

Noblesse Oblige

A Book of Courtly Intrigue

Introduction

There is more to 7th Sea than sword fighting. While swashbuckling is a core of the game, so is interaction at court.

Would the three Musketeers have had any adventures had they not become agents of the Queen and run afoul of the politics of Richelieu? Would the dark games of Dangerous Liaisons have been so devious without the civility of court? Could the Count of Monte Cristo have truly gained revenge without gaining social power?

This book is a mixed bag of systems and details to help you expand on life in the courts of Théah. It adds new rules and abilities for courtly characters that will leave the swordsmen in their wake at social occasions.

We begin with ‘The Courts of Théah’, an introduction to life in the Thean court. This article details courtly life and the positions and titles that can be acquired by the ambitious. This is followed by detail on fashion in Théah. This article helps you dress your characters for court and figure out what they are wearing and how to repair the sword holes. The next article is an optional system to expand reputation. The system has come under criticism in the past, so this small expansion should help make more sense of character’s renown. Then for the courtiers we present social combat rules. This system allows courtly characters to trade wit with deadly masters of sarcasm for reputation. However, take care, in Théah words can kill as surly as a blade. Finally

we present two articles originally published in Valkyrie magazine, but updated and revised for this book. Dégât is a new sword school suitable for courtly ladies, and Mirage reveals the secrets of one of the three lost bargainers’ arts. So welcome to court, but take care. Every move is watched, every lie examined and each breach of etiquette can mean ruin.

The Courts of Théah

In the Lion’s Den

In many of the swashbuckling tales that Théah is based on, the heroes are agents of the King or Queen. This is little wonder, when the actions of the people in court, whether overt or clandestine, can change the fate of whole countries.

The courts of Théah are full of possibilities

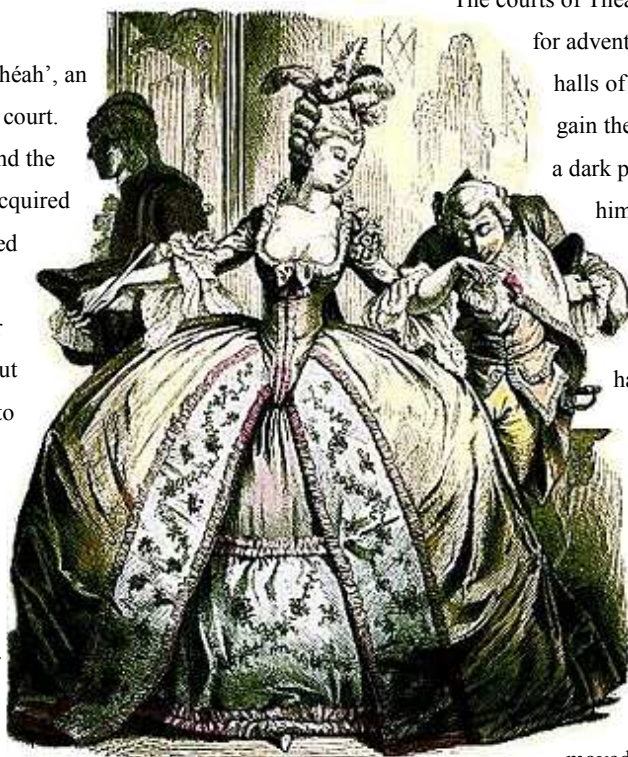
for adventure and intrigue. In the halls of power the characters can gain the favour of the king, or find a dark patron looking to depose

him. For these reasons, life at court, for all it’s grandeur and spectacle is not for the feint hearted. You have to know the rules, or the consequences can be fatal.

So, what actually is the court? Put simply it is wherever the country’s Ruler does business, which means it can be

moved from place to place. If the

King decides to spend some time in the country, the court follows him. However, if he wants to spend some time on holiday and leaves someone else in charge for a while, the



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court stays where it is. This means that a lot of how a court functions depends on the Ruler. Each King or Queen gets to organise things as they like. There are certain traditions, but a Ruler can topple them if he is powerful enough to upset the status quo. Each court in Théah has its own rules and organisation. Knowing one does not make you a master of them all. In fact, just when you get to know one, the Ruler may be succeeded and it all changes again. However, it is not as bad as it may seem, many of the basic rules of court usually apply to them all, and many traditions remain from their common root in Numa. So find yourself something decent to wear and come join the intrigue, but leave your sword at home, it won't help you here.

