

PARADIGM CONCEPTS

PRESENTS A



ADVENTURE

UNBATED & ENVENOMED

4-hour Introductory Adventure

Intro #3

Sweet Savona is hosting a series of festivals, and the Grand Melee fighting tournament has just begun. Even in seeming chaos, one can find order and those who wish to subvert it.

An **Introductory** adventure optimized for **2nd-level** characters.

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RUNNING AN ARCANIS ADVENTURE

When you run an Arcanis adventure you are charged with brining the world to life. We pride ourselves on delivering a deep world where a player's actions are just as, if not more, important then their die rolls.

We ask our GMs to be familiar with the location the adventure is set in and the cultures the players may encounter. But we also understand that during convention play some GMs may be forced to run an Arcanis adventure on short notice, as such when cultural details come into play we will do our best to call them out in "Arcanis Cliff Notes" side bars.

Beyond that, the important job you have as a Game Master is to make the table as fun as possible by engaging players and drawing them into the story.

Pay close attention to the player's actions (not character's, players), are they on their cell

phone or tablet? Do they seem disengaged? Distracted? Don't be afraid to engage them or shift the spot light to their character a little.

To facilitate this, you are empowered to adjust and modify the adventure in a number of ways:

- You may make on the fly adjustments to the adventure if the players find a clever way to tackle a problem, especially when out of combat. As long as the idea is reasonable, run with it! When you must say "no" always try and say "no, but," This keeps the game moving and makes it fun for everyone,
- Don't be an adversarial GM. Some tables like to be challenged, but there is a difference between being adversarial and offering a challenge. At the same time, don't make an adventure so easy that the players become bored.
- Keep the pace going in order to keep players engaged. Switch the spot light, have them make some skill rolls, asking them what their character is doing. If the party is stuck nudge them though some skill rolls or improvised details, just keep the game going.
- During conventions and game days be aware if you are running short or long on time while running an adventure. If necessary, skip some encounters but try and tell the entire story. Give the players closure, even if you need to fudge the numbers.
- Read-aloud text may be adjusted as you see fit, but make sure you give the players the appropriate hints and clues needed to keep the story going.

ADJUSTING ENCOUNTERS

Before you begin play you should determine the average strength of the party and compare that to the base level of the adventure. Each combat encounter has a box titled “scaling the encounter” guiding you on how to adjust the encounter to the party’s power level.

These adjustments are suggestions; if a party is having an easy or hard time don’t be afraid to adjust the difficulty.

To set the adventure difficulty you must first determine your tables Average Party Level.

Add up all the levels of all the characters, then divide by the number of players. Round up fractions to the nearest whole number. This is the Average Party Level

Consult the table below to set the adventure difficulty based on the APL

ADVENTURE DIFFICULTY

This adventure has been optimized for a table of 5 players playing **2nd** level characters.

#of Players	APL to BL	Adventure Difficulty
3-4	Equal to BL	Easy
3-4	Greater than BL	Normal
5	Less/Equal	Normal
5	Greater than	Difficult
6-7	Less/Equal	Difficult
6-7	Greater	Perilous

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

While in a settlement, town, or city characters may visit a temple or shrine to request spell casting at the cost of a substantial donation. You may only utilize these spell casting services three times per adventure. Any spell casting provided through the story of the adventure, such as an NPC casting a spell for the party, does not count against this limit.

Shrines do not house a clergy with which to attend to the needs of the faithful. Instead one or two itinerant priests tend to the shrine and the needs of the people.

Temples and churches are larger structures attended by full staffs of the faithful, including Templars.

The following spell services are common to all temples, with additional options available at specific temples as noted in each adventure.

Shrines, regardless of their deity, may only provide players with *cure wounds* and *lesser restoration*.

General Spell Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp

Initiates of the Gods background/Acolyte background/divine spellcasters receive **one free spell** as long as it is from a church or temple of the same religious faction (Mother Church for example)

If they worship the same god as a particular temple but are part of another religious faction, they can get a onetime 50% discount

instead.

ADVENTURE RELATED INFORMATION

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Savona is home to official temples and shrines to all the major gods and goddesses of the Pantheon of Man. The largest temple is the ziggurat-like Temple of Larissa located in Temple Square on the Main Island of Savona. There is a smaller (but no less prominent) Temple of Cadic located on the grounds of the Temple of Larissa.

There are no official temples to any other deity located in Savona.

GOODS AND SERVICES

Savona has a bustling mercantile district selling all items from the core rules at their normal prices.

ORGANIZATIONS

All secret societies maintain a presence in Savona.

PORTALS OF ANSHAR

There is no known Portal of Anshar available to the Heroes in this adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Striking Viper Academy is a Fighting School in Savona which, for the last ten years has been stuck in the bottom level of the Savonan Grand Melee rankings (the Equestrian League). However, two years ago their luck suddenly started changing. The season before, the Striking Vipers were solidly in the middle of the Equestrians. After the next melee, they advanced from the middle up to the Patrician

League (the next of the three main leagues), and the year after that advanced directly to the Imperialis League by winning all of their duels that season. While this is great news for the Striking Vipers, the rest of the Savonan establishment has been significantly shaken up.

The Brotherhood of Savona (known as the Cafelan Cartel) has secretly run the Grand Melee behind the scenes. Officially, the Grand Melee is a festival where many of the honour duels in the city take place. Anyone can fight, and there is nothing official about it. Behind the scenes, however, the Cartels and the various Fighting Schools of Savona maintain a very tightly regulated league between the two-dozen schools, with individual and School standings bet upon by many of the people in the city.

When the Striking Vipers (a third-rate school) began unexpectedly raising in the standings, the Cartels began losing a lot of money paying off the long-shot bets made in their favor. Now that they have jumped to the very heights of the dueling league, the Cartel is beginning to worry that there is foul play afoot. While they do not have any compunctions against people doing illegal things, they certainly are concerned by people messing with their business interests.

The Dovitoni family are among the most powerful Patrician families in Savona, and is one of the most prominent vassal families of the val'Sheem. For centuries, they have been part of the system where duelling is the primary means of settling disputes between feuding noble houses. They have the money to purchase the best duelists to champion their causes, and their contacts with the most powerful and successful dueling schools is second only to the val'Sheem's themselves. As such, when their highly skilled (and highly priced) fighters started losing to bottom-tier fighters on retainer of their significantly less-

influential and less-wealthy political enemies, the Dovitoni's started to consider that someone is skewing the odds against them.

As it turns out, the Striking Vipers are cheating in their duels, however, the rank-and-file Viper is not doing it consciously. Many of the noble families of Savona make use of the duelists in the city to settle their own vendettas, and many of these families are patrons of the various dueling schools, using them as their own private armies to settle disputes. The same is true about the Striking Vipers, who among others are patronized by the Rivalta family. This family is an up and coming family much like the Vipers are a fairly new school, and have a strong desire to rise in prominence using whatever means necessary.

GM NOTE: This is a full module with a lot of Scenes. It is possible to run long, especially if there is a lot of great role-playing. Scenes 10-13 are optional. If the Heroes complete the investigation, but there isn't much time left, these Scenes may be skipped and proceed directly to the appropriate Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Key Concepts: The Heroes arrive in Savona

While some have claimed that Grand Coryan is the heart of the Coryani Empire, there are many who will argue that the honour truly belongs to Sweet Savona. While the capital may be the house the Alabaster Throne, Savona and the province of Cafela encapsulates Coryan's lust, its passion. Nowhere else in the Known Lands of Onara are hearts worn so prominently on people's sleeves, pleasures sought so openly, and avarice hidden so poorly.

There are many reasons why one would find their way to this city. Perhaps you are searching for mercantile opportunities in

one of the Known Lands largest and busiest ports? Perhaps you are wishing to sample some of the best wine produced anywhere? Perhaps you wish to offer your 'supplications' at the Temple of Larissa. . . or any other location with enough privacy or space for your particular taste in worship? Perhaps you are here to witness the Sollemne Saeva Tempestas which is reaching its apex in only a few days. Perhaps you are here for the debauchery of the Festum Serena which follows it. Or perhaps you are here to witness the Grand Melee fighting tournament which has just begun. Whatever the reason, you find yourself in one of the over-large gondolas which ply the waters of the Savonan Lagoon between the various desperate parts of the city to the central hub that is the Main Island of Savona.

Leaving the gondola, like the heard of travellers who shared the boat with you, you make your way past the web of docks which ring the city, down one of the dozens of canals which split the Main Island into its own archipelago, and towards one of the many inns and hostels which service those coming to the mecca of Larissan worship in the Empire. While known as a city of debauchery, the city of Savona continues to function as any city would: common folk move between buildings, ships ply and fish the waters of the Savonan Lagoon, and life continues for those who live here. The only difference comes in the almost imperceptible scent of the ever-present incense that usually hangs over the city. While usually it thoroughly perfumes the entire lagoon, today it is almost completely absent.

Development: Please proceed to **Scene 1**.

SCENE 1

Key Concepts: The Heroes have a chance to interact with each other and learn a few things about Savona.

It is not long, before you find yourself a taverna near your cramped accommodations, sampling some of the fine beverages for which the city is famous. Unlike most places in the Known Lands, it seems that all the people of Savona go out on the town for meals and drinks. Part of this could be due to the wild lifestyle for which people of Savona are known, but looking around the city before reaching your destination you can see that most of the buildings in the city don't have room for a proper cooking hearth.

The taverna that you have chosen seems to be typical of the more tourist-centric areas of the Imperial District of Sweet Savona. It is loud, it is crowded, and there is much exposed flesh and alcohol to be passed around. Between flagons of wine being passed about, small plates of food—mostly seafood—filter to the various tables around you. This particular taverna seems to be a fairly popular one, with tourists, pilgrims, and even local Cafelans present in force.

Allow any Heroes to introduce themselves to each other and possibly with several of the bar patrons. Give them time to enjoy themselves and possibly indulge in the cheap (but decent) drinks being served here. The Heroes may also wish to ask about certain topics about the city, using a Charisma check to determine the results.

Current Events of Savona: If the Heroes ask about specific events in the city, allowing them to make any **Charisma based** skill checks (as long as they can describe how they use their skill, don't guide them, let them come up with it and describe it) feel free to Advantage to

players with creative or particularly in character ideas.

Additionally, should any of the Heroes be native to Cafela, you may reduce the DC by 10 at your discretion.

- **DC 5** – The Sollemne Saeva Tempestas—known as the Celebration of the Savage Storm in Low Coryani—is nearing completion. It was created some decades ago by the Governess of Cafela (the province in which Savona is the capital) to celebrate the rebuilding and rebirth of the city after Dorjan val'Mehan—Neroth damn him!—destroyed the city in the Coryan Civil War some forty years ago. Because the storm blew out all the braziers (which are kept constantly lit in dedication to Larissa) in the city, in the week leading up to the Celebration, each of the incense braziers are put out in sequence, clearing the air of the incense of Larissa. The festival will culminate in a group of clerics recreating a smaller version of the storm.
- **DC 10** – The Grand Melee of Savona is kind of an unofficial festival that happens every Dirigo (a summer month) in Savona. The various bravos and other professional duelists in the city stage duels to display their skills for all to see, particularly possible patrons in the Patrician class. Be careful of who you insult, because with so many bravos wanting to display their skills they may be touchier than usual.
- **DC 15** – While the Grand Melee is officially just a series of random duels, the various Dueling Schools maintain rivalries which carry through year after

year, with fighters from each School fighting not only for themselves, but for their Schools as well.

- **DC 20** – A cult to Yarris has recently begun preaching in the city, saying that Yarris is going to bring a wave to wash away the filth of the city. As if they could do worse than The Storm during the Civil War!
- **DC 25** – While officially the Grand Melee is just to show the fighter's prowess, the Cartels run extensive betting pools and standings. The Dueling Schools are all ranked into one of three separate Leagues, with members only being able to challenge fighters from other Schools in the same League. It is very hard for new duelists who are not affiliated with one of these Schools to fight one of the established Schools, with those who challenge 'above their station' often finding themselves bobbing in the canals, if you get my understanding.

GM Notes:

The dueling societies and Schools of Savona are a VERY closed system, and are not tolerant of outsiders. If any Hero expresses interest in becoming a Bravo, unless they are already affiliated with an established Family or School, they will be looked at as though they were a child who said something mildly amusing. That said, interpersonal duels between common citizens are not uncommon and are largely ignored by the larger dueling societies. They focus on the Vendettas of the patricians of the city, and view those of the common man to be beneath them unless a fighter shows particular promise to be taken into their societies.

Allow the Heroes to roleplay as they wish, interacting with the locals or with each other. There are itinerant Larissan clergy around, as well as off-duty Watchmen enjoying a post-work meal and drink. There are a few points they will notice, however. *Please use this as roleplay fodder instead of being an info dump:*

- *Nobody in the taverna is drinking ale or beer. The only beverages being consumed are water, wine, a sour vinegar drink with herbs known as Posca (popular with the less wealthy), and tea (popular with the higher classes due to its expense of being imported from the west). If any of the Heroes order any other beverage (especially beer), they will be mocked as barbarians (or worse, Milandesians!).*
- *All the food comes in tapas form, and most are vegetarian or seafood dishes. No mutton, beef, or even chicken, though there are a few preserved pork dishes.*
- *Like any Coryani city, you see those marked as slaves—either by brands or by the utilitarian tunics they often wear—which are serving customers. Some obviously belong to the taverna, while others bear sigils of noble houses and are serving their owners.*
- *The majority of the people here appear armed, mostly with daggers though there are also a few gladii (especially on those who bear legionnaire brands and tattoos) and rapiers.*

Development: Once the Heroes are introduced to their surroundings, please continue to **Scene 2**.

SCENE 2

Key Concepts: The Heroes are introduced to Savonan dueling culture.

GM Notes:

This scene can go one of two ways:

1) At least one of the Heroes is pulled into a duel with a local Cafelan.

or

2) The Heroes witness a duel as part of the Grand Melee of Savona. It is up to you—based on the party makeup or other cues—to choose which angle you wish to take. If the party is made up of noble Milandesians, feel free to have them attempt to stop an injustice and find themselves in a duel. If the party is made up of those who likely wouldn't bat an eye to seeing others mistreated (such as a Patrician seeing a slave being mistreated), it is likely easier to simply go with the second option. Please read the various sub-scenes to see which best fit your players.

Below are a series of potential scenes that you can use to 'bait' one or more of the Heroes into a duel. The four scenarios below are meant as hooks, but for simplicity they will all lead to the same duel sub-scene. Please modify any box-text to suit the needs of your table.

SCENARIO 1 – THE ABUSED SLAVE

GM Notes:

This scenario is best used if the party contains members of groups who are generally opposed to slavery, including Elorii,

Milandesians, and members of the Champions of the Silver Chalice secret society.

From the other side of the bar, you hear a crash of plates and cutlery. Getting up to see what the commotion is, you see a man wearing the toga of a Coryani patrician standing over an older Myrantian man wearing a soiled tunic and a slave-brand on his forehead. "You clumsy oaf, Mufuku! I told you to get me a bottle of the local Red, not this swill from the mainland!" says the man as he kicks the slave on the ground.

If the Heroes ask about what others in the taverna are doing, have them make a **Wisdom (Perception) DC 10** check to notice that some (including some of the off-duty Watchmen) seem to be giving the Patrician man some disapproving glares, but nobody is doing anything about it.

The Heroes (especially those who are not Coryani) will likely choose to intervene. If they do not, please describe how the slave (after many kicks) gets up and submissively skulks back towards the kitchen to get his master his order.

