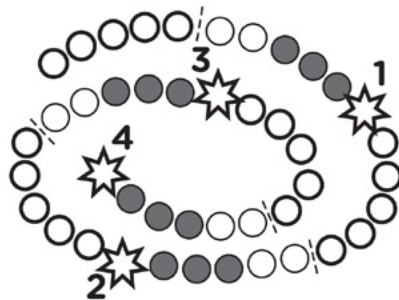
TRAITS

- Brawn ●●○○○
- Finesse ●●○○○
- Wits ●●○○○
- Resolve ●●○○○
- Panache ●●●●●

SKILLS

- +1 BONUS DIE FOR EACH ●
- Athletics ●●●○○
 - Deception ●○○○○
 - Diplomacy ●○○○○
 - Empathy ●●●○○
 - Hide ●●○○○
 - Intimidation ●●○○○
 - Tempt ●●○○○
 - Weapon (Sword) ●●●○○
- REROLL REROLL

WOUNDS



- 1: +1d6 to all risks.
- 2: Villains gain 2 bonus dice against you.
- 3: Your 9's count as 10's during Risks.
- 4: You become Helpless.

BACKGROUNDS

Bravo: You brag openly about your prowess with a sword.

Consigliere: You insist that a problem can be solved with some simple slip of a knife between the right pair of ribs.

ADVANTAGES

LEFT-HANDED: When you perform a physical Risk using your hands (picking someone's pocket, attacking someone with a sword, sneaking a dose of poison into someone's drink), you can reroll any single die in the Risk if you use your left hand.

POISON IMMUNITY: Poison never affects you, aside from some potential mild discomfort. If the poison would ordinarily kill you, it might cause you only to vomit instead, but there are no additional effects.

INDOMITABLE WILL: Spend a Hero Point. You cannot be intimidated, seduced, or otherwise goaded into acting a way that you do not wish. You can do this once per game session.

MEMBERSHIP (DUELIST'S GUILD): You are a member in good standing with the Duelist's Guild. You wear a pin that other members will recognize, and you have the right to challenge others to Duels.

COMBAT REFLEXES (SWORD): Choose one Weapon Skill. You are always considered to be spending a Hero Point on this action for the purpose of Speed.

Roberto Gallo

CASTILLE, VATICINE

OVERCONFIDENT (Hubris): You receive a Hero Point when your Hero squashes any doubts she may have about her own capabilities, especially when it leads to danger or risk.

INSPIRATIONAL (Virtue): Activate your Virtue to add one Raise to another Hero's Risk.

REPUTATION: n/a

WEALTH: 0

STORIES

TRAITS

Brawn ●●○○○
 Finesse ●●●○○
 Wits ●●●○○
 Resolve ●●○○○
 Panache ●●●○○

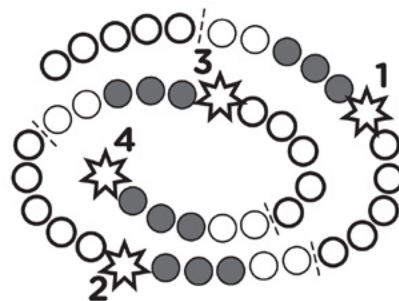
SKILLS

+1 BONUS DIE FOR EACH ●

Athletics ●○○○○
 Deception ●●●○○
 Diplomacy ●○○○○
 Empathy ●○○○○
 Healing ●○○○○
 Know (Law) ●●○○○
 Know (Sea) ●●○○○
 Profession (Sailor) ●○○○○
 Sailing ●●●○○
 Tempt ●●○○○
 Weapon (Firearms) ●●○○○

REROLL
 REROLL

WOUNDS



- 1: +1d6 to all risks.
- 2: Villains gain 2 bonus dice against you.
- 3: Your 9's count as 10's during Risks.
- 4: You become Helpless.

BACKGROUNDS

Army Officer: You take command to organize other characters toward a single goal.