The Wolves and the Lambs

So who is to be found at court? Needles to say, there is quite a mixture, but for simplicity we can divide them into three main groups. The first group are those who are actively employed by the Ruler as courtiers. The second group are those who are there to get the attention of the king, to gain a position for themselves or to ask a favour. The final group really don't want to be there, as they are the hostages taken to ensure the loyalty of other nobles.

The Ruler is the undisputed centre of the court. There are many different kinds of Ruler throughout Théah, Kings, Queens, Emperors, Princes, Imperators and many more. What is important is that the Ruler is the person in charge; their decisions are what counts and the court must bow to their wishes.

Every Ruler needs help to govern, and to do this there are many positions they can hand out to those they trust. Few Rulers need to have all these positions filled in their court. In effect these positions are a way for a Ruler to delegate responsibility. Such courtiers act with the Ruler's authority, and can command great power under their jurisdiction. So the Ruler needs to know there is someone there they can trust. The whole thing is a bit of a catch twenty two situation for the Ruler. If he appoints courtiers they may betray him, but without people taking some of the weight of government, the Ruler may have no time to watch for treachery. In many cases the positions at court follow a set tradition, and it takes

a powerful Ruler to overwrite such practice. Courtly position is one of the perks of nobility, and they get very upset should the lord decide he no longer needs such council.

Most of the positions are offered only to nobility, but that is tradition, rather than the rule. In history, many Rulers have elevated low-born friends to positions of power by awarding them trusted places on their council. However they must be ready for the consequences. Few nobles like to see what they consider their birthright to be handed over to the peasantry. However it does sometimes occur, and often purely for the purpose of upsetting the nobility; though sometimes great heroes of the people can make enough of a name for themselves that everyone is happy with their appointment, Montegue being the most obvious example in Théah.

The positions available are many and varied, but they divide along two specific lines. Officers of the chamber are led by the Lord Chamberlain, who is concerned with the ritual and affairs of the Ruler themselves. Some Rulers create a 'privy chamber' for their more private affairs, with only the most trusted officers involved. The other set of positions come under the Lord Steward and cover the dealings of the Ruler's castle and holdings. This includes all the domestic affairs such as kitchens and organising the logistics of balls and entertainments.

In addition to the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Steward, there are a host of other court appointments. While most cultures have different names for them, the offices themselves are very much alike. GMs are encouraged to mix and match from the list below and create other titles of their own. For instance, a court appointed sorcerer is an obvious addition for Théah, as is perhaps an ambassador for the Sidhe. All positions at court are determined by the Ruler, and often used as a way to keep a trusted ally close, or keep an enemy busy.

Some positions may seem like servants, however almost any responsibility can become a court title. A Master Cook could be slaving in the kitchen all day, or be a noble who plans the Ruler's meals and never sets foot in the kitchen. So the listing below also covers many service positions that can easily become offices of the court. Many positions grant more title

Françoise-Claude Nouveau du Riché

Lord Steward to King Montegue I

Since many of l'Empereurs retainers either died in the Revolution or fled to Wische, Montegue needed to restaff the Palais on his return to power. Françoise formerly worked for the Duke of Crieux, although he left his service well before the fall of the family. Having become used to the lifestyle of serving the rich and powerful, he welcomed the restoration of the noble classes and sought out a position in Charouse. Following a recommendation from a merchant friend, he has now become the head of the Montegue household and the duty is testing his capabilities to the fullest. The King has proven to be a fairly easy master to deal with so far, preferring to do many tasks for himself and lacking the spoiled nature of most of the other Montaigne nobility.

Françoise-Claude Nouveau du Riché - Hero (7th Sea™)

Brawn 2, *Finesse* 3, *Resolve* 3, *Wits* 3, *Panache* 4

Reputation: 43

Background: Fear (Peasant Crowds), Hated Relative

Arcana: Adaptable

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Barterer, Castille (R/W), Connections (Merchant Ally), Eisen, Keen Senses, Linguist, Montaigne (R/W), Théan (R/W), Vodacce

Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 4, Fashion 4, Gossip 4, Oratory 4, Memorising 3, Politics 4, Seduction 2, Sincerity 4