The Patrician will react different ways, depending on how the Heroes interact with him. Please feel free to roleplay accordingly with the Heroes, but the sentences below give a general idea of the Patrician's mood towards the Heroes:

- *Coryani Noble Borns (Patricians) or Priests of the Mother Church of Coryan (such as Clerics) acting non-aggressively/insultingly towards him:*

The Patrician (Lorenzo Crispo) will act with a certain amount of difference, but overall will act as though the Heroes cannot possibly disagree with him or his

actions. ***“Those Myrantian filth-borns need to be taught their place, eh?!”***

- Any other Hero acting non-aggressively/insultingly towards him:

Lorenzo generally dislikes anyone who is not a Coryani Patrician, and will treat all others (and any opinions they may have) with disdain. ***“What I do with my slave is no concern of yours!”***

- Coryani Noble Borns (Patricians) or Priests of the Mother Church of Coryan (such as Clerics) acting aggressively/insultingly (but non-violently) towards him:

Lorenzo will look to the Heroes as if they are speaking a foreign language. ***“What I do with my slave is no concern of yours!”***

- Any other Hero acting aggressively/insultingly (but non-violently) towards him:

Lorenzo has no time to deal with the opinions of those he considers barbarians, freaks, or less than human, and will not in any way hide his opinions. ***“Get back to that provincial hellhole out of which you climbed, because obviously you don’t know how to show proper respect to those who are your betters!”***

Should any Hero (at any point) attempt to intimidate him or physically strike him, Lorenzo will challenge that Hero to a duel (if multiple Heroes are involved, choose only the most aggressive/first to act/aggressive one). Should this happen, please read the following (adjusting text accordingly).

Pulling away from you, the patrician looks at you with a hungry anger in his eyes.

Removing his cloth glove, he throws it to the ground between you. “You have insulted my honor [and transgressed upon my person]. For such insults against me, I demand satisfaction!”

Upon uttering these words, the chatter around the taverna quiets to a whisper, as those around you stare at you, awaiting your response.

Any Hero who has proficiency in **Intelligence (History)** who can make a passive check at **DC 13** will know that they have been formally challenged to an Honor Duel, and please hand that Hero a copy of **Player Handout #1 (Code Duello)**. If the Hero does not meet the above requirements, but is either still proficient in **History** (with passive check lower than the above requirement), are from Cafela or from the League of Princes to the south, or has the **High Born** or **Diplomat** background, they may attempt a **Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** **DC 15** skill check to learn that they have just been challenged to a duel, and get given the Code Duello information as above. If the Hero(es) do not meet any of the above qualification, they may make an **Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** **DC 20** skill check to gain this information.

If the Heroes make this roll, they will know that once challenged to a duel they have only two socially acceptable responses: admit they were at fault, or accept the duel. If the Heroes admit that they were at fault, Lorenzo will withdraw his duel, but the Hero will face ridicule for being such a coward as to refuse to stand up for their previous beliefs/behavior. If they do so, they suffer **disadvantage on ALL Charisma based skill checks with inhabitants of Savona for the rest of the Adventure**. If the Hero simply refuses the duel, they will be actively mocked and heckled out of the taverna by the crowd, called “Coward,” or accused of having no honor. If they do this, they will suffer **disadvantage on**

ALL Charisma based skill checks for the rest of the Adventure.

If, however, they accept the duel, please proceed to the “The Duel” subscene below. If the Hero failed to make their rolls to know the etiquette of the Cafelan Honor Duel system (Code Duello), feel free to have a friendly NPC ‘inform’ them after they have naively accepted the duel.

GM Notes:

Should the Heroes, for example, attempt to coup de grace the Cafelan who has sparked this challenge, please remind them that there are Watchmen in the crowd. While duels are perfectly legal, murder is NOT. As such, should the Heroes straight up murder or harm someone without declaring a duel first, they will be arrested by the Watchmen in the bar and the adventure is done for them as they will be in prison.

SCENARIO 2 – THE RACIST

GM Notes:

This scenario is best used if the party contains non-human/val or Dwarf members, especially Gnomes, Elorii, Ss’ressen, and Dark-kin. Please only choose one of the following ‘hooks’ to provoke the party.

As you settle to enjoy your repast, above the din of the crowded taverna you hear the unmistakable sound of inebriated laughter surrounding an obviously very popular individual. Leaning your ear a little closer, you are able to clearly make out what he seems to be saying:

- Dark-kin insult: ***“They shot down Senator Bracchi’s petition to have those demon-tainted monsters rounded up again. I swear, they are a***

stain upon the honour of our race, and they should all be rounded up and thrown off a cliff! Nothing but a bunch of misbegotten, lazy, violent, ill-born lowlife they are! Neroth’s hells, we all know that if it wasn’t for them we’d have no crime as they know nothing else! Our world would be better without them!”

- Ss’ressen insult: ***“Did you hear that that fat ass heretic Sabinus made the Lizard-God equal to the Pantheon? Shows just how far those northern savages have fallen when they start worshipping the ‘gods’ of those slime-begotten animals from the southern swamps! I always knew the Milandesians liked rutting with their goats, but apparently they have developed a taste for more scaly things, eh?!”***

- Elorii insult: ***“So, I have heard that those elves have been trying to petition the Council to let them raise a temple to that god of theirs—Beselardo, or something—whatever his name is. That said, speaking in those hissy-little snake voices of theirs I’m surprised that anyone can hear what they say!”***

“I heard that they were part lizard, or something.”

“Well, they might as well be, the whiny little cowards they are. It’s almost adorable how they think that they are people rather than the fancy little forest whelps they are.”

- Gnome insult: ***“Gnomes? What about them? They’re little better than rats.***

Hell, at least the rats' help get rid of the garbage! All gnomes do is fornicate with other disgusting, twisted creatures, steal from those better than them, and make the city uglier by simply existing. Best that they just climb up onto their filth heaps and prey that Illiir makes them disappear!"

This should—one would hope—stimulate a response from at least one member of the party of the chosen racial group.

The typical response to this would be for the Hero to confront the racist to dispel their misinformed views. Should the Hero be Human, Val, Kio, or a Dwarf, the individual (Marcus Pullo, a member of the Equestrian class in Coryan, which are basically rich Plebeians) will simply laugh off their views as one would a small child. For example: **"Ahhh, it is adorable that you defend these creatures. Anshar bless you, child, but we both know what these things are."**

Should the insulted race confront Marcus Pullo, he will look at them with utter disgust, pulling away from them as though he fears contamination. For example: **"It can talk? Who knew that it had the intellectual capacity for to speak a civilized language like Low Coryani. I thought that your ilk could only understand grunts/hisses/etc."** (whatever is most appropriate)

Should one of the Heroes directly insult him (as in, pointedly call his honor into question) or physically assault him (for example, by striking him, manhandling him, etc) please read the following (adjusting text accordingly).

Pulling away from you, the man looks at you with a hungry anger in his eyes. Removing his cloth glove, he throws it to the ground between you. "You have insulted my honor [and transgressed upon my person].

For such insults against me, I demand satisfaction!"

Upon uttering these words, the chatter around the taverna quiets to a whisper, as those around you stare at you, awaiting your response.

Any Hero who has proficiency in **Intelligence (History)** who can make a passive check at **DC 13** will know that they have been formally challenged to an Honor Duel, and please hand that Hero a copy of **Player Handout #1 (Code Duello)**. If the Hero does not meet the above requirements, but is either still proficient in **History** (with passive check lower than the above requirement), are from Cafela or from the League of Princes to the south, or has the **High Born** or **Diplomat** background, they may attempt an **Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** **DC 15** skill check to learn that they have just been challenged to a duel, and get given the Code Duello information as above. If the Hero(es) do not meet any of the above qualification, they may make an **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** check to gain this information.

If the Heroes make this roll, they will know that once challenged to a duel they have only two socially acceptable responses: admit they were at fault, or accept the duel. If the Heroes admit that they were at fault, Lorenzo will withdraw his duel, but the Hero will face ridicule for being such a coward as to refuse to stand up for their previous beliefs/behavior. If they do so, they suffer **disadvantage ALL Charisma based skill checks with inhabitants of Savona for the rest of the Adventure**. If the Hero simply refuses the duel, they will be actively mocked and heckled out of the taverna by the crowd, called "Coward," or accused of having no honor. If they do this, they will suffer **disadvantage on ALL Charisma based skill checks for the rest of the Adventure**.

If, however, they accept the duel, please proceed to the “The Duel” subscene below. If the Hero failed to make their rolls to know the etiquette of the Cafelan honor duel system (Code Duello), feel free to have a friendly NPC ‘inform’ them after they have naively accepted the duel.

GM Notes:

Should the Heroes, for example, attempt to coup de grace the Cafelan who has sparked this challenge, please remind them that there are Watchmen in the crowd. While duels are perfectly legal, murder is NOT. As such, should the Heroes straight up murder or harm someone without declaring a duel first, they will be arrested by the Watchmen in the bar and the adventure is done for them as they will be in prison.

SCENARIO 3 – THE CHAUVINIST

GM Notes:

This scenario is best used if the party contains those with strong codes of honor or are made up of women.

The portrayal of violence, or even aggressive behavior, of men towards women can be a touchy subject with some players. If you believe your players may be sensitive to such subjects, please either choose a different scene.

As you settle to enjoy your repast, above the din of the crowded taverna you hear a commotion happening near the bar. Turning your attention that direction, you see a woman attempting to frantically disentangle herself from a Cafelan man, who appears loath to let her leave. “I am no Priestess of Larissa, Paulo! Let me go!”

“Come on, baby, you know you want

me to show you my magic wand. . .”

No matter what the lady says, the man identified as Paulo seems to be unwilling to let her go in peace.

Many Heroes of a somewhat noble-bent (such as Milandisians) will likely take offence to the man’s (Paulo Dandolo) unwanted advances on the woman. Aside from groping her, he is not actively harming her, and being more of a nuisance than a real threat (at this point, at least), he has not actively harmed the woman (Sylvia Enrico).

Should any Male Hero or Female hero of a ‘non-attractive’ race (such as gnomes, Ss’ressen, Dark-kin with obvious infernal taint) confront him, he will respond as one would expect of a man aggressively hitting on someone. **“Mind your own business!” or “Do you see me getting in your way from having a good time? No, then shut up!”**

Should a Female Hero of an ‘attractive’ race (such as Elorii, Human, Kio, Val, etc) confront him, though not aggressively, he will turn his attention to them. He will then attempt to do the same thing to them that he was doing to Sylvia. **“Hello, beautiful, what can I do for you?”**

Should any Hero directly act aggressively towards Paulo, especially if one of them attempts to physically intervene in his efforts with Sylvia (or another Hero), please read the following (adjusting text accordingly).

Pulling away from you, the man looks at you with a hungry anger in his eyes. Removing his cloth glove, he throws it to the ground between you. “You have insulted my honor [and transgressed upon my person]. For such insults against me, I demand satisfaction!”

Upon uttering these words, the

chatter around the taverna quiets to a whisper, as those around you stare at you, awaiting your response.

Any Hero who has proficiency in **Intelligence (History)** who can make a passive check at **DC 13** will know that they have been formally challenged to an Honor Duel, and please hand that Hero a copy of **Player Handout #1 (Code Duello)**. If the Hero does not meet the above requirements, but is either still proficient in **History** (with passive check lower than the above requirement), are from Cafela or from the League of Princes to the south, or has the **High Born** or **Diplomat** background, they may attempt an **Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** **DC 15** skill check to learn that they have just been challenged to a duel, and get given the Code Duello information as above. If the Hero(es) do not meet any of the above qualification, they may make an **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** check to gain this information.

If the Heroes make this roll, they will know that once challenged to a duel they have only two socially acceptable responses: admit they were at fault, or accept the duel. If the Heroes admit that they were at fault, Lorenzo will withdraw his duel, but the Hero will face ridicule for being such a coward as to refuse to stand up for their previous beliefs/behavior. If they do so, they suffer **disadvantage ALL Charisma based skill checks with inhabitants of Savona for the rest of the Adventure**. If the Hero simply refuses the duel, they will be actively mocked and heckled out of the taverna by the crowd, called "Coward," or accused of having no honour. If they do this, they will suffer **disadvantage on ALL Charisma based skill checks for the rest of the Adventure**.

If, however, they accept the duel, please proceed to the "The Duel" subscene below. If

the Hero failed to make their rolls to know the etiquette of the Cafelan honor duel system (Code Duello), feel free to have a friendly NPC 'inform' them after they have naively accepted the duel.

GM Notes:

Should the Heroes, for example, attempt to coup de grace the Cafelan who has sparked this challenge, please remind them that there are Watchmen in the crowd. While duels are perfectly legal, murder is NOT. As such, should the Heroes straight up murder or harm someone without declaring a duel first, they will be arrested by the Watchmen in the bar and the adventure is done for them as they will be in prison.

SCENARIO #4: THE HEROES DO NOT WANT TO PLAY BALL

GM Notes:

This scene is for tables who either do not take any of the previous hooks provided, or those which do not fit any of the previous hooks.

The din of the bar is shattered by the shattering of glass. What separates this from the actions of a clumsy server is the declarations made for all to hear. "You have wronged me, sir, and I demand satisfaction!", screams one. "You are without honor, sir! I will meet you outside this establishment!"

Moving yourself forward, you can see two well-dressed individuals with naked steel on their hips, eyeing each other from across a broken table.

The Heroes can take two major paths at this point: they can attempt to intervene, calling for cool heads; or they can stand by and do

nothing. Of these two, the second option is the 'correct' as this duel is one of the staged duels that are common in the Grand Melee. Because of this, any efforts that the Heroes will put into trying to appeal for peace will be met with scorn and eventually will be booed out of the bar.

Any Hero who has proficiency in **Intelligence (History)** who can make a passive check at **DC 13** will know that they have been formally challenged to an Honor Duel, and please hand that Hero a copy of **Player Handout #1 (Code Duello)**. If the Hero does not meet the above requirements, but is either still proficient in **History** (with passive check lower than the above requirement), are from Cafela or from the League of Princes to the south, or has the **High Born** or **Diplomat** background, they may attempt an **Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight) DC 15** skill check to learn that they have just been challenged to a duel, and get given the Code Duello information as above. If the Hero(es) do not meet any of the above qualification, they may make an **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** check to gain this information.

If the Heroes make this roll, they will know that once challenged to a duel they have only two socially acceptable responses: admit they were at fault, or accept the duel. If the Heroes admit that they were at fault, Lorenzo will withdraw his duel, but the Hero will face ridicule for being such a coward as to refuse to stand up for their previous beliefs/behavior. If they do so, they suffer **disadvantage ALL Charisma based skill checks with inhabitants of Savona for the rest of the Adventure**. If the Hero simply refuses the duel, they will be actively mocked and heckled out of the taverna by the crowd, called "Coward," or accused of having no honor. If they do this, they will suffer **disadvantage on**

ALL Charisma based skill checks for the rest of the Adventure.

If the prior skill check succeeds, the Heroes may also make a **Wisdom (Insight) DC 13** skill check to know that this is a 'put-up' match as part of the Grand Melee.

Should the Heroes just allow the duel to take place, please continue with the following:

What follows is what appears to be a complex ritual, similar to a religious liturgy. First one of the challenged man—identified as Marcus Dandolo—comments that they will be fighting using the Duodo Rules, while the challenger—identified as Horatius Luoado, organizes two 'friends' of the duelists as seconds. Quickly the formalities are finished, both champions move from the taverna into streets beyond.