Aristocrat: You appeal to your bloodline, breeding, or family name to solve a problem.

ADVANTAGES

HANDY: Spend a Hero Point. You can repair a broken item, rig a damaged gun, patch a leaky ship, or perform similar miracles, causing the object to function normally for the rest of the Scene. At the end of the Scene, the item is completely destroyed. You can do this once per game session.

CASTILLIAN EDUCATION: Whenever you make a Know Risk, add 1 to the value of each die. You may spend a Hero Point to grant another Hero a Rank in a Skill, so long as your Ranks in that Skill are higher than theirs. This Skill Rank lasts until the end of the Scene. A Hero can only receive a Skill Rank in this way once per game Session.

SEA LEGS: While aboard a ship, treacherous footing never affects you. You gain 1 bonus die on any Physical Risk while aboard a ship at sea.

ORDAINED: You can expect refuge in any church as well as a place to stay and hot meals. You also have access to many (but not all) of the Church's libraries. Finally, you gain 2 dice for any Social Risks against characters who are adherents to your faith.

ABLE DRINKER: Alcohol never affects you, no matter how much you drink.

LUCK: After you take a Risk, you may re-roll any number of dice you wish. You must keep the new roll, unless you have a different effect that allows you to reroll dice.

Azucena Esquivel

CASTILLE, AGNOSTIC

LOYAL (Hubris): You receive a Hero Point when your Hero goes back for a fallen comrade or to refuses to leave a wounded ally.

VICTORIOUS (Virtue): Activate at the end of a Round. If your opponent has at least one Wound, they take a Dramatic Wound.

REPUTATION: n/a

WEALTH: 0

TRAITS

- Brawn ●●○○○
- Finesse ●●●●○
- Wits ●●●○
- Resolve ●●○○○
- Panache ●●○○○

SKILLS

+1 BONUS DIE FOR EACH ●

- Ambush ●●●○○
- Athletics ●●○○○
- Disception ●●○○○
- Hide ●●○○○
- Know (Poison) ●○○○○
- Ride ●○○○○
- Theft ●●●○○
- Weapon (Dagger) ●●○○○○

REROLL
REROLL

BACKGROUNDS

El Vago Vagabond: You take matters into your own hands to dispense vigilante justice.

Assassin: You target the person in charge, ignoring as many of the “pawns” as possible.

ADVANTAGES

ALLY (UNDERWORLD): You have a connection with a particular NPC or minor faction. An Ally is a close friend who would walk through fire for you.

MEMBERSHIP (LOS VAGOS): You are a member in good standing with Los Vagos, a secret society of vigilantes. You have a passphrase you can use to identify yourself to other members and to friends of the society.

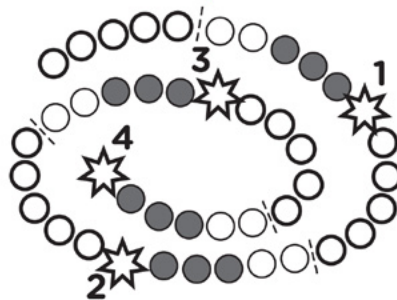
SECOND STORY WORK: You can spend a Hero Point to locate a way into a building or restricted area. If you spend a second Hero Point, you can bring one other Hero along with you, but everyone else has to find their own way in. You can do this once per game session.

SMALL: All of your Hide Risks have one extra die. Any Physical Risk you take that would benefit from your Small size has one extra die.

PSST, OVER HERE: While undetected, you can spend a Hero Point to lure a single guard out of position and take them out of commission. You can do this once per game session.

KEEN SENSE (HEARING): When you make a Risk where hearing is your primary sense and spend a Hero Point to gain bonus dice, you gain one additional bonus die.

WOUNDS



- 1: +1d6 to all risks.
- 2: Villains gain 2 bonus dice against you.
- 3: Your 9's count as 10's during Risks.
- 4: You become Helpless.

STORIES