Fencing: Attack 1, Parry 1

Firearms: Attack 1

Merchant: Steward 5, Hagglng 4

Rider: Ride 3

Servant: Etiquette 4, Fashion 4, Menial Tasks 4, Unobtrusive 5, Accounting 3, Drive Carriage 3, Gossip 4, Hagglng 4, Seneschal 5, Valet 5

Spy: Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Bribery 4, Conceal 4, Lip Reading 4, Sincerity 4

Streetwise: Socialising 3, Street Navigation 3, Shopping 4

Françoise-Claude Nouveau du Riché - Hero (d20™)

Montaigne Courtier 5 / Spy 2 / Expert 4: CR 9

than responsibility, only requiring the officer to keep some unimportant courtly trinket safe (although losing it can often be considered treason). However, such a position grants the courtier a reason and duty to remain at court near the Ruler. The potential of such ability cannot be underestimated at court.

The Offices of the Steward

Lord Steward

Also known as a Dapifer (bearer of meat to the table), Seneschal or Major-domo. The Lord Steward is in charge of all castle affairs. He is served by the domestic staff and charged with the responsibility of keeping the Rulers house in order.

Butler

This is the head servant, so not really a court position. He is charged with seeing to all aspects of food service to the court.

Doorward

This is usually a low grade ceremonial position. Essentially the Doorward holds the keys to the front door and acts as gatekeeper. He decides who gains entry to the Ruler's household.

Falconer

With Falconry a popular sport, someone needs to look after the birds and see they are well fed. That is the job of the falconer. This is more the job of a servant, but might become a noble privilege if falconry is extremely popular.

Panther

This servant office originated as the person entrusted with the supply of bread and later involved oversight over the pantry. Ultimately the butler subsumed this function.

Treasurer

Also known as Cofferer or Comptroller. Served by various officer and clerks, the treasury organises all the finances of the court as well as making any disbursements required. This officer controls the purse strings and is usually a highly trusted member of the Ruler's council.

The Offices of the Chamber

Lord Chamberlain

This is possibly the closest advisor to the Ruler. He organises courtly routine and sees to the business of statecraft. He is usually head of the privy chamber as well, and will be very offended if he isn't. Such a state would show the Ruler trusts him with ritual rather than advice. A powerful Chamberlain is the master of court, often able to decide who does or does not see the Ruler. Many Chamberlains have grown fat on the bribes from the nobility that such an immense power can afford. The amount of actual titles under the chamberlain's department varies depending on how ritualised the court is.

The Dean

While it is not the most important religious post in the Ruler's palace, this can be of great influence. The Dean is the local priest who looks after whatever chapel may be part of the palace grounds. He won't be a bishop or anything grand as they have other duties. He is no higher than a local parish priest, although his parish is a little more important. If Vaticine it may be this priest that hears the Ruler's confession, but this is unusual as the Ruler would more likely go to a higher cleric. However, as minister to the congregation of the court, the Dean is in a position to know many secret confidences.

Keeper of the Jewels

This office sees to any royal jewels, such as the crown of the land for instance. Not only are such royal treasures important in statecraft, but they are usually unfeasibly valuable. The amount of them and value reflects the power and wealth of the Ruler and the country. The keeper himself wouldn't be standing guard, but he will be responsible for setting guards and organising shifts. It is possible he may also have respon-

sibility for palace guards, but that may be more under the auspices of a Lord Marshall. In some countries the royal jewels might be a couple of simple items. In other places, like Montaigne where you need several rooms to house the royal jewels, some require a specific 'Jewel House' for these precious items. If the jewels are stolen it is the responsibility of the Treasurer of the chamber to get them back, or suffer a terrible punishment. In Innismoor the O'Bannon has lost his crown on numerous occasions making 'The Ballad of Ballatyne', the story of the poor keeper and his adventures trying to find the crown, a popular Innish folk tale.

Treasurer of the Chamber

This treasury position is the counterpart to the Cofferer in the Steward's domain. While he does not see to the Ruler's personal finances, this office makes disbursements for any of the offices under the Chamberlain. This makes him responsible for paying the staff as well as footing the bill for royal pomp and ceremony. He may share some responsibility with the Keeper of the Jewels, as wherever the Jewels are kept is secure enough to keep the chamber treasury.