Assuming the Heroes go outside, continue with the following:

The duel itself is surrounded by a sizable crowd. One of the fighters fights with a side sword while the other has a gladius and a dagger. Despite the differences in styles—and even weapons of choice—the two fighters seem quite well matched. After each strike, the seconds that were named inside ask the duelists if honor has been satisfied, but time after time they both say that they must continue. It is only after the twelfth pass that the dagger of Horatius strikes the rib of Marcus, and the man goes down and cannot return to his starting point. At that, the two seconds bow, and declare Horatius the victory. After a raucous applause, the crowd disperses, and the two sides limp into the night of Savona.

If the Heroes attempt to talk the two sides down, there is no possible way for them to succeed (feel free to let them try, however). No

matter what they roll in their Persuasion (Charisma) skill checks, they will do no good. The more they try the worse it will make them look. If the Heroes attempt to stop the duel with words only, they will be mocked by the members of the crowd for their stupidity and ignorance. For the rest of the adventure they will suffer **disadvantage on ALL Charisma based skill checks with inhabitants of Savona for the rest of the adventure**. If the Hero attempt to physically stop the duel, they will be restrained by other bar patrons and forcibly removed by the crowd (if they fight back, inform them that there are over forty people in the taverna). If they this is the case, they will suffer **disadvantage on ALL Charisma based skill checks with inhabitants of Savona for the rest of the Adventure**.

THE DUEL

The Heroes have multiple options at this point:

- 1) Name a champion/Second/Master of the Field,
- 2) Choose a location, and
- 3) Choose a duel ruleset.

Should the offending Hero decide not to fight in the duel, (s)he may name a Champion to defend their honor. This person is named immediately (***"If you wish a Champion to defend your Honour, name them now for all to hear"***) and must immediately say yes or no. Should they refuse, the challenged individual must fight their duel as it is apparent that their champion does not believe in their honour.

The Second can be any Hero that the challenged Hero chooses (other than themselves) and acts as a moderator to ensure that the duel is done honorably and according to the rules provided in **Player Handout #1**. Aside from knowing that should one party cheat (including their own) it is their job to punish such acts. If no Hero wishes to second the duel, there is no loss of Honour (after all, one cannot remain impartial with their friends). If none step forward, have

one of the Watchmen in the Bar offer (at a cost of 10 sp from the Hero for his 'service').

It is also the challenged party's job to name a location, but should the Hero not specify a location, it will be suggested that they simply leave the taverna. Should this be chosen, nobody will argue the point.

The last thing to be considered is the Rules that the Heroes wish to fight under. There are three major rulesets in the standard Savonan Code Duello: The Carvello Rules, the Duodo Rules, and the Tansuro Rules.

- The Carvello Rules

The simplest (and least deadly) form of the Savonan duels, these duels are fought to first blood (first HP damage dealt). This style of duel is favored by fighters with higher initiatives, with them typically able to win before their opponent can even get a strike in.

- The Duodo Rules

One step up from the Carvello Rules, it is basically a series of Carvello duels. Once blood is drawn, the duel stops and both sides are asked if honour has been satisfied, if both are satisfied the person who has taken the most HP damage (total) is deemed the loser. Initiative is rolled again, and it continues until the above condition.

- The Tansuro Rules

This is the deadliest form of the standard Savonan duels. While the other two tend to end fairly quickly and typically leave both fighters more-or-less intact, the Tansuro duels end with one opponent either unconscious or dead. These are usually reserved only for the most grievous of offenses, and are not often used in common duels. In this rules set, once initiative is called, the fighters will fight until one is reduced to 0 HP or lower.

As you head outside the taverna, a large crowd begins to coalesce around you. It appears that such duels are common forms of entertainment here in Savona, and you find dozens of eyes upon you.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **One (1) Savonan Duelist**
- **One (1) City Watchmen**
- **One (1) val'Sheem Priestess**

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** No real change, if they cheat, they suffer.
- **Difficult:** Add one (1) watchmen
- **Perilous:** Add one (2) watchmen

Tactics:

Both parties will begin 15' away from one another. Should the Duelist win initiative, he will lunge forward and try to get a telling blow in before the Hero can respond. If they are engaged in a Cavello or a Duodo duel, then this could be the end of the duel for the Hero's champion. Should the Duelist miss, please continue the fight as per the rules of the duel rules chosen by the Heroes. This will continue until one party is reduced to 0 HP or the end conditions of the duel is satisfied. Should the Hero choose the Tansuro Rules, they will continue until one of the people is dead or unconscious.

Please inform the Heroes that any form of magic that is not necessary to fight the duel (such as a spell which creates the blade that is being used) is strictly forbidden. The Duelist's second is a val'Sheem psion and will be continually looking for magical interference in the duel (such as a paladin or holy champion's Smite ability). Should the Hero use such magic it is the job of the Seconds (including one of the Heroes, if so chosen) to subdue the offending

party. If the Hero wins their fight, please read the following:

After many blows your opponent limps/is carried off the field of Honor to raucous applause. Apparently your skills in battle have been deemed acceptable by the local population of Savona. Alas, your accolades appear to be short lived as the crowd soon disperses leaving nothing but the small pool of spilled blood on the street as they go about their business.

Should the Hero lose their fight, please read the following:

Despite your efforts, you have been bested in a trial by combat. However, despite your failure to defend your position, nobody seems overly perturbed. Your victorious opponent walks away as though satisfied by the whole ordeal, and the crowd look upon you with respect, if not awe. It appears that you have shown yourself to be worthy of attention, if not for your martial skills.

Should the Heroes cheat:

"Hey!" yells Antonius val'Sheem, a friend of your opponent. "That one brings dishonor by using magic in a duel! Harvesters take their soul; they have shown their dishonor."

At this point, the Master of the Field or Seconds must intervene and disarm the offending party. In this case, Player vs. Player combat is allowed up to unconsciousness. Once the offending Hero has been subdued, please read the following.

Now that your lack of honor has been shown for all to see, the members of the crowd around you spit on you as you lie on the ground. It appears that your breach of conduct was a major faux pas, and one that is

unlikely to be forgiven.

If the Hero used any arcane magic in their duel (including the manifestation of blades), please add.

While all others seem to scorn you, you get the strangest feeling that certain eyes in the crowd seem to linger over you.

Either way, the Heroes suffer **disadvantage on ALL Charisma based skill checks with inhabitants of Savona for the rest of the adventure for cheating.**

Development: Please continue to Scene 3. If the Heroes used arcane magic, they will have attracted the **Notice of the Harvesters** at the conclusion of this adventure.

SCENE 3

Key Concept: The Heroes are offered a job.

GM Notes:

There are two possible sources of employment in the party, one 'official' in the form of Antonio Dovitoni (a local patrician) and Enrico Torta, a representative of the Torta Cartel family. Which one you choose depends on the party make-up, as it is highly unlikely a noble Knight of Milandir would accept a job from a criminal, but probably would from a respected Patrician family. Choose which hook you wish from the two options.

DOVITONI OFFER:

After the dueling drama of the previous evening, you feel the need to find your way to your lodging. While most cities would provide inns which combine food, stabling, and sleeping spaces, Savona appears to separate most of those functions into

separate buildings. As such, you find yourselves climbing up another stairwell up to the small suite of cramped rooms in this boarding house not too far from Lady's Square. Reaching your door, you find it not locked as it previously was, but slightly ajar.

Each Hero (regardless of what boarding house they are staying at) will get the same message, and as such will receive the same box text. If the Heroes find alternate lodging (such as a Hero who has a residence in Savona), please modify the above box text for them specifically while still relating the above information.

Allow the Heroes to do whatever they want to prepare for opening the door, though there is ultimately nothing that they will learn. When they are ready, please continue.

Entering your room, you find that everything that you had left in the room appears to be where you left it. However, there does appear to be two additional items, laying on your bed: a note, sealed with a wax seal, and a small grey stone set upon the note.

If the Heroes seek to detect any magic in the room, they will find that the stone detects as weakly magical. Closer inspection of the stone will show that it appears to be a non-descript stone about an inch in diameter. If any Hero wishes they may perform an **Intelligence (Arcana) DC 15** skill check will believe that this item looks like a *luck stone*, a magical item which allows them advantage on a single roll once per long rest. Any Hero who makes the same check at **DC 25** with the above skills (-5 to DC for a Coryani val'Sheem or a member of the Dovitoni family) will be able to identify it as a special version of a *luck stone* given out by the

Dovitoni which functions only at the sufferance of the Dovitoni family.

GM Notes:

The *Dovitoni stones* gain their power from the ancient halls of the Dovitoni family, one of the most powerful of the val'Sheem's vassal families. It is not far known, but these stones are used not only to bolster their allies, but also to keep tabs on them. While in possession of these items, the Dovitoni can track its bearer anywhere within the city. Additionally, should the Hero ever break faith with the Dovitoni's, the stone will explode dealing 1d6 damage to the Hero, but leave them marked with a strange glyph which burns into their flesh, marking them as an oathbreaker. This glyph lasts for 5 adventures.

If the Heroes look at the letter, any Hero with proficiency in **Intelligence (History)**, a Coryani val'Sheem, or member of the Dovitoni family can identify the seal on the wax as belonging to the Dovitoni family, one of the major vassal families of the val'Sheems. All other Heroes may attempt an **Intelligence (History) DC 12** skill check to gain this knowledge.

If the Heroes open the letter (the letter is identical in each case, except insofar as the name of the recipient), please give the players
Player Handout #2: Dovitoni:

Any Hero who succeeds on an **Intelligence (History) DC 15** skill check will be able to identify Antonio Dovitoni as a scion of the powerful Dovitoni family with a reputation as a problem-solver (though stories tell that his methods are not always legal).

Assuming the Heroes decide to meet with Antonio, please continue with the following:

Navigating the bridges, squares, and gondola-filled canals of Savona from the

majestic Imperial District into the much closer—but still rather opulent—Marcellus District poses few issues for you. In fact, even when you are forced to hire a Gondola to get across the Grand Canal of Savona the gondola operator waves off your attempt at payment. It is almost suspicious how quickly you are able to make it across the Main Island.

The townhouse you are directed to is a modest structure, the type you would expect a moderately wealthy merchant or an Equestrian to own. In fact, there is only a single guardsman stationed outside of the door, who greets you as you approach.

Allow the Heroes to identify themselves, show the guardsman the note, or whatever means of identification they wish. However, unless they make obviously hostile movements towards the guard, he is aware who they are and will allow them passage into the townhouse.

The interior of the townhouse is similarly modest, with a comfortably appointed sitting room just off the main entrance hall.

"Friends, I thank you for coming!" says a middle-aged, well-dressed man, his Cafelan heritage clearly visible by his olive skin and dark hair. "I am Antonio Dovitoni, please, have a seat. I apologize for the pedestrian nature of our surroundings, but sometimes it is best not to hold meetings such as this in palaces where everyone can see the comings and goings."

Allow the Heroes to settle down as they wish before continuing.

"For those of you who are unaware, Cafela is somewhat different than many parts of the Empire when it comes to settling our disputes. While the great families in Illonia or Balantica may resort to political backstabbing, and the Annonicans resort to

poison and daggers in the shadows, Cafelans are far more direct about their grievances. Out of this desire for up-frontness, most Cafelans—at least those of the more noble class—have embraced the Duel as our primary means of settling disputes.

“Because of the official nature of these duels, a fairly elaborate code of conduct has risen out of them: the Code Duello. This honour code ensures that all the duels are fought by men, and not by magic or poison or deceit for the Lady blesses those who are righteous with luck, not the tools they use.”

Moving forward, Antonio throws a half-dozen brooches onto the table in front of him. “Lately, however, we have come to believe that there are those who seek to subvert the Code Duello for their own gain, and are using underhanded tactics to advance themselves above their stations.” Motioning at the brooches, he continues. “These belonged to a half-dozen of our champions who have been killed in the past few weeks in duels. All belonged to one of the most storied Fighting Schools in all the city, and all were felled to those of an upstart school who until last year languished among the bottom tier of the city.

“For years, these fighters have defeated those of this School without difficulty, and those who use these bravos as their champions. To have lost a half dozen fighters, and dozens more duels that did not end in death, shows that something has changed among them.

“And that is where you come in.

“We wish for you to investigate the School in question—known as the Striking Vipers—and do what you can to figure out if these Vipers are as dishonourable as the snakes from which they take their name.

Once you have discerned what they are doing and how they are doing it—with proof, if all possible—please report your findings to us.”

“Any questions?”

The Heroes will likely have a number of questions:

- How much will we be paid?

“While I could assure you that earning the gratitude of the Dovitoni should be payment enough, we are not unfamiliar with the desires for material wealth. To that end, we shall pay you fifty imperials (50 gp) each for your efforts if you can gather any information for us on this matter, with an option for more if you can provide us with solid proof of their disreputable tactics, commensurate with the quality of proof you can provide us.

“Additionally, while working for the Dovitoni, you may make use of the Luck Stone that we provided with your invitation. While you keep faith with us, it shall continue to provide the Lady’s Blessings to you. Acceptable?”

- What can you tell us about the cheating?

“We have been able to determine that they are not using any of the typical methods that one would assume—poison, magical spells, and other disreputable methods like that. If they are cheating, they are doing it very smartly such that we have not been able to figure out what it is.”

- I thought you said the duels were between nobles, so why are we targeting a Fighting School?

“While the Lady would prefer those involved in the dispute to settle their issues with steel, she also understands that some have not been granted the same martial boons as others. As such, it is not uncommon for those lacking in the requisite skills naming Champions to their cause. These Champions are often schooled by the Fighting Schools of the city, a rather exclusive group of organizations which almost every reputable fighter in the city has either trained with or is otherwise affiliated with. The Dovitoni family has for decades maintained retainers several different schools—best to keep our options open, you understand—but no matter how well placed our fighters are, they seem to fall before the Vipers.”

- If these duels are between nobles, why haven’t you looked at your rivals?

“The Vipers have earned a lot of patrons over the past thirteen months due to their ability to win, including many of our own rivals. Since we started truly noticing, the Champions of the Vipers have won duels against us representing several different groups. Because of this, it is impossible to tell which one of them have been with the Vipers since their current run of victories have started, and therefore who may be responsible. If you can find evidence that it is one of these families is the cause, we would be greatly interested in this.”

- Why us?

“Should we send our own retainers to investigate this—or even some of our local contacts—our role in

these investigations will be obvious to all. However, you do not have any known ties to us before this day, which means that those other parties will have much greater difficulty identifying us. Should we be identified, those other families will likely challenge us to additional duels. Should we not discover if they are cheating in these duels before these challenges are leveled, many more of our retainers and my own kin may be killed. I cannot allow that.”

- Can we get a writ or something to give us official status?

“Alas, because we need this job done unofficially—at least until we have some information—we cannot provide you with any official aid in this investigation.”

- Can you provide us with information on the Striking Vipers?

“The Vipers are one of the newer Fighting Schools in the city, and unlike the more civilized fighters use a far more brutish combat style than is becoming of a fighter. Because they were always more concerned with offence, they were often beaten by those who could take advantage of their aggression. Their Guildhall is located on the Trades Island, south of the Main Island. With their recent fortunes, I have heard they are looking for property on the Main Island, but as yet only their Guildmaster has found residence here.” Antonio will provide any information the Heroes want about locations, but will refuse to put anything in writing beyond commonly available maps.

Assuming the Heroes accept, please read the following:

Nodding to you, Antonio stands. "Excellent! Please, I would ask that you start as quickly as reasonable. I am sure that you are aware of the Grand Melee going on, so with so many fights going on the poison of the Vipers has the potential to sink deeply into the veins of the city and the Code Duello. Please be quick."

TORTA OFFER:

After the dueling drama of the previous evening, you feel the need to find your way to your lodging. While most cities would provide inns which combine food, stabling, and sleeping spaces, Savona appears to separate most of those functions into separate buildings. As such, you find yourselves climbing up another stairwell up to the small suite of cramped rooms in this boarding house not too far from Lady's Square. Reaching your door, you find it not locked as it previously was, but slightly ajar.

Each Hero (regardless of what boarding house they are staying at) will get the same message, and as such will receive the same box text. If the Heroes find alternate lodging (such as a Hero who has a residence in Savona), please modify the above box text for them specifically while still relating the above information.

Allow the Heroes to do whatever they want to prepare for opening the door, though there is ultimately nothing that they will learn. When they are ready, please continue.

Entering your room, you find that everything that you had left in the room appears to be where you left it. However, there does appear to be an additional item

laying on your bed: a neatly folded note without any wax or sigil.

If the Heroes use any magical detection abilities in the room, they will find that there is a faint feeling of magic in around the lock, but otherwise there is nothing.

If the Heroes open the letter (the letter is identical in each case, except insofar as the name of the recipient), please give the players

Player Handout #3: Torta:

If the Heroes look at the letter, any Cafelan Hero or a Coryani Rogue or Vagabond or other similar background will automatically know that the Torta family runs one of the most powerful Criminal Syndicates in Savona. All other Heroes may attempt an **Intelligence (History) DC 15** skill check to learn this information.

Assuming the Heroes decide to meet with Enrico, please continue with the following:

Your trip across the lagoon to Saint Marcella Island shows you a completely different side of the city. While the Main Island is a densely populated city, and the gateway regions of the Mainland portion of the city and the Island of Little Savona have a typical port or trade centre feel, upon setting eyes on Saint Marcella you would swear you have found your way onto a val'Dellenov's garden sitting in the middle of the Savonan Lagoon. Minimally populated, the island serves as the breadbasket for the entire region, with row upon row of vineyards, orchards, crops, and other produce growing in the rich sea-side soil. Aside from slave barracks, the only built-up structures seem to be based around the small port that is used to transport the bounty of the island to wherever it is needed.

It does not take long to find the small but well-appointed taverna near the docks.

Upon entering the establishment, you find it strangely empty except for a single well-dressed, if understated, looking man at the largest table. There are individual place settings set out for all of you showing sumptuous dishes which highlight the fruits of the island, each with a very expensive-looking bottle of wine.

"Ahhh, greetings! Please, let us dine before we get to business. I have always felt that it is best to enjoy food as fresh as you can get it. Those dreary markets on the Main Island rarely get the produce when it is at the best, at least compared to here on Saint Marcella's."

If the Heroes ask, the dishes are primarily vegetarian dishes consisting of delicious salads, noodle dishes similar to lasagna, and seafood sautéed in butter. If there are Ss'ressen at the table, they will find shanks of mutton in the place of the salads, but only them. If any Hero asks about this, Enrico will shrug, wink, and say, ***"Saint Marcella is not known for its herds, as they come from the mainland. Not as delicious as the fruits of the island, but a more palatable meal for your kind I believe."***

As they are enjoying their food and drink, Enrico will begin.

"As I'm sure you can guess, my name is Enrico Torta. I represent certain business interests here in the city. As it turns out, some of these business interests have become rather threatened by some outside force, and I am in need of someone to investigate what is going on so we can take appropriate measures to ensure that our business continues as usual.

"If you are interested, I can make it quite worth your while, both in gold and in favors. Interested?"

If the Heroes say yes, please continue with the following. If not, allow the Heroes to finish their meal and please end the adventure.

"As you may or may not be aware, certain business groups in the city run a little competition during the Grand Melee. While officially the Melee is a way for completely independent bravos to make a name for themselves, in reality it is a very well-organized competition between the Fighting Schools which vie for power and attention. The Schools themselves are separated into three main Leagues, with schools in each league only able to challenge the Schools in the same League as themselves. Whichever School wins the most fights during the Melee in their League is advanced to the higher league, while the fewest wins drops to the lower League.

"As befitting such a competition, there is much organization and money to be had, and my interests are very much tied into this system. However, recently one of the Fighting Schools—the Striking Vipers—seem to be unsettling the system. At the beginning of last year's Melee, they were ranked near the bottom of the Equestrian League, but by the end of that tournament they won their League with an almost perfect win score. This year, they appear to be doing the same in the Patrician League, defeating fighters who would have eaten them for breakfast before their current string of luck.

"As I'm sure you can understand, this is greatly upsetting to my associates, who make good money managing the bets on these fights. While I'm very proud of them to sticking it to the gits who make up these elite Schools, I'm pretty sure that they are getting their edge by cheating rather than by skill. Because of this, they have thrown the entire betting system into chaos and have cause me

and many, many others to lose a large amount of money.

“As such, I would like you to investigate them—discretely, of course—and see if they are cheating. If they are, I’d like you folks to put an end to it. They are bad for business, and therefore have to stop before they do more damage than they already have. Interested?”

The Heroes will likely have a number of questions:

- How much will we be paid?

“Ahhh, but where is the romance of doing things for the right reasons?” Sighing dramatically, Enrico continues. “My associates are willing to pay each of your fifty imperials (50 gp) for your efforts on our behalf to find if the Vipers are cheating, with bonus’ available for giving us details of what they are doing and if you are able to put a stop to it. Acceptable?”

- What can you tell us about the cheating?

“We have been able to determine that they are not using any of the typical methods that one would assume—poison, magical spells, and other disreputable methods like that. If they are cheating, they are doing it very smartly such that we have not been able to figure out what it is.”

- Could it be any of your rival families/other criminals?

“While likely someone else is feeding them this power, we do not know who. My associates would not turn upon us, as they are suffering all

the same. Outsiders like the Myrastian Medja may be involved, but fixing games is not their style. They are more into straight up murdering than more gentlemanly means of business. If it is someone else, I would hope that you are able to find them and stop them.”

- Why us?

“Should we send our own retainers to investigate this—or even some of our local contacts—our role in these investigations will be obvious to all. As many of these Fighting Schools enjoy the patronage of some of the Patrician families in the city, this could make our other business ventures more troublesome unless we have proof that they are being disreputable. As such, we are in need of someone who is not tied to us to provide us with enough time to make preparations should we need to move on this matter.

- Can we get a writ or something to give us official status?

Enrico laughs out loud, “Do I look like I have any official status?”

- Can you provide us with information on the Striking Vipers?

“The Vipers are one of the newer Fighting Schools in the city, and unlike the more civilized fighters use a far more brutish combat style than is becoming of a fighter. Because they were always more concerned with offence, they were often beaten by those who could take advantage of their aggression. Their Guildhall is located on the Trades Island, south of the Main Island. With their recent

fortunes, I have heard they are looking for property on the Main Island, but as yet only their Guildmaster has found residence there. Enrico will provide any information the Heroes want about locations, but will refuse to put anything in writing beyond commonly available maps.

Assuming the Heroes accept, please read the following:

Nodding to you, Enrico stands. "Excellent! Please, I would ask that you start as quickly as reasonable. I am sure that you are aware of the Grand Melee going on, so with so many fights going on the Vipers actions are causing much irritation for my associates, so the sooner they are dealt with the better."

Development: The Heroes now have many options. If they wish to travel to the Viper's Guildhall, please proceed to **Scene 4**. If they wish to confront the Guildmaster, please proceed to **Scene 7**. If they wish to observe a fight (as part of the Grand Melee) between the Vipers and others, please proceed to **Scene 8**. If they wish to learn more about the victims, please proceed to **Scene 9**.

SCENE 4

Key Concept: The Heroes may travel to the Striking Vipers Guildhall to confront them.

The journey from the Main Island of Savona to the Trade Island is not difficult as the islands are linked by massive bridges. Individually, these bridges would be wonders in their own right, but due to the nature of Savona being built upon hundreds of islands, it requires no fewer than nine such large bridges to span the distance between the major islands is the lagoon.

Entering the Trade Island, you can see a noticeable difference between it and the Main Island. While also containing a series of canals to dispense with waste, there are fewer of them here, meaning that this island smells significantly worse than the rest of the city. This I only made worse by the smells of industry which have found their way here. It is quite clear that this region is a much less affluent area than the Main Island, where cash-strapped Fighting Schools may purchase a large enough area to serve as their training centre.

The Guildhouse itself was once a large warehouse near the docks on the island, but it has since been thoroughly reinforced as the Schools fortunes waxed and waned. Securely sealed, the only obvious route into the building is through the main door, which is flanked by a group of six bravos with naked steel on their hips.

The Heroes, no matter what, will not be allowed into the Guildhall. While they may have recently one of the lowest members of the 'Gentleman's club' of dueling schools, they are still members of that culture and are very restrictive and secretive. However, the Heroes may feel free to question the guards in front of the Hall.

Approaching the main gates, the bravos in front peel off from the closed gate towards you. "Excuse me, but can we help you today?" One says, politely, but with some suspicion.

GM Notes:

The Heroes can comport themselves however they want, but remember that the bravos are fairly touchy people, and prone to issuing challenges if they feel they have been wronged.

What the Guards Know:

- Who are you?

“We are bravos of the Striking Viper.”

- Can we see your boss/can you let us in?

The guards look at you strangely, as though you just begun speaking a foreign tongue. “What do you mean? Do you let random, uncouth ruffians into your home? No!”

- You have won a lot of battles lately.

“The Striking Viper has been blessed by Larissa, and our destiny is to dominate the city’s dueling societies is at hand. None shall stand between us and glory.”

- Have there been any changes lately?

“We have finally had an opportunity to show our skill to those who thought they were our betters. With our prowess being seen, we have been able to acquire better blades as befitting our station, but that is only steel. It is the man who is what matters.” Honestly, the bravos don’t see the steel as more than a status symbol, and they do not know of any wrong-doing towards them or for their benefit.

- Where did you get the blades?

“What do blades matter, for it is only steel?”

- Can we see the Blades?

The guard looks at you firmly. “The only time we draw our blades is to duel.”

If the Heroes are polite, respectful, or otherwise flatter the bravos (GM’s discretion), they will pass on the name of the swordsmith who created their blades as Debora Serracchiani after a **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 14** skill check or a 20 sp bribe. They will not, however, draw their blades as for them the blade is only drawn when it is to draw blood. If the Heroes have a means of detecting magic (without being too obvious about it), they will not be able to detect its magical effects unless that effect becomes active. Unless the Hero is psionic, they have to succeed on a **Dexterity (Stealth) DC 15** skill check while casting with Subtlety or use the Subtle Spell metamagic option to avoid the bravos notice.

If the Heroes are not polite with the bravos, make threats against them, make demands, or are caught casting spells on or around them (that they would consider dishonorable), the Heroes are likely to be challenged to duels.

Backing away from you, the guards look at you with scorn. “You have shown yourself to lack the respect. Draw your blades, villains, and let us see who the Lady favours!”

As with **Scene 2**, the bravos of the Striking Viper will issue challenges to whomever they decide has wronged them. However, they are duelists under the Code Duello, and will insist on all the niceties being upheld. Should there be Heroes who are not actively insulting them, they will ask that Hero to act as a Second for the individual(s) who have insulted them. If not, they will delay the duel (without giving additional information) until a Watchman can be found (at a cost of 10 sp on the part of the Heroes for his time) to serve as Master of the Field. If the Heroes refuse, by the rules of Code Duello they forfeit the duel. It should be noted that none of the bravos, nor the Watchman (that he is willing to admit) have any spell

casting talents, so the Heroes may cast buffs (with Subtlety) more freely so long as the buff does not have a visual component (GM's discretion).

As the challenged individuals, the Heroes have the option of time and place of duel, though if the Heroes say they want to fight in the Guildhall they will be firmly denied (*"such a request is impossible as saying you want the duel in the Governor's own bedroom!"*). Similarly, they may choose the Rules of the duel, though it should be noted that the longer the fight happens, the more likely they are to learn things from the fighters/duels.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Striking Viper Duelists**
May include
- **One (1) Striking Viper Duelist per Hero**
Or
- **6 Watchmen**

Adventure Difficulty

There are no adjustments to the difficulty of this encounter.

Tactics:

The Striking Vipers will use their abilities to best win the duel depending on what the style is. However, unlike the Duelist from **Scene 2** the Vipers swords have been inscribed with the Ssethric Runes that the Rivalta's have salvaged which grant the blades limited (and very hard to detect) magical effects. Every turn, the effect of the rune may be changed to a different one on the list, and they cannot make use of the same effect twice in a row. It is possible that the Heroes may start the duel, and then have all the rest of the party attack the rest of the bravos. If the Watchman is present as the Master of the Field, then this will result in him leaving to bring a whole squad of Watchmen in to intervene

after 3 turns. If there is not a Watchman, the rest of the Bravos in the party (1/Hero at the table) will engage and all the Code Duello is thrown out as it becomes a free-for-all.

GM Notes:

A year ago, the Rivalta's sponsored an expedition into the Endless Dark near the city of Savona. Buried deep in the tunnels they found an artefact of the Il'Huan War thousands of years ago: A magical device which allows the operator to generate and 'transmit' special abilities to any weapon within range which bore a unique 'receiving rune'. Most of these artefacts were lost in with the fall of Yasshremore (the ancient Ssethric capital), and have fallen out of memory.

These effects cannot be activated by the wielder of the blade, only by the operator of the 'transmitter'. As such, feel free to choose whatever effect is the most advantageous at the time as the Rivalta's do their best to keep their fighters alive. Once an effect is used, a new one cannot be chosen until the following turn, and the same effect cannot be used twice in a row.

Runic Effects:

- You gain advantage to your next attack roll.
- You gain an additional 1d4 necrotic damage on your next damage roll
- You gain a +1 to your Armor Class your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws until your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws until your next turn.
- You are healed 1d4 hit points.

However, because the Ssanu were worried

about their elorii slaves revolting, there are also effects which can damage the wielder:

- You suffer disadvantage on your next attack roll.
- You deal 1d4 LESS damage (minimum 1 damage) on your next damage roll
- You have a -1 penalty to AC until your next turn.
- You have disadvantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws until your next turn.
- You have disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws until your next turn.
- You take 1d4 poison damage.

When the bravo's weapon is drawn, allow the Heroes a **Wisdom (Perception) DC 20** skill check to notice the strange rune on the sword. You may add a cumulative +2 bonus for each of the following: Apprentice (Smith) background, proficiency in Arcana, Smith's tools, or any elorii or dwarf. Additionally, each time that the rune changes its effect, they may again attempt the Perception if they did not notice it before (easier with longer duels).

Additionally, allow elorii Hero who see the rune to make a **Wisdom (Insight) DC 15** skill check. If they succeed or if the elorii has the Reborn background, please give them **Player Handout #4: Visions of Lives Past**.

Should the Heroes defeat all of the bravos (and possibly the Watchmen, if they intervene), they make take one (or more) of the short swords from the Striking Vipers. If they wish they may gain access to the Maker's Mark on the blades to identify the swordsmith, through whom they can track down the runesmith, and through him find out about the Rivalentas. However, please remember (do not tell the Heroes) that the

Rivalentas will be more than willing to use the negative effects against any Hero who may be wielding the blades.

GM Notes:

If the Heroes wish to salvage these blades, they may carry them for the rest of the adventure. However, at the end of the adventure the swords will magically begin to fall apart as whomever controls the Generator does not want to leave any evidence in their wake. If the Heroes ask, this seems to be a trait related to the special magic on the blade itself and cannot be countered through any known means.