Sir John Deeth

Court Physician to James MacDuff

Many disapprove of the position of the half-Avalon half-Highlander in the court of James, but few can argue with his medical knowledge and skill. He is also a keen researcher and natural philosopher, although some critics say that his interests are more akin to witchcraft than the modern sciences. Certainly some of the techniques he has demonstrated during lectures in Kirkwall can be charitably called unorthodox and many do ask where from did he learn some of the ideas he espouses.

Sir John Deeth - Hero (7th Sea™)

Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Resolve 4, Wits 5, Panache 3

Reputation: 21

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Membership (Invisible College), Montaigne (R/W), Patron, Research Library, Spark of Genius (Medicine), Théan (R/W), University

Background: Contentious Theory

Doctor: Diagnosis 4, First Aid 5, Densist 2, Examiner 2, Quack 5, Surgery 5, Veterinarian 2

Herbalist: Compounds 5, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 4, First Aid 5, Flora 5, Poisons 3, Quack 5

Professor: Oratory 4, Research 5, Writing 3, Mooch 3, Natural Philosophy 5, Theology 2, Occult 4

Knife: Attack 3, Parry 2, Throw 2

Pugilism: Attack 2, Footwork 2

Rider: Ride 4

Sir John Deeth (d20™)

Avalon Alchemist 8 / Courtier 2 / Field Surgeon 5; CR 15

Physician and Surgeon

Even the greatest Ruler falls ill sometimes. When a doctor can hold the life of his patient in his hands, the job of who looks after the Ruler is an important one indeed. Many have been killed for failing to preserve the life of their liege, even when there was no way to save them. However, should a doctor gain the trust of a Ruler he often becomes a confidant, especially as he needs to know all the embarrassing details of the Ruler's life to ensure the correct treatment. Some Rulers surround themselves with doctors, others will have only one. Some Rulers also have the greatest doctors they can find to look after their mistresses, or even their dogs.

Chancellor

Essentially a chancellor is a secretary, or 'head civil servant', usually to a powerful monarch. However, the court can be littered with various chancellors, who all have secretarial duties to one of the many offices of the court. The power and prestige of the individual chancellor can be very varied. It depends entirely on the office in which he serves. Whoever serves the Ruler is best placed as an advisor and confidant. He may also be referred to as 'the' Chancellor, rather than

just 'a' Chancellor. The remaining chancellors are the civil servants working among all the other departments, hoping to graduate to more powerful offices. Essentially, anywhere there is paperwork, you will find an academic Chancellor working to support the office. There is no formal structure to the work, so only ones who prove themselves can find promotion to higher office at the whim of the Ruler.

There are two offices that deserve a mention, by way of example. The office of wardrobes, robes and beds organises the massive amount of ceremonial regalia used in statecraft. It oversees everything from the Ruler's bed linen to his day wear. The office of Arms and Heraldry records the deeds of the noble families and their coats of arms. In Avalon especially this is a renowned office, even if it isn't that exciting. However, in the Glamour isles, the rather bookish Chancellor in this office in Elaine's court has a reputation as a master storyteller, if of course you can convince him to spin you a tale. Each of these offices is not important enough to warrant more than a Chancellor at its head. However they are both important and necessary parts of the Ruler's chamber.

Ladies in Waiting/Maids of Honour

With court clothing being as heavy and complicated as it is, no lady could manage to dress herself at court. So any royal lady will have a flock of ladies in waiting ready to assist her with her needs. Essentially these ladies are simply well paid ladies maids, but depending on the Ruler, they may be trusted confidants. In 'The Three Musketeers' D'Artagnan's lover Constance is such a trusted servant and works as a messenger and occasional spy for her mistress. The position also exists to allow noble daughters to enter court, given that many of the positions are reserved for men. If the lady is a noble she may be referred to as a 'Maid of Honour' to distinguish her noble status from the lower born ladies in waiting. The amount of trust and confidence given to ladies in waiting depends on the lady they serve. However, very few politically inclined court ladies, from Queens to Baronesses have ignored the servant's rumour-mill as a

source of useful information. Especially as, while everyone takes note of where the Queen is, few take the same notice of her serving girls.

Marshall

There are two forms of Marshall in the court. The Lord Marshall is in charge of all military matters with regard to the palace. He commands the palace guard and is often a primary adviser in martial matters to the Ruler. He ranks with the Steward and Chamberlain as a valued and trusted part of the retinue.

A Marshall is a far smaller office, and like Chancellors there are many of them. Essentially, anyone leading a parade is a Marshall. Their real job runs parallel to the chancellors, in that they organise the people the chancellors are often doing the paperwork for.