As with before, they will not be allowed into the Guildhall, even if they have dealt with the Guards. There are another dozen or so bravos inside, so any efforts to get in will be met with twice the number of Heroes in additional bravos coming out and fighting them (no holds-barred as they are protecting their Guildhall from criminals, in their opinions).

Development: Should the Heroes wish to question the swordsmith, please proceed to **Scene 5**. Should the Heroes have been captured by the Watch, please proceed to **Conclusion D**. Should the Heroes require additional information (they're stumped) please proceed to **Scene 8**.

SCENE 5

Key Concept: The Heroes travel to the swordsmith to figure out what is going on with the sword.

For the Heroes to track down the shop of Debora Serracchiani, please have them perform a **Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) DC 12** skill check. Please remember to apply any penalties gained in **Scene 2** to the Investigation roll. If the Heroes'

skill check succeeds at a **DC 15** or above when looking for her shop, they will be able to learn the following bit of gossip about Debora:

"The Thorned Lady? Don't go and patron that upstart! She has no respect for the establishment. I understand that women can be equal to men in some things, but blacksmithing is not one of them! Best go to see Pedro Carradine or Arathus of Solanos Mor if you want a blade."

On they have reached Debora's smithy, please continue:

Making your way through the tangled warrens of warehouses and manufactories of the Trade Island, you eventually find yourself before a small smithy marked by a sword wrapped in thorny vines. Entering, you find yourself confronted by a group of slaves pumping the forge while a surprisingly slight woman is filigreeing a blade with an elaborate design.

Seeing your entrance, one of the slaves peels off the bellows and beckons to his master. Looking up at you—more than slightly annoyed, apparently for being interrupted—the woman puts down her tools and walks towards you. "Hello, and what service can Debora Serracchiani do for you today?"

If the Heroes in any way mention her work with the Striking Vipers, or especially if they show her one of the blades, she will smile and begin waxing poetic about her work:

"Ah, yes, such fine work those short swords were! Don't get me wrong, I am more a fan of the side sword—a far more elegant weapon compared to those overblown daggers—but that doesn't behoove me of creating works of art." Looking at your lot, she smiles. "But of course, if you have seen

these blades you would know that. Individuals of your skills would be able to recognize such artistry from across the lagoon. As such discerning peoples, it would be my honour to make similarly beautiful blades for you all, as I am without doubt the best swordsmith in the city!"

If the Heroes wish to purchase swords from her, she is accomplished at making longswords, short swords, side swords, gladii, and daggers. Other blades she is willing to do, but will be somewhat disdainful about them (**"Uggg! Such inelegant weapons! Are you sure you wouldn't want a more civilized blade?"**). If so, she will be able to create the weapon for market price which the Heroes can have at the end of the adventure.

If the Heroes ask about the blades of the Striking Vipers, she will avoid directly commenting on her clients, and only talk about how great her craftsmanship is. However, with a **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 15** skill check (cumulative +2 bonus for each blade purchased from her and for every 5 gp bribe that they give her) she will divulge some information:

- *Who commissioned the blades?*

"I am not entirely sure, but it must have been one of the patrician clans in the city. Only those of that rank would have the funds to purchase over two-dozen blades of that quality."

- *Did you put on the runes?*

Snorting laughter, Debora says, "Oh, I wish! If I knew how to imbue weapons with magic I'd live in the Imperial District! No, after the blades were forged I had them sent over to Crestus' shop."

- *Who is Crestus?*

“Crestus of Nol Dappa is an ornery Dwarf who hates pretty much everyone, but is probably the crafter of . . . exotic items, if you will, in the city. Most people dislike me because of what I am, but he hates me for being alive like anyone else. It’s actually quite refreshing to be hated only as much as everyone else.”

- Where is his shop?

“Though the Trade Island is where he should be, being such a specialized craftsman he can afford better lodging.” Beckoning over one of her slaves, she says, “Caius here can show you where his shop is on New Island.” If the Heroes refuse to allow the slave to lead them (for some reason), she will have the slave give appropriate directions.

Development: The Heroes will likely wish to investigate Crestus’ shop, so please continue to **Scene 6**.

SCENE 6

Key Concept: The Heroes travel to New Island to figure out what is going on with the sword.

If the Heroes wish to ask about Crestus before they meet with him, allow them to make a **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 14** check to learn the following:

“Crestus came here after the Milandisian Crusades of a few years ago, but why someone who seems to hate all but his own people would come to Savona is beyond me. It might have something to do with all those frost-bite scars all over him. Savona is warmer than the wild mountains of the north, though I’m told the Dwarves live in a volcano so you’d think he’d just stay there.”

Continuing to Crestus, please read the following:

Leaving the Trade Island, you have to catch a ferry (at a cost of a 10 sp each) over to the island to the south of the Main Island known as New Island. While still built up, the streets are wider and the houses bigger and less crowded than they are on the Main Island of the city. In fact, as you approach the island you see that there are even beaches on the south-west side of the island full of sunbathers.

It does not take long for you to find your way to the small industrial area of the island and the building identified as Crestus’ shop. Unlike many smithies, this building looks more like a manorhouse than an artisan’s workshop. There is even a pair of hulking Dark-kin guards at the door. “Who wishes to see Master Crestus?” One asks, menacing above you from a height of over 7 feet.

Allow the Heroes to make whatever reason they wish to see him, but the only way that they can be allowed through without having to make a roll (for every 5 gp of bribes the players earn a +2 bonus to the roll) is to say they wish to talk to Crestus about business. However, a successful **DC 18 Charisma (Deception)** check will allow them to pass through with a somewhat less direct story. Please remember any negatives gained in **Scene 2**.

Assuming they make it through, please continue with the following.

Entering the building you are hit by a wave of heat even stronger than the blast furnace at Debora’s smithy. However, the entire area is blacked out as though all the windows are blocked with only a roaring fire providing light inside. Silhouetted against the fire is a large armchair, from which a deep voice echoes. “What do you want, humans?”

Moving towards the armchair, you see probably the ugliest Dwarf that you have ever seen, with his nose and ears seemingly melted off his immensely scarred face. Even his beard is patchy where whole chunks of his chin have seemingly fallen off. Despite his scars, you can see deep intelligence in his sharp, brown eyes.

Allow the Heroes to dissemble as they wish, even making requests to purchase runed items with any legal uncommon rune available in the campaign, if any (which for market price he will provide for the Heroes at the end of the adventure, just as Debora would with the sword in **Scene 5**. ***"I will gladly take your gold."***). However, eventually they will have to start being more direct. If the Heroes bring up the Striking Vipers Blades, Crestus will admit (rather brusquely) that yes he did scribe the strange runes on the blades for them. However, for him to admit anything strange about the blades, the Heroes will have to succeed on a **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check (+5 bonus if the Heroes have one of the blades and show him the special rune). If they do not make the check, he will not provide any information about what the runes were, but he is more than willing to provide the name of the people who hired him.

- *Who hired you?*

"The Rivalta family. They are as upstart as any of you other creatures, but they had gold and who was I to deny them."

- *What is this rune? (only will answer if the Persuasion Check, if specifically asked)*

"Ahhh, that piece of work. I actually am fairly proud of that one."

The Rivalta's provided me with an ancient blade that they found in some caverns near the city. The blade must have been of Ssethric or Elorii make, but the look of it, but instead of the normal markings that one would expect on such blades this one had one which I had never seen before. Some kind of rune which allows them to customize the effect of the magic on the blade from afar. I'm not sure how they do it, but it required a very intricate rune to allow them to do it."

- *Why are you so willing to betray them?*
Crestus shrugs. "Why should I protect someone who isn't me? They wouldn't do it for me."
- *What happened to you (appearance)?*

"I was shown just how scorned we all are by the Gods when the Dwarves of Fire were confronted with the cold of oblivion." This is a reference to the recent plague of cold-based Infernals which devastate his home enclave during the Milandisian Crusade.

Crestus will not show any real desire to divulge any more information to the Heroes, and if they press the issue, he will not want to speak to them any longer. When they leave, however, he will contact the Rivalta family and inform them that the Heroes have discovered the nature of their special runes.

Development: The Heroes will likely wish to report their findings to their Patron, but first they will have to have a confrontation with the Vipers (who have been tipped off about their investigations). It is even possible that the Heroes have learned nothing after this. Either way, please continue to **Scene 7**.

SCENE 7

Key Concept: The Heroes are confronted by Nicolo Orseolo, the Guildmaster of the Striking Vipers.

By this point, the Heroes will have caused enough of a ruckus to draw the attention of the Rivalta family and Nicolo Orseolo, Guildmaster of the Striking Vipers. While some of his fighters have no knowledge about the swords and the runes on them, Nicolo very clearly does and does not want his honor called into question, requiring him to silence anyone who might reveal what is going on.

While passing over one of the innumerable bridges in the city which connect the various small islands, you hear a call from behind you. "Foes! Stop now and answer my questions, or face your deaths!"

Turning around, you find that a group of fighters bearing the twin short swords of the Striking Vipers is blocking the other end of the bridge. Turning around, you see that another group is materializing in front of you, completely blocking your passage.

"I am Nicolo Orseolo, and I have heard tales that you are attempting to sully the honor of my fighters, and I cannot stand for it. I will now have you answer my questions, and if they are not to my liking the last thing you shall ever taste is my steel in your throats."

Allow the Heroes to say what they want, but really Nicolo is fully aware of what they are doing, and why. What he doesn't know is whom, which he is intent on getting from the Heroes no matter what. However, he is too essentially honorable (or, at least too programmed by the dueling culture of Savona) to outright attack them like brigands, and feels

the need to at least go through the motions of a confrontation.

One way or another, he only really has a single question:

"Who has sent you to sully our honor? You will tell me this, right now, and without lying, or I will have one of you killed for each lie I am told until I have the truth."

The Heroes can give whatever answer they wish, but unless they give up their patron as well as a successful **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 13** skill check, he will not believe them without a successful **Charisma (Deception) DC 20** skill check. If they are caught in a lie, Nicolo will order one of his fighters to kill one of the Heroes. This will likely result in Initiatives being called.

If the Heroes tell the truth or succeed in their Deception rolls, half of the Striking Vipers will leave to 'deal with' their patrons, but the rest will remain to silence the Heroes, including Nicolo. After all, anyone who gives up their patron is without honor, and as such cannot be a good fighter, correct?

It should also be noted that any Hero still in possession of a *Dovitoni stone* and who gives up the name of their benefactor will suffer 1d6 fire damage as the stone explodes

GM Notes:

Aside from combat, the only way to escape this situation would be to jump into the canal. Unless the Hero is a val'Ossan or a Berokene elorii, however, it is unlikely that they will succeed in such an escape. The Vipers will not accept bribes as their survival is at stake, and no amount of persuasion will stop them from silencing the Heroes. If they attempt to flee, they will be chased down.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Nicolo Oreseolo**
- **Two (2) Striking Viper Fighters***
- **Four (4) Hired Muscle***

*May be reduced to 1 Striking Viper Fighter and 2 Hired Muscle (if they give up their patron/succeed in their Deception)

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Remove 1 Striking Viper Fighter
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Striking Viper Fighter
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Striking Viper Fighters

Tactics:

The Heroes are blocked on a 15x30 foot bridge, with water on either side. The minions will rush the Heroes while the Vipers move up more cautiously until they can lunge forward to deal as much damage as possible. All of the Viper's Swords have the special rune upon them, allowing them a number of bonuses as per the previously detailed rules.

When the bravo's weapon is drawn, allow the Heroes a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the strange rune on the sword. You may add a +2 bonus for each of the following: Apprentice (Smith) background, proficiency in Arcana, Smith's tools, or any elorii or dwarf. Additionally, each time that the rune changes its effect, they may again attempt the Perception if they did not notice it before (easier with longer duels).

Additionally, allow elorii Hero who see the rune to make a **Wisdom (Insight) DC 15** skill check. If they succeed or if the elorii has the Reborn background, please give them **Player Handout #4: Visions of Lives Past**.

Should the Heroes survive the fight (and there are any Vipers left alive), they may question

them (but not the Hired Muscle). However, they will not give up any information without a successful **Strength or Charisma (Intimidation) DC 16** skill check. Nicolo will kill himself before he gives up any information to the Heroes, however.

Should they succeed in their roll, they will learn the following information:

- The Rivalta family has long been a patron of the Striking Vipers, but both groups were not overly successful in the Grand Melee or any other duels.
- Over a year ago, the Rivalta's discovered a way to increase both of their fortunes. The new blades were commissioned for some of the fighters with the new runes placed upon them. As their fortunes increased, they were able to purchase more blades for the rest of the school.
- None of them will know the source of the powers on the blades, only knowing that the Rivalta's seem to have direct control of them.
- The Rivalta's are known to be great collectors of artifacts, but rarely keep them in the city proper. They prefer to keep them locked away in their manor on Saint Lucius' Island north of the city.

If the Heroes have not been able to learn anything about the blades or the runes until this point, they now have the ability to salvage the swords from the fallen bravos or Nicolo. If these blades are brought to Debora or Crestus (**Scenes 5 and 6**), they can gain additional insights that they have not yet found.

GM Notes:

If the Heroes wish to salvage these blades, they may carry them for the rest of the adventure. However, at the end of the adventure the swords will magically begin to fall apart as whomever controls the Generator does not want to leave any evidence in their wake. If the Heroes ask, this seems to be a trait related to the special magic on the blade itself and cannot be countered through any known means.

Development: If the Heroes need to gain additional information about the blades to continue the adventure, have them continue to **Scene 5, 6, or 9** as appropriate. If they have decided that they want to confront the Rivalta family, please proceed to **Scene 11**. If they wish to report to their patron, please proceed to Scene 10 or the appropriate **Conclusion (A or B)** as time allows.

SCENE 8

Key Concept: The Heroes may observe a fight with the Striking Vipers as a means of divining what they are doing.

For Heroes that know about the competition between the Schools of the Grand Melee, they should be able to arrange to watch one of the semi-official match-ups between the Vipers and one of their rival Schools. Should they think of this, allow them the opportunity to make an **Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) DC 13** to find out that the next match is going to be in about an hour between Marsha Pollazo and one of the Youngbloods School, Nero Dovitoni.

Assuming they go to watch the match, please continue with the following:

It is clear as soon as you see the young patrician Nero Dovitoni enter the

square that this is just as much of a put-up match as possible. The whole 'accidental' run in between the spear-and-shield-wielding patrician and the provocatively dressed woman with the paired beautifully-wrought short-swords standing hip-coked near a produce stand.

What follows is a highly-rehearsed series of provocations, challenges, and arrangements as both fighters agree to the Duodo Rules of duelling. Before long, the two duelists are circling each other when the patrician lashes out with his spear hoping to catch the Viper, but somehow she manages to move out of the way as though she knew it was coming before Nero did. In response, she manages to score the first blood on her enemy before they are separated once more

When Marsha uses her first ability, allow the Heroes a **Wisdom (Perception) DC 20** skill check to notice the strange rune on the sword. You may add a +2 bonus for each of the following: Apprentice (Smith) background, proficiency in Arcana, Smith's tools, or any elorii or dwarf. Additionally, each time that the rune changes its effect, they may again attempt the Perception if they did not notice it before (easier with longer duels).

Additionally, allow elorii Hero who see the rune to make a **Wisdom (Insight) DC 15** skill check. If they succeed or if the elorii has the Reborn background, please give them **Player Handout #4: Visions of Lives Past**.

If the Heroes do not get the roll here, allow them one more opportunity after the following box text.