They make sure people are where they are meant to be, 'floor managing' parades and state events. Large parades may have many Marshals each leading a separate part, such as Trumpets, Minstrels or even Nobles. Nobles may not like to be herded around, but they

like being told to just 'follow the Marshall' and they will be in the right place. Many Marshals have worked their way up from the lower orders, but there are many Marshall responsibilities considered fit only

for the nobility.

Knights

While they may go by other names, Théah has plenty of knightly orders who also have access to court. Elaine's Knights and the Kings Musketeers, especially the Lightning Guard, are directly responsible for the safety and well-being of the Ruler. Not just any soldier can join these orders. The more important the order the more the applicant must prove himself worthy of it. Only a rare few knights ever become anything more at court, but even as guards they have access. However, Montegue began as a musketeer, and we have seen how high he has risen by proving himself and his skills.



The Rest

With the office of the Chamberlain being directly involved with the Ruler, everyone wants to be part of it. So there are a mass of low grade titles that mean very little but can grant access to the Ruler as part of the retinue. None of these titles get brought into council, or even see the Ruler much more than anyone else. But they are 'at court' which brings the promise of being noticed. The titles are pretty self explanatory and include: Cupbearers, Sewers (officer of high rank in charge of serving dishes at the table and sometimes of seating and tasting), Gentlemen and Yeomen Ushers, and Yeomen, Grooms and pages of the Chamber.

Waiting in Line

The largest and most varied group of court attendees are the supplicants. While all the offices of the court are there for statecraft and ceremony, without supplicants there is no business at court. The essential purpose of the Ruler attending their court is to sit in judgement and rule their country. While the law courts see to most problems under the Ruler's law, there are a few things they cannot deal with. This may be because there is no legal precedent for them to follow, or because the parties involved are too high a rank for anything but the judgement of a King. However people do not come to court simply for rulings of law. Many wish to ask favours of their lord, present gifts or introduce their sons and daughters to society.

Anyone who wants to see the Ruler will need an appointment. These can only be obtained through one of the court officials, which can mean a lot of palm greasing. With so many people wanting to see the Ruler most people have to wait for quite some time. If your case isn't urgent or you don't have the bribes you could be at court for months. Even if you do have an appointment, the Ruler might just decide they don't wish to hear any petitions that day and send you all home. There is nothing you can do about this.

Even without bribery, social standing also determines your access to the Ruler. A few non-nobles might be allowed to see the Ruler, but this is not the norm. Each noble is a lord of his own domain and holds his own court for local matters. For someone low born to seek the king's judgement over that of their liege lord is rather insulting. It suggests their

liege is wrong or that only the Kings word will do, which is a great presumption for someone low born.

However the system is not all bad. If you have been granted an appointment, you have leave to remain at court. In fact you have to remain at court, because if the Ruler decides he wants to see you, then you must be available in an instant. This means you can get as involved with courtly life as you wish. On a day to day basis this means you will be able to join the long queue of people waiting to stand before the Ruler. However if your appointment is not for a long time you are free to move around the other supplicants and gossip. The pageantry of the court is impressive, despite all the standing around you will be doing, and the conversations of the other courtiers are often worth overhearing. If you are lucky there will be a chance for you to get yourself noticed, which may raise your position quite considerably. Quite often a young lady might catch the King's eye or a young man might impress a Queen in just the same way, or a tale of heroism may reach the Ruler's ears and he decides to meet the swordsmen in question.

It may not be just the Ruler you can impress though. As you have time on your hands, a good few nobles and notables may ask for your assistance in other matters. If you have a reputation you could find a few patrons offering you tasks of a clandestine nature. Everyone at court has an angle, and need people to do the legwork so they can remain at the side of the Ruler. Few things you get asked to do will be illegal or wrong, you need to build trust for that sort of work. However there is no doubt the patron will require discretion on your part. The simplest tasks are usually part of much larger schemes and can unravel easily with the wrong word to the wrong person.

While you are waiting there are all manner of entertainments. How many you get to attend and how often will depend on your status. Balls and banquets are common for everyone to join in. However hunting parties and days out may be more difficult to get involved in. Essentially there will always be entertainments for the Ruler. How lavish they are will depend on the Ruler as well. The larger the gatherings the more people can go. All the invitations are handled by court officials, so again, bribery is often the norm. Rulers



very rarely have any idea who is being invited to their own parties.

After all this time, and all the goings on, it is easy to forget what you came to court for. However, eventually you may get your moment to speak to the Ruler. In a formal situation you are simply allowed to approach the throne and make your request. The Ruler gives a judgement and that is that. However in some cases, usually when word of your plea or deeds has already reached the Ruler, you may be given a private audience. Such a meeting will probably be held outside the 'office hours' of the court, and be far less informal. In such a position it is far more likely you will get a favourable ruling as the Ruler has taken a special interest.

Theoretically, when you have made your request, you are done and should leave. However, in the time it has taken you to see the Ruler you may have acquired any number of reasons to remain. Some people just stay anyway, waiting for someone to actually throw them out. Any noble of the country has a certain right to attend the Ruler. It is also common for a Ruler to take a liking to someone and leave orders they are to remain. Then they get distracted with the next flavour of the week and forget to rescind the order. This allows many people to overstay their welcome for years.

Trapped in Paradise

Interestingly, not everyone at court wants to be there. The organisation of government means that local nobles have the power of life and death over their estates. They exercise this power in the Ruler's name so he need not concern himself with local government. There just isn't the time in the day for one person to rule every part of a country. Rulers cannot take away noble titles without seriously shaking the boat. However there are many nobles who they do not trust. Anyone of a sufficient status might have a claim to the throne making them dangerous potential enemies. With their domains being potentially far from court, how does a Ruler retain their loyalty? The answer is traditionally hostages.

It is a simple arrangement, the Ruler requests the noble's children to attend him at court. This is technically a great honour, to be sent to wait on the Ruler. So the noble in question will find it very hard to refuse. While the children are at

court, they are a long way from home. While the noble does as he is told, the children will be safe. In fact they will be treated very well and may not even realise the reason for their new home. However if the noble decides to act against the Ruler his children could be forfeit, and few Rulers have a problem with ordering the death of a traitor's progeny.

Life at court for these children can be wonderful or frustrating. When they are young it is great fun to be in such an exciting place. However, as they grow older they may wish to see the world or make some form of career for themselves. Unfortunately, anything that takes them from court will simply not be allowed. They will also be watched almost constantly, in case their parents attempt to spirit them away or contact them about any misdoings. This observation could be subtle, or as overt as having a 'personal servant' following them everywhere.

The time spent as a hostage varies quite a lot. Some traditions may ensure that all children of the nobility spend time at court in the summer, the traditional time for insurgency. Other times the Ruler may only request the presence of a rival's heirs when he doesn't trust them. This means the children could be at court for a few months, or spend many years there.

When the hostage is released, what happens will depend on their time at court. Some become close confidants of the Ruler or other nobles, having made friends and allies of their own. Some simply enjoy courtly life and opt to remain. However they could return home to plot with their parents, especially if their time at court has been difficult. Finally, they may simply leave to pursue a life free of courtly squabbles.

Life among the Gadflies

Once you have access to court, you step into another world. Courtly life can be closed off to the daily affairs of the world to an incredible degree. No one wants to be the one to tell the Ruler things aren't going well, so many courtiers spend their lives trying to maintain an illusion that all is well. This is fine in a place like Avalon where things are going well or in Vodacce where the Prince has his own spies to tell him the real story. However in places like Montaigne and Castille



it ensures that the Ruler is cut off from their people, leading to all sorts of problems. After all, if the Ruler doesn't know what is going on, how can he make decisions about how to govern? Many courtiers would rather he didn't make any decisions at all, and delegated all his responsibility to them. Then they could run things the way they wanted.

With everyone trying to keep the Ruler as uninformed as they can, the 'Ear of the King' becomes paramount. Much of courtly manoeuvring is to ingratiate oneself with the Ruler so that he trusts your council above all others. Those who become the trusted council of a Ruler are in a powerful position. They can directly influence policy as the Ruler trusts their judgement. This may be due to the loyalty they have shown, or because they can travel outside the court to see how things really are. If they reach this position because they are noble and trustworthy, all well and good. However, many nobles and courtiers rise to such positions by simply ingratiating themselves with the Ruler. They are only concerned with expanding their own power and crushing their enemies. So their advice rarely works to benefit the country. As player characters become more involved in court, their circles of allegiance and patronage may spiral ever closer to the Ruler. This may mean they have the opportunity to gain the Ear of the King for themselves, or make the Ruler aware about just how bad the advice he is getting really is. Unmasking a powerful courtier's real motives can be rewarding. Many Rulers are very glad to be rid of an obsequious viper in their midst. However, the sort of courtiers who can get this close to the Ruler are very hard to unmask. Their plans will be obscure and well hidden, and even if the players do remove the courtly canker, they have made a very dangerous enemy.

If you manage to remain at court, you'll need somewhere to stay. Most palaces are designed with far more rooms than one Ruler could ever need. So those of sufficient station who are in need of a place to stay can often find rooms at court. This will be organised by the offices of the Steward, and again will rely on a little bribery. However, sometimes a Ruler may decide a certain courtier should be kept close, in which case the Steward has no option but to provide them with rooms.

Once you have a place to stay, it is a lot easier to keep it. It is highly inappropriate to turn nobles out on the street. So as long as no one else of a higher station needs a room, you will have a place to sleep. For a noble this may not be as good as it seems. Quarters in the palace are usually a room or two, where most nobles own whole estates. The price you pay to be near the Ruler is to leave your own estate in the hands of lackeys. Few nobles can afford to do this for long, or remain in what is to them the frightfully small accommodations of the palace. So the court is mainly full of second sons and daughters who have little or no responsibility to the family estate. They often live in court to act as the eyes and ears of their older siblings.

For anyone who does manage to stay at court, there is often plenty to do. For many Rulers the entire purpose of their court is to entertain them. Balls and banquets are rather common-place, as are weekends of hunting in the country. Often they will be in celebration of certain events, such as birthdays, but can be called for any reason. As mentioned above, getting invited to such gatherings is a trial in its own right, but often well worth the effort. Balls are simply dance parties, but for added interest they usually have a theme such as a costume party or a masked ball. Picking a costume to such events requires carefully thought, as you want to look good, but not look better or cleverer than the host. Banquets can follow a similar pattern, and often occur at the same time. While the guests dine they will often be entertained with music recitals and dance. Hunting parties are simply trips to the country for exercise. Usually the killing of animals for sport is as complicated as it gets, but plenty of twists are often arranged to keep the Ruler's interest. Such things can also be done in costume or run to a theme, usually based on historical hunts. Sometimes the courtiers may find something different for the Ruler to hunt, such as a strange beast or even a more human target. However hunts are usually simple affairs and often grant a better opportunity to get close to the Ruler in a less formal setting.

When planning courtly entertainment, remember to think big. A life of Balls and Banquets may sound wonderful, but when you've done anything a lot of times it gets dull. Courtiers are continually encouraged to invent new and different twists to the games to keep the Ruler's interest. The



King likes chess? Why not organise a human chess game. He enjoys hunting? Why not find him some rare and different creature to hunt. Does he like to eat? What can you find that he has never tasted. These are questions that courtiers spend all day considering.

Quite often visitors from other places arrive to pay homage or offer trade. To impress their hosts, many put on displays and entertainments from their native lands. Courts have been witness to dancing girls from the Crescent Empire, tribal rituals from the Midnight Archipelago and even poetry recitals from Cathayan nobles. That is in addition to the festival and spectacle of each of the Thean nations trying to impress each other. Entertainers are always in need in a court, and it is often a good way to get close to a Ruler. If the Ruler is sufficiently impressed, he may adopt certain entertainers as companions and confidants for a while. While they are pleasing the Ruler, such entertainers can acquire favours beyond their wildest dreams. However, they had better remember their place. Those who forget they are simply 'flavour of the month' and not nobles of the court can make enemies quickly. However, those who know to leave before things turn sour can do very well for themselves indeed.

This goes for pretty much anyone at court. When a courtier sees an opportunity he must be able to capitalise on it. If he fails to, such opportunities may not return. The trick is to impress the Ruler with your talent, without looking better than the lord. In other words, if you can beat everyone else at the game, make sure you don't beat the King. Plenty of courtiers, who were the toast of the court one day, have found themselves burnt at the stake the next. So tread carefully. While court is full of wonders, and the potential for raw power is almost tangible, death and poverty can also lie in wait just as easily.

The Courts across Théah

Avalon

The only formal court in Avalon is that of Elaine's. The courts of King James in the highlands and the O'Bannon in Inishmore are