In the next pass, the Youngblood patrician seems to once again get the faster start, managing to strike the Striking Viper with his shield before attempting to thrust one more time with his spear. However, Marsha is only

just able to avoid the blow. As she moves out of the way, she just barely seems to return and strike her opponent, but while her movement would should not allow her to cause much more than a small wound, she somehow manages to create a spray of blood more in line with an arterial blow, causing Nero Dovitoni to fall down defeated.

As Nero's second attempts to staunch the bleeding, Marsha bows to her opponent, then strides off as the victorious champion into the crowd.

If the Heroes ask about the swords (they will not be able to recognize the rune beyond what they learn in the Visions of Lives Past vision), allow them either a **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 15**; or an **Intelligence (Investigation) DC 16** followed by a **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 11** check to allow them to learn that the blades wrought by a local swordsmith by the name of Debora Serracchiani.

Development: Hopefully the Heroes have managed to gain an idea of what is going on with the rune or at least an idea of where the swords came from. Please proceed to the appropriate scene based on the information that they have learned.

SCENE 9

Key Concept: The Heroes may interview some of the fallen, or at least those who were close to them.

If the Heroes wish to seek out those who may have been touched by the Striking Vipers, they may attempt a **DC 12 Persuasion (Charisma)** skill check. If they succeed on the roll, they randomly receive one of the below options (either random or at GM's discretion). For every 2 points rolled above the DC, they may interview one additional person.

Please feel free to roleplay these interactions, time permitting.

D6 roll	Information Gained
1	<p>Contact: Rolf val'Inares, brother of a Youngblood Fighting School fighter Volthar.</p> <p>What he knows: His brother was fighting for the honour of Frederico val'Sheem against Caesere Rivalta. Frederico believed Caesere Rivalta undercut him in a business deal and demanded that honour be satisfied.</p> <p>Result: The Striking Viper champion of Caesere Rivalta killed Volthar in two passes of a Duodo duel.</p>
2	<p>Contact: A gnome street urchin named Adonis (and no, he is not attractive)</p> <p>What he knows: Adonis saw a put-up duel between a member of the Striking Vipers and a fighter from the Dragon's Kiss School. This was fought using the Duodo Rules last year, but the duel ended with death as the last of the Viper's blows severed an artery.</p> <p>Result: Adonis will say that this fight was an obvious put-up match and did not seem to have any honour-motive.</p>
3	<p>Contact: Enzo Castella, a former Legion veteran and Equestrian.</p> <p>What he knows: Enzo was a former Prefect of the Legion of the Singers of Sweet Savona who left the legion entering the Equestrian class. He became deep in debt after several poor business decisions, and ran afoul of the Rivalta family. He was challenged to a duel for his failure to</p>

	<p>pay his debts, and lost.</p> <p>Result: Though Enzo survived, he is bankrupt and living in squalor. He harbours hatred towards everyone who he believes led to his fall, including the Rivalta's.</p>
4	<p>Contact: Fabio Costantino, fighter of the In Risum Certatior Fighting School.</p> <p>What He Knows: Fabio recently survived an encounter with a Striking Viper when fighting as proxies for two different patrician clans, specifically the Cenzo's (the Vipers) and the Dovitoni (Fabio). The Striking Viper seemed to move with inhuman speed and skill, but his Sarishan second could not detect any breaches of the Code Duello.</p> <p>Result: He does not know how the Vipers got as good as they have, but he suspects they did not come by their new skills honourably. He, alas, has no proof.</p>
5	<p>Contact: Enki, Myrastian slave</p> <p>What He Knows: Enki was present when his owner Franco Dovitoni (a member of the Sun's Blade Fighting School), was wounded in a put-up match against a Striking Viper fighter during the recent Grand Melee. Though not fighting over anything, Enki knows that Franco was a strong fighter for the Dovitoni family, and his being wounded removes one of their primary champions.</p> <p>Result: The Striking Vipers wounded a Dovitoni fighter, taking him out of the melee.</p>

6	<p>Contact: Leonardo Fieri, brother of a longshoreman named Luigi Fieri.</p> <p>What he knows: His brother Luigi was recently found killed by a Striking Viper one day after he was hired to deliver some kind of artifact to the Rivalta's private estate on Saint Lucius' Island. His brother was a skilled duelist, and was challenged to a duel by a Striking Viper named Nicolo Oreseolo after Luigi vomiting on him at a local bar.</p> <p>Result: The Fieri family was not able to afford a proper funeral for Luigi, so his body was given over to Yarris ('buried' in the lagoon, to be brought out to sea).</p>
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Development: If the Heroes have not witnessed the Ssethric rune in action, please proceed to either **Scene 4** or **Scene 8** as appropriate. If the Heroes wish to report their suspicions to their employer, please proceed to **Scene 10** or the appropriate **Conclusion**.

SCENE 10

Key Concept: The Heroes report back to their employer and may get an additional mission.

GM Notes:

You should only proceed with Scenes 10 through 13 if you have plenty of time. If there is not sufficient time remaining to complete the additional mission and fights, then proceed to the Conclusion appropriate to who hired the Heroes.

You reach out to your employer and describe your findings.

Allow the Heroes to relate what they have learned and present the evidence that they have collected.

This is fascinating. I had no idea that they were this devious or this well-connected. We will have to do something about this. Would you be willing to take on another task for us? We would like to hire you to go to the Rivalta Family estate and investigate further. We would be willing to pay you an additional fee to find and secure more information and evidence behind their plans. But, if you aren't interested then we can just conclude our business here.

GM Notes:

The Heroes are being hired to break into an estate without legal authority. More lawful characters may have a problem with this.

There is no penalty for refusing.

Development: If the Heroes agree proceed to **Scene 11**. If the Heroes refuse, proceed to the appropriate Conclusion.

SCENE 11

Key Concept: The Heroes may arrange passage to Saint Lucius' Island to infiltrate the Rivalta Family estate.

GM Notes:

It should be noted that the Patrician Island of Savona is the second most exclusive location in all of the city—besides that of the private island of the val'Sheem family. As such, the Heroes will not be able to find anyone willing to transport them to the island unless one of the Heroes is a val'Sheem or Coryani Noble. Even nobles of other nations will not be allowed access to the island without escort or permission. This is meant as both a class control issue, as well as a security issue.

The following box text assumes that the Heroes do not have a val'Sheem or a Coryani High Born in the party. Please edit the following box text if this is not the case (so long as they are willing to identify themselves as such).

Now that the Rivalta's culpability in this situation is revealed, you now seek to redress and conclusively prove their role in this conspiracy to your patron. Quick questions around the city as to where you may find them, leads you to an island to the north of the Main Island of Savona called Saint Lucius' Island, also known as the Patrician Island. All you need to do is find passage to the island.

However, as soon as you try to find someone to ferry you across the lagoon to the island, you find that nobody is willing to allow you passage. No matter which of the normal shuttles, water taxis, and gondolas you look into, they all tell you the same thing: "Oh," they say, "we cannot go there. Unless you are a patrician—or one of their slaves—you are likely to find yourself arrested or even find arrows coming your way if you approach that island!"

It seems that if you wish to make the crossing, you will have to find more... unofficial passage.

The Heroes have four main options here: they can ask their patron to arrange passage, they can attempt to hire a smuggler to bring them across, they can lie and claim that they are a patrician, or they can give up and simply provide their patron with the information they presently have.

If they wish to go to their patron, please read the following:

DOVITONI

After travelling to the same townhouse where you first met Antonio Dovitoni, you find that the house has been abandoned by the scion of that patrician clan. However, after explaining to the guards (the same ones that you met before), you are informed to travel to the main water-shuttle port near the Savonan Arsenal in one hour. Sure enough, when you arrive you find a foppish patrician waiting at a dock.

“There you are!” yells the patrician at seeing you approach. Turning to the captain of the rowed launch, he says “It seems that my new bodyguards have approached. It seems that I, Mario Crispin, should have just bought slaves for the job, but you know how the people in the capital feel about arming slaves. At least they are punctual. . .”

Allow the Heroes to perform an **Intelligence (History) DC 15** skill check to recognize the Crispin family as a minor patrician clan allied with the Dovitoni family. Assuming the Heroes follow the charade, they will be granted passage across to the island.

During the entire journey across the lagoon, your ‘employer’ denigrates you, saying things like “such rabble as this, I might as well be like those damnable Rivalta’s up on the north-bank instead of a Crispin!” or “it is a good thing that our estate is near the centre of the island, unlike those poor defences near the cape on the North bank. I doubt their walls couldn’t even stand up to a man simply jumping over it!” When you have docked at the small private port on Saint Lucius’ Island, your ‘employer’ commands you to get up and start marching up the street away from the boat.

After leaving sight of the port, Mario Crispin stops, bows and wishes you good luck before seemingly disappearing into the deepening darkness of the evening without

another word.

TORTA

It is not hard to find members of the Torta Family’s ‘business representatives’ in the city, so finding your way to a warehouse near the Savonan Arsenal happens quickly and easily. Inside—again, supping on a nice meal and wine—Enrico Torta listens to your plight. Nodding, he snaps his fingers causing some of his servants to scatter to the four winds. “I hope none of you are allergic to onions. . .”

If the Heroes ask what he is talking about, he will wink at them and say,

“If you want passage across without having the papers to do it, sometimes you have to get dirty.”

Within an hour, you find yourself in a barge full of sacks of onions sailing its way across the lagoon. It appears that while the patricians of the island forbid ‘commoners’ on their private estates, they are still in need of fresh produce to support their luxurious lifestyles. Though not the most comfortable or dignified passage, you are dropped off on shore not far away from the north-shore estate of the Rivalta family. As the sun sets, you hope that Cadic’s shadow will help ward you from the difficulties to come.

HIRING A SMUGGLER

Should the Heroes wish to hire a smuggler, please allow the Heroes to make an **Intelligence (Investigation) DC 14** skill check to find someone willing to help them. (Anyone with a criminal background should gain Advantage on this roll) He will charge a total of 10 gp per Hero for passage, but a successful **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 16** will have him reduce the

cost to 5 gp per Hero (no lower). If they agree (and pay up front), please read the following:

Waiting for night to fall, the black-sailed skiff makes its way silently across the water towards the manicured island of the patricians of Savona. Instead of making for any of the docks or the main port on the island, you travel to the north-end of the island near a sheer cliff. Pulling up against the rocks, your captain informs you that he can stay here for three hours before he will head back as he has to leave before the moons are fully up. "Good luck with whatever you are doing!" he wishes you.

DECEIVING THEIR WAY ACROSS TO THE ISLAND:

The only way for the Heroes to deceive their way across is to somehow convince one of the various ferry captains—as well as the guards at the port of Saint Lucius' Island—that they should be there. The two main groups that are allowed onto the island (without escorts) are patricians and their entourages, and slaves making trips into the city for supplies.

If the Heroes attempt to pass one or more of their party off as Coryani Patricians, have them make two **Charisma (Deception) base DC 20** skill check (one for each side of the passage), Modifying the DC as follows, all bonuses are cumulative. Coryani High Born automatically succeed.

Note, If the hero is a dwarf, dark-kin (without an obvious infernal heritage), Kio, or Undir (automatic fail for elorii, gnomes, and ss'ressen) they suffer disadvantage on their **Charisma (Deception)** skill check

If the hero is dressed in fine quality clothing or armor (GM's discretion) they should gain advantage on this check

- **DC: +5** if the Hero is not Coryani
- **DC: -5** bonus if the Hero is a val
- **DC: -5** if they manage to forge identification of their patrician status by accomplishing an **Intelligence (Forgery kit) DC 13** check first.
- **DC: -2** bonus if the Hero is of a High Born background from another nation.

If the Heroes are attempting to pass themselves off as slaves (all of them, as slaves wouldn't bring armed retainers without a Patrician handy), please have them make two **Charisma (Deception) DC 15** skill checks (one for each side of the passage), with the following modifications:

Note: Heroes are in any way armed or armored (slaves are not allowed to carry more than daggers) suffer disadvantage on this skill check.

Heroes with the Former Slave background gain advantage on this skill check.

- **DC: -5** if the heroes are human, Undir, gnome, or dark-kin.
- **DC: +5** bonus if the Hero is a val

Feel free to add appropriately tense box text and roleplaying to add tension in the trip across the water, especially when they arrive at Saint Lucius' Island. There will be guards to vet the Heroes, which should make it plenty tense.

If all else fails, the Heroes can bribe the shuttle pilot or guards 50 gp PER HERO to travel across the water. This will allow them passage across.

After this, allow the Heroes to make an **Intelligence (Investigation) DC 13** skill check to identify where the Rivalta family estate is located. If they fail this, they will have to do another batch of **Deception Rolls** before they can make another attempt.

Development: Should the Heroes make their way across to the island and locate the Rivalta's, please continue to **Scene 10**. If they decide to cut their losses and simply report what they have found to their patrons, please continue to the appropriate **Conclusion (A or B)**.

SCENE 12

Key Concept: The Heroes infiltrate the Rivalta Manor.

Approaching the Rivalta manor house, you see that they obviously either cannot afford increased security (unlikely), or they simply do not expect people to invade their private domain. The wall surrounding their compound is barely ten feet tall, and from outside you can only make out guards at the gates.

Skill Challenge #1: The Heroes will have to get over the wall stealthily and quickly. While they cannot see guards aside from the gates, there are guards walking the inside of the grounds. Each Hero must complete a **Strength (Athletics) DC 10** to get over the wall in two attempts, or else they will be spotted by a guard. If so, he will sound an alarm, and they will have to fight their way into the manor (proceed with Combat).

Skill Challenge #2: Assuming the Heroes make their way over the wall, they will have to creep across over 100 yards of manicured grounds before they reach the manor house. Have the Heroes make a **Dexterity (Stealth) DC 15** to sneak across the grounds. If a majority of the

Heroes fails this roll, they will be spotted by a guard. If so, he will sound an alarm, and they will have to fight their way into the manor (proceed with Combat).

Skill Challenge #3: Now that the Heroes are at the Manor, they have to get into the building without raising an alarm. To do this, they will have to Stealth into a window, unlock one of the slave entrances, or scale the interior wall to get into the courtyard. Have the Heroes make (any combination of) a **Strength (Athletics) DC 10 (one per Hero)**, a **Dexterity (Stealth) DC 15 (one per Hero)**, or a **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) DC 10 (only once for the party)** to get into the manor. If any of the Heroes fails this roll, they will be spotted by a guard. If so, he will sound an alarm, and they will have to fight their way into the manor (proceed with Combat).

If the Heroes at any point raise an alarm, please have them roll initiatives. It should be noted that when the alarm is called, not all the Heroes may be in the same location (eg: wrong side of wall).

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Six (6) Hired Muscle**

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Remove 2 Hired Muscle
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Hired Muscle
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Hired Muscle

Tactics

These guards are not particularly skilled, but they will swarm the Heroes in an attempt to subdue them. These foes are not meant to be a major obstacle for the Heroes, but to drain their resources before the 'final fight' of the adventure.

Development: Assuming the Heroes are not killed, even if the Heroes have to kill every

guard in the manor, please proceed to **Scene 11**.

SCENE 13

Key Concept: The Heroes confront the Rivalta Family about their duplicity

Now that the Heroes are inside the Rivalta Manor, they can attempt to travel wherever they please. That said, a quick perusal of the structure (can be determined with a **DC 10 Intelligence** check if they need prompting) will show that the above ground structure is designed more for ostentation than security, so if the Rivalta's wanted to keep something secret they would likely keep it in the basement. If you have time, you can have the Heroes investigate the upper floors, but there are people living here (both Rivalta's and slaves) so this may be a bad idea.

Assuming the Heroes eventually make their way to the basement, please continue with the following:

It does not take long for you to find your way into the basement, but you find your passage blocked by a stout wooden door.

The Heroes may attempt to open this door; they will find that it is locked and trapped.

Lock: Picking the lock requires a **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves' tool)** ability check.

Exhaustion Glyph Trap:

Detect: A **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** ability check, active or passive, or a **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana)** ability check, active or passive, will detect this trap.

Disable: A **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana)** or *detect magic* spell with the same DC will disable the magical glyph.

Trigger: Any living creature passing through the doorway will trigger this trap.

Effect: Any creatures in a 10' x 10' cube on either side of the door area must make a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw**. A failure results in the creature suffering 1 level of Exhaustion. A successful save negates the effect.

Special: Any creature immune to Exhaustion is unaffected by this trap but may still trigger it if they are living.

Once the Heroes are in the room, please read the following:

Entering the basement chamber, you see a strange sight: In what is otherwise a plain wine cellar you find a large, pulsating azure stone set upon a pedestal of burnished bronze. Upon the pedestal are over a dozen bands of iron, each inscribed by twelve different runes. Surrounding the device are a trio of robed figures, manipulating the runes and chanting over the whole artefact in a strange, hissing sound.

Any Hero who speaks Eloran and Ss'ressen can identify this as a Ssethric language, but cannot understand it. Any Hero who speaks Ssethric will know that these are arcane incantations in an archaic form of the language.

Before you can further enter the room, it appears that the three robed figures are not the only ones in the room. At your entrance, you see a pair of blades drawn upon you, and another figure move out from a side room. The man is slight, but looks quite healthy for someone of his advanced years. "So, these are the folks who have been digging into our business. I guess that Nicolo proved less able to deal with this issue than we thought. Perhaps we should think about

cutting off his good luck.

Motioning "Well, I guess we should allow them to make a good argument why they should be allowed to further live? Perhaps we can come to a deal. After all, I'd hate to have to dispose of all your bodies as it is obvious that someone is paying attention to your continued well-being."

The Heroes can ask whatever questions they want, but patriarch of the Rivalta's, Paolo Rivalta, has no desire to monologue about his motivations, his methods, or even what the artefact is. After all, if the Heroes do get out of this alive, he doesn't want to reveal anything which may further incriminate him.

However, if the Heroes agree to talk to him, he will make only one demand.

"If you reveal to me—without lying, as I assure you I have means of finding out—who you are working for, and I will allow you not only to live, but reward you for your information. We will, of course, have to make agreements for you to leave this room, but I assure you that it is entirely possible."

If the Heroes reveal their patrons (for real), Paolo will grant each Hero 100 gp reward for their information, but insist that the Heroes swear a Sarishan Oath (officiated by one of the Sarishan's managing the artefact) to not reveal any information about what they have seen in the Rivalta's manor. The Heroes may attempt to deceive Paolo, but will require a **Charisma (Deception) DC 22** skill check to succeed. They will have to swear the Sarishan Oath, however, which would prevent them from revealing to their employer any additional information.

It should also be noted that any Hero still in possession of a *Dovitoni stone* who gives up the name of their benefactor (or who gives into the

Rivalta's offer) will suffer 1d6 fire damage as the stone explodes.

GM Notes:

It is entirely possible that the Heroes provided almost all the information needed to satisfy their patron before heading to the Rivalta's manor house if they were hired by the Dovitoni family, who only required proof of who was responsible. Of course, this could result in some creative roleplay, but feel free to reward those who plan ahead.

It is, however, likely that the Heroes will not accept such a stain on their honor, which will probably result in you having to call Initiatives.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Paolo Rivalta**
- **Two (2) Sarishan Sorcerer-Priests**
- **Two (2) Rivalta Duelists**

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Remove 1 Sorcerer-Priest
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Rivalta Duelist
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Rivalta Duelists

Tactics

The three common duelists will form a wall to prevent the Heroes from reaching the three Sarishan Sorcerer-Priest, who will be lobbing various spells at the Heroes. Paolo will attempt to remain behind his allies, focusing on any Hero who manages to get past his other fighters.

When combat is done, the Heroes will have a decision to make: What are they going to do about the Ssethric artefact? The item easily weighs a tone, which means that they can in no way move the thing. It is also solid metal and crystal, which means breaking it (while entirely possible, especially with Fervidite weapons) will

be difficult requiring multiple hits or serious spells. If they do this, please play out that the whole process is extremely difficult. Similarly, even if they could move it, they still have to get off the island, which means that moving it through the roadways and streets would be basically impossible.

If they say they want it destroyed, please read the following:

After many strikes, the device suddenly starts to give before your blows. However, it appears that one does not simply shatter a magical construct without some amount of sacrifice. As soon as the device begins to fall apart, a massive blast of eldritch power washes over you.

Exploding Device: When the device is destroyed, it will release its energy as a single wave of magical force. Any Hero in the basement or on the stairway down to the basement is affected.

Save Difficulty: DC 16 **Dexterity** or **Constitution** for half damage.

Damage: 4d6 (12) force damage

Effect: All creatures near the artifact will be caught up in the blast, with a significant portion of the Rivalta manor being damaged in the process.

Whatever method they used to gain access to the island, it is assumed that the Heroes have some means of exiting the island to report where they are going, such as return via the smuggler, the Torta's produce barge, simply going to the Dovitoni manse, etc. When the Heroes have decided their course of action, please continue to the appropriate Conclusion.

Development: If the Heroes were hired by the Dovitoni family, please proceed to **Conclusion A**. If the Heroes were hired by the Torta Cartel, please proceed to **Conclusion B**. If the Heroes accepted the Rivalta Bribe, please proceed to **Conclusion C**.

CONCLUSION A

Key Concepts: The Heroes finished some or all of the Dovitoni family's objectives.

The Heroes desired objective was to find out who was behind it, with proof. Ultimately, the Dovitoni care less about their fighters in honor duels and more about political advantage. As such, the best results for the Heroes would be to leave the Rivalta's unrevealed publically—and their own knowledge of their activities secret as well—so they can blackmail the Rivalta's later. That said, eliminating the problem also works for them, so they will not be upset if the Heroes get a little. . . ambitious.

Making your way through the city to one of the many (easily located) Dovitoni properties, you are quickly whisked away into the night to meet with your patron, Antonio Dovitoni. After a convoluted passage through the city, you find yourself in a lamp-lit café near the Grand Canal where you find Antonio drinking tea.

"Ahh, excellent! I assume you have some information for me?"

Assuming the Heroes have some information for them, they will be rewarded and thanked for their efforts:

- 1) If the Heroes have found out who did it, but do not have physical proof (eg: a sword taken from a Striking Viper, a witness that they captured, etc.), they

will be given 50 gp each. Additionally, if the Heroes revealed the Dovitoni's to either the Rivalta's or the Striking Vipers, they will be given only their promised sum and nothing more regardless of other efforts they may have done.

- 2) If the Heroes provide physical evidence of how it was done, and/or who did it, they will be granted an additional 50 gp as well as the Favor of the Dovitoni Family.
- 3) If the Heroes went to the Rivalta's mansion and secured the device, but did not destroy it, they will be granted an additional 100 gp and the Favour of the Dovitoni.
- 4) If the Heroes destroyed the device, they will not gain the Favour of the Dovitoni Family, but they will be granted the whole 200 gp.

If the Heroes destroyed the artefact, please read the following:

With the Rivalta Family's role in the Striking Viper's cheating revealed, both the family and the fighters of the Fighting School have found their fortunes immediately turning for the worse. At almost every turn, defeated foes of both parties have challenged almost any one of their numbers to duels, leading to many injuries and deaths. It seems that without the aid of the Rivalta's special runes, they are incapable of dealing with the fury of their former victims. Additionally, dozens of both parties have been found floating in the canals of the city. Apparently, some had no desire to wait for the results of

the duels to deal with their former foes.

Out of the chaos of the fall of a patrician family and the near destruction of one of the largest Fighting Schools in the city, the various other powers in the city have swooped in to try to bite the biggest piece from the haunch of both them. The biggest winners in this exercise seem to be the Dovitoni, who within less than a day of the revelation have acquired the lion's share of their possessions and influence. Some claim that the Dovitoni had a hand in the fall of the Rivalta's, though none will say so loud enough to earn the wrath of such a powerful family.

Of the Vipers, with their string of defeats following the revelation of cheating it is sure that they will not be viewed as a top tier fighting school for years to come.

If the Heroes do not destroy the artefact (thereby leaving it intact for future groups to use) please read the following:

The night after your discovery of the Rivalta's complacency in the Striking Vipers actions, the city of Savona is shocked that the once up-and-coming family has entered the service of the Dovitoni family as a vassal house, bringing their not-inconsequential resources into the command of the powerful family. Quickly, the Dovitoni's move their own managers into the Rivalta's business ventures, further cementing their dominion over their new vassals. Though obviously not in their best interests, nobody in the Rivalta family complain about their loss in fortune but praise their new homage.

On a surely unrelated note, as the Grand Melee continues it becomes clear that the fighters of the Striking Vipers—despite the mysterious loss of a few of their

fighters—are shoe-ins for the top of their league in the unofficial competition that occurs every year between the Schools. With their newfound position as a top-tier school, it appears that various other families, such as the Dovitoni, have begun talks about patronizing their services.

Development: The Heroes gain their rewards as per above.

CONCLUSION B

Key Concept: The Heroes finished some or all of the Torta Cartel's objectives.

While the Dovitoni wanted to use the actions of the Rivalta's against them, the Torta family simply wants the problem to go away. As such, the noble actions of the Heroes to remove the problem falls well within their objectives.

Making your way back to the Main Island of Savona, you are met at the docks by a group of men who identify them as belonging to your 'employer,' and who politely ask you to follow them. Walking behind them, you are led to a warehouse near the Savonan Arsenal, where you find Enrico Torta enjoying a series of sweet-smelling pastries while looking over some figures in a log book. At your approach, he puts the book down, and looks at you.

"Ahh, excellent! I assume you have some information for me?"

Assuming the Heroes have some information for them, they will be rewarded and thanked for their efforts:

- 1) If the Heroes have found out who did it, but do not have physical proof (eg: a sword taken from a Striking Viper, a witness that they captured, etc.), they

will be given 50 gp each. Additionally, if the Heroes revealed the Torta's to either the Rivalta's or the Striking Vipers, they will be given only their promised sum and nothing more regardless of other efforts they may have done.

- 2) If the Heroes provide physical evidence of how it was done, and/or who did it, they will be granted an additional 50 gp.
- 3) If the Heroes went to the Rivalta's mansion and either secured or destroyed the device, they will gain the Favour of the Torta Cartel, and 150 gp.

Once they have explained themselves and received their reward, please continue with the following:

Over the next few days, it appears that the luck of the Striking Vipers has run out. Match after match, fighters who were once favorites in the city for their success have managed to lose every duel that they once were in. Many are shocked by this sudden change in their fortunes, but rumor on the street is that the bookies that have made a competition of the Grand Melee are much happier about this turn of events as they have pocketed large amounts of money from those who have bet on the used-to-be favorites.

Oddly, a large number of the duels that were lost were those in support of one of the up-and-coming patrician clans—the Rivalta's—which has led to a decrease in political fortunes for that clan. It is not long before the Rivalta's withdraw from a number of different business ventures in the city, paying hefty fees for backing out of contracts to a number of different ventures around the city.

On a lighter note, you hear rumors that your former patron Enrico Torta has used a sudden windfall to purchase one of the best vineyards on Saint Marcella's Island. Apparently he has decided that the vintage he served you was worth further investment in.

Development: The Heroes gain their rewards as per above.

CONCLUSION C

Key Concept: The Heroes accepted the Rivalta's bribe.

When you return to your patron, you find that he is thoroughly frustrated at you for your seeming unwillingness to divulge any information from what you have seen at the Rivalta manor.

If the Heroes had the forethought to divulge information to their patrons prior to swearing a Sarishan Oath to the Rivalta's, they will receive the 100 gp that they were promised for the information, and in the case of the Torta Family will earn the Disfavour of the Torta Cartel. As the Dovitoni family only asked for evidence, the Heroes would not gain their disfavour in this case. Please see **Conclusion A** for details of what the Dovitoni would grant for this information, and the Conclusion appropriate to them having this information.

If the Heroes did not tell their patrons any of what they have found, they will not be paid at all and earn the Disfavour of the Dovitoni Family or the Disfavour of the Torta Cartel as appropriate.

Assuming the Heroes did not divulge any information to their patrons, please read the following:

In the next few days, you constantly feel yourself being watched wherever you go in the city. In fact, a number of bravos seem to constantly dog your heels, but whenever you go to confront them you find one of the Striking Vipers nearby who seem to intercept them before you can get to them. It appears that while you are in the city you will need to keep an eye out, because these guardian angels may not always be around to help you in case those following you manage to find you without them around.

Development: The Heroes gain their rewards as per above.

CONCLUSION D

Key Concept: The Heroes were arrested during the investigations.

It appears that your methods of investigation have proved to be too... aggressive for the tastes of the local Watch, and you find yourself sitting in a dungeon on the Fortress Island in the Savonan Lagoon. While there, you have a chance to consider how your actions may not be desired by not only the local constabulary, but also your patrons. In fact, it takes a full week for you to be released after someone posts your bail to the local legionary garrison. Any attempt to contact your patron is rebuffed, and you are informed that any further efforts to contact them is ill advised.

Development: The Heroes do not gain any money and earns the Disfavour of the Dovitoni Family or the Disfavour of the Torta Cartel, as appropriate.

THE END

ADVENTURE REWARDS

After an adventure make sure players record what experience and treasure they acquire on their adventure chronical, after which check their numbers, mark off any favors, boons, or curses and add any particular game notes before signing the adventure chronical and having it back to the player.

EXPERIENCE REWARDS

Arcanis Adventures do not necessarily reward experience points for winning combats. Instead Arcanis Adventures reward experience for achieving particular tasks or reaching important story points.

Task, Achievement	
Total Possible Experience	300 Exp

FOUND ITEMS

Players may keep any item without an Item Certificate that they find during the adventure. Remember that carrying a flintlock without the right to do so is a crime.

When a player keeps an item, the item's sale value is removed from the shared treasure reward the party splits at the end of the adventure. If the amount removed is greater than a player's share of the coin, the player in question must make up the difference or the other players can chip in from their shares.

The number and distribution of items found in a Living Arcanis adventure is always calculated using the base level of the adventure and a table of 5 players. Even if the party goes through the adventure at a higher difficulty and fights more enemies, any items beyond what is listed here are unsalvageable. This helps the Campaign Staff have a better grasp on campaign economy.

DUELS

At the conclusion of any duels that the Heroes fight, they are not allowed to take items from the loser of the duel. To do so would be illegal and gauche.

SCENE 4

If the watchmen were present, then nothing from this scene is salvageable and anything that might be considered loot is confiscated by the Watch as evidence.

If there were no Watchmen present, then the Heroes may recover a Studded Leather Armor (22 gp) and a dagger (1 gp) from each duelist (1 per Hero). The short swords fall apart at the end of the adventure.

SCENE 7

- Studded leather armor – 22 gp
- Dagger (2) – 2 gp
- Leather armor (6) – 30 gp
- Scimitar (4) – 50 gp
- Light crossbow (4) – 50 gp

The short swords fall apart at the end of the adventure.

Total for Scene 7 – 154 gp

SCENE 12

- Leather armor (6) – 30 gp
- Scimitar (6) – 75 gp
- Light crossbow (6) – 75 gp

Total for Scene 12 – 180 gp

SCENE 13

- Studded leather armor – 22 gp
- Dagger (2) – 2 gp
- Leather armor (2) – 10 gp
- Short bow (2) – 25 gp
- Shortsword (2) – 10 gp

Total for Scene 13 – 69 gp

TOTAL TREASURE REWARD

The party can split a total of 403 gp and 23 per Hero which would be 104 gp per Hero for a table of 5.

CONCLUSION A

50gp to 200gp per hero

CONCLUSION B

50gp to 150 gp per hero

CONCLUSION C

100gp per hero

STORY AWARDS

FAVORS, BOONS, CURSES

Favor of the Dovitoni Family

You have earned the favor of the Dovitoni Family. You may exchange this favor any time you are in Savona to 1) cancel out a Disfavor of the Dovitoni Family, 2) get out of prison after 24 hours without having to pay bail or bribe the guard.

Disfavor of the Dovitoni Family

You have earned the disfavor of the Dovitoni Family. While you have this Disfavor, 1) the Dovitoni will only pay half for any job offered, 2) while in Savona you may be targeted by duelists, 3) cannot make use of a Dovitoni Stone should you possess one. You can only remove this by exchanging in a Favor of the Dovitoni Family or pay 500 gp to the Dovitoni family.

Favor of the Torta Cartel

You have earned the favor of the Torta Cartel. You may exchange this favor any time you are in Savona to 1) cancel out a Disfavor of the Torta Cartel, 2) get out of prison after 24 hours without a bribe, or 3) automatically succeed on any single **Intelligence (Investigation)** while in Savona up to DC 20.

Disfavor of the Torta Cartel

You have earned the disfavor of the Torta Cartel. While you have this Disfavor, 1) the Torta Cartel will only pay half for any job offered, 2) while in Savona you may be targeted for assassination, 3) Suffer Disadvantage on all **Intelligence (Investigation)** while in Savona. You can only remove this by exchanging in a Favor of the Torta Cartel or pay 500 gp to the Torta Cartel.

NOTICE OF THE HARVESTERS

This only pertains to characters who cast Arcane magic, every time during the adventure an arcane caster casts spells in a public place or within sight of common people there is a chance that they had been spotted by a harvester or a harvester informant.

Unless the caster goes out of their way to hide such spell casting, news of their abilities will, eventually, reach the ears of the “wrong” people.

If the hero was open about their spell casting in public or failed two consecutive attempts to disguise it they get 1 point of harvester notice.

COMBAT APPENDIX 1

SCENE 2

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **One (1) Savonan Duelist**
- **One (1) City Watchmen**
- **One (1) val'Sheem Priestess**

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** No real change, if they cheat, they suffer.
- **Difficult:** Add one (1) watchmen
- **Perilous:** Add one (2) watchmen

Tactics:

Both parties will begin 15' away from one another. Should the Duelist win initiative, he will lunge forward and try to get a telling blow in before the Hero can respond. If they are engaged in a Cavello or a Duodo duel, then this could be the end of the duel for the Hero's champion. Should the Duelist miss, please continue the fight as per the rules of the duel rules chosen by the Heroes. This will continue until one party is reduced to 0 HP or the end conditions of the duel is satisfied. Should the Hero choose the Tansuro Rules, they will continue until one of the people is dead or unconscious.

VAL'SHEEM PRIESTESS

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 14 (armor of faith ability)

Hit Points 14 (3d8+3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10	14	12	10	14	14
(+0)	(+2)	(+1)	(+0)	(+2)	(+2)

Skills: Perception +3, Arcana +2

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Languages: Common

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. *The Val'Sheem's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12; +4 to hit with spell attacks).*

Cantrips (at will): Resistance, Sacred Flame, Thaumaturgy

1st level (4 slots): Bless, detect magic

2nd level (2 slots): hold person, darkness

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

SAVONAN DUELIST

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 14 (None)

Hit Points 19 (3d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10	16	12	10	11	10
(+0)	(+3)	(+1)	(+0)	(+0)	(+0)

Skills: Acrobatics +5, Intimidation, +3, Perception +2

Senses: Passive Perception 12

Languages: Low Coryani

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

WATCHMEN

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 13 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13	12	12	10	11	10
(+1)	(+1)	(+1)	(+0)	(+0)	(+0)

Skills: Perception +2

Senses: Passive Perception 12

Languages: Low Coryani (Common)

Challenge: 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

COMBAT APPENDIX 2

SCENE 4

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Striking Viper Duelists**
May include
- **One (1) Striking Viper Duelist per Hero**
Or
- **6 Watchmen**

Adventure Difficulty

There are no adjustments to the difficulty of this encounter.

Tactics:

The Striking Vipers will use their abilities to best win the duel depending on what the style is. However, unlike the Duelist from **Scene 2** the Vipers swords have been inscribed with the Ssethric Runes that the Rivalta's have salvaged which grant the blades limited (and very hard to detect) magical effects. Every turn, the effect of the rune may be changed to a different one on the list, and they cannot make use of the same effect twice in a row. It is possible that the Heroes may start the duel, and then have all the rest of the party attack the rest of the bravos. If the Watchman is present as the Master of the Field, then this will result in him leaving to bring a whole squad of Watchmen in to intervene after 3 turns. If there is not a Watchman, the rest of the Bravos in the party (1/Hero at the table) will engage and all the Code Duello is thrown out as it becomes a free-for-all.

ELITE STRIKING VIPER DUELIST

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 14 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills: Acrobatics +4, Athletics, +3, Intimidation, +3, Perception +3

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Languages: Common

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Runic Blade. Choose an effect every turn, once an effect is used, a new one cannot be chosen until the next turn, and the same effect cannot be used twice in a row. (See Runic Effects).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The duelist makes two melee weapon attacks, one with each hand wielding a sword.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage

Runic Effects:

- You gain a +2 to your next attack roll.
- You gain an additional 1d4 damage on your next damage roll
- You gain a +2 to your Armor Class your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Str, Dex, and Con saving throws until your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Int, Wis, and Cha saving throws until your next turn.
- You are healed 1d4 hit points.

WATCHMEN*Medium Humanoid***Armor Class** 13 (leather armor, shield)**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13	12	12	10	11	10
(+1)	(+1)	(+1)	(+0)	(+0)	(+0)

Skills: Perception +2**Senses:** Passive Perception 12**Languages:** Low Coryani (Common)**Challenge:** 1/8 (25 XP)**ACTIONS**

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

COMBAT APPENDIX 3

SCENE 7

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Nicolo Oreseolo**
- **Two (2) Striking Viper Fighters***
- **Four (4) Hired Muscle***

*May be reduced to 1 Striking Viper Fighter and 2 Hired Muscle (if they give up their patron/succeed in their Deception)

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Remove 1 Striking Viper Fighter
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Striking Viper Fighter
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Striking Viper Fighters

Tactics:

The Heroes are blocked on a 15x30 foot bridge, with water on either side. The minions will rush the Heroes while the Vipers move up more cautiously until they can lunge forward to deal as much damage as possible. All of the Viper's Swords have the special rune upon them, allowing them a number of bonuses as per the previously detailed rules.

When the bravo's weapon is drawn, allow the Heroes a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the strange rune on the sword. You may add a +2 bonus for each of the following: Artisan (Smith) background, proficiency in Arcana, Smith's tools, or any elorii or dwarf. Additionally, each time that the rune changes its effect, they may again attempt the Perception if they did not notice it before (easier with longer duels).

Additionally, allow elorii Hero who see the rune to make a **Wisdom (Insight) DC 15** skill check. If

they succeed, please give them **Player Handout #4: Visions of Lives Past.**

NICOLO ORESEOLO

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 15 (Studded Armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws: Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +3

Skills: Acrobatics +6, Athletics, +4, Perception +3

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Languages: Low Coryani (Common)

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Runic Blade. Choose an effect every turn, once an effect is used, a new one cannot be chosen until the next turn, and the same effect cannot be used twice in a row. (See Runic Effects).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nicolo makes two melee weapon attacks, one with each hand wielding two shortwords.

2 Shortwords. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Runic Effects:

- You gain a +2 to your next attack roll.
- You gain an additional 1d4 damage on your next damage roll
- You gain a +2 to your Armor Class your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Str, Dex, and Con saving throws until your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Int, Wis, and Cha saving throws until your next turn.
- You are healed 1d4 hit points.

STRIKING VIPER FIGHTERS

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 13 (2d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills: Intimidation +2

Senses: Passive Perception 10

Languages: Low Coryani (Common)

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage

HIRED MUSCLE

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills: Intimidation, +3, Perception +2

Senses: Passive Perception 12

Languages: Low Coryani

Challenge: 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80 ft. / 320ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

COMBAT APPENDIX 4

SCENE 12

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Six (6) Hired Muscle**

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Remove 2 Hired Muscle
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Hired Muscle
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Hired Muscle

Tactics

These guards are not particularly skilled, but they will swarm the Heroes in an attempt to subdue them. These foes are not meant to be a major obstacle for the Heroes, but drain their resources before the 'final fight' of the adventure.

HIRED MUSCLE

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills: Intimidation, +3, Perception +2

Senses: Passive Perception 12

Languages: Low Coryani

Challenge: 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80 ft. / 320ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

COMBAT APPENDIX 5

SCENE 13

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **Paolo Rivalta**
- **Two (2) Sarishan Sorcerer-Priests**
- **Two (2) Rivalta Duelists**

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy Mode:** Remove 1 Sorcerer-Priest
- **Difficult:** Add 1 Rivalta Duelist
- **Perilous:** Add 2 Rivalta Duelists

Tactics

The three common duelists will form a wall to prevent the Heroes from reaching the three Sarishan Sorcerer-Priest, who will be lobbing various spells at the Heroes. Paolo will attempt to remain behind his allies, focusing on any Hero who manages to get past his other fighters.

PAOLO RIVALTA

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 15 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points 37 (5d10+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws: Str +3, Dex +5, Wis +3

Skills: Athletics, +3, Insight, +3, Perception +3

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Languages: Low Coryani (Common),

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Footwork. On each of its turns, Paolo can use a bonus action to take the Dash or Disengage action.

Runic Blade. Choose an effect every turn, once an effect is used, a new one cannot be chosen until the next turn, and the same effect cannot be used twice in a row. (See Runic Effects).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Paolo makes two melee weapon attacks.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry: Paolo adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, Paolo must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Runic Effects:

- You gain a +2 to your next attack roll.
- You gain an additional 1d4 damage on your next damage roll
- You gain a +2 to your Armor Class your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Str, Dex, and Con saving throws until your next turn.
- You gain advantage on all Int, Wis, and Cha saving throws until your next turn.
- You are healed 1d4 hit points.

NOVICE SORCERER-PRIEST

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills: Perception +3, Arcana +3, Religion +3

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Languages: Low Coryani (Common), Infernal

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

SPECIAL TRAITS

Spellcasting. The Sorcerer-Priest's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11; +3 to hit with spell attacks).

Cantrips (at will): *resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (3 slots): *bless, inflict wounds, sanctuary*

ACTIONS

Dagger – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

RIVALTA FIGHTERS

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 13 (2d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills: Intimidation +2

Senses: Passive Perception 10

Languages: Low Coryani (Common)

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Shortbow – *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80 ft. / 320ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

HANDOUT 1: CODE DUELLO

- 1) Whenever you feel that your honor has been besmirched, you may demand satisfaction from the person you feel that has challenged your honor. This challenge must be made in public, directly to the person you are challenging. If not, this is viewed as a sign of cowardice and there is no loss of personal honor for the challenged individual for refusing the duel.
- 2) If a duel is refused, the offending party must make a public and immediate apology for their actions, including any reparations required. Should they refuse the duel, but refuse to apologize, that person is regarded as a coward, which could carry significant social, political, and personal consequences.
- 3) The challenger then proposes a field of battle, which the challenged fighter may either accept or propose an alternative. Should the challenged person not provide an acceptable location, the Challenger's choice is chosen.
- 4) Either side can name a Champion to fight in their stead without loss of honor. This Champion must be willing to side with their party, without monetary compensation or hesitation (at least, not publically). If they propose such things, both the Champion and their patron suffer a loss of honor, as it is obvious that the Champion does not believe their patron's position is correct.
- 5) Each duel requires a Master of the Field, a neutral party, which acts to moderate the duel. This Master of the Field is typically a member of the City Watch or a Patrician of high esteem (such as a Senator). Aside from being the moderator, the Master of the Field is also responsible for punishing any breach of conduct in the duel. Should a Master of the Field not be present, both parties may appoint 'Seconds' to jointly hold the position of moderator, acting as go-betweens between the two offending parties.
- 6) The Challenged party may choose the rules of the duel, of which there are three primary dueling Rules: The Carvello Rules, the Duodo Rules, and the Tansuro Rules. The Carvello Rules are until first blood, the Duodo Rules are to trade blows with each blow being an option to yield or not, while the Tansuro Rules are until either the death or until one party has fallen unconscious.
- 7) If any party breaks the Code Duello, the Master of the Field (or the Seconds) are required to punish the offender immediately for their break. The severity of the punishment depends on the breach of the code itself, but can include the death of the offending party. For example, should the offending party have an ally step in, the Master of the Field or both Seconds MUST attack the interloping party and (unless they immediately yield) the party they are supporting.
- 8) All 'buffs' on the parties of the duel are prohibited, as is the active use of magic. The only exceptions to this are in the case of magic being used to produce an appropriate blade. Armour is less regulated, but similarly specific buff spells are prohibited. If such spells are detected (such as by a Master of the Field who can cast Detect Magic), then the offending party has broken Code Duello and must be punished. Runes are allowed to be scribed onto blades, but activating a rune effect is forbidden (the activation of a rune is typically a physical act, and can be seen).
- 9) Yielding during a duel is tantamount to admission of fault. You are effectively stating that you are unwilling to stake your honor (and life) in defense of your action or position.
- 10) Each duel deals with a specific slight. There are no appeals, and if you declare a duel on the same grounds as a previous duel (that you either won or loss), it will result in a loss of personal honor. However, you can declare a duel in regards to previous duel (such as declaring a duel against the man who killed your brother in a duel), as long as it is not for the same offence as the previous duel was declared (such as that same brother having taken slight over his later killer embarrassing him in public).

HANDOUT 2: DOVITONI

Honorable [Insert Heroes Name],

Word of your deeds and actions have reached our ears, and we have found ourselves in need of your services. Should you wish to help us right an injustice in this city, please come to the townhouse at 112 Dovitoni Siestri in the Marcellus District tomorrow at noon. To help entice you to visit, I present a token of faith towards you. So long as you keep faith with us, we shall keep faith with you.

Antonio Dovitoni

HANDOUT 3: TORTA

Greetings [Insert Heroes Name],

You do not know me, but I know of you. Your skills come highly recommended by common friends (as well as enemies), and I believe I have a business venture which may interest you. If you are interested, please find your way to the Lonesome Vine taverna on Saint Marcella's Island at noon tomorrow.

If it helps entice you to visit, I will have a good vintage of REAL Savonan Red (not that crap that they sell elsewhere under that name) for you to sample over the offer.

Enríco Torta

HANDOUT 4: VISION OF LIVES PAST (ELORII ONLY)

Seeing the rune, you find yourself in a dim, lavender-lit cavern surrounded by rank upon rank of your kin. Behind you a group of Ssanu circle a strange glowing artefact which they seem to be manipulating. Before you lies your enemy: a hoard of insectoid creatures on the ground with humanoid bat-like creatures above them. With the sound of a warhorn, a group of Ss'resen mounted on flying drakes begin to engage the bat-like creatures, while your lines begin to move. As you prepare to make contact with your enemy, you notice the rune inscribed on your blade glow, filling you with confidence in your next strike.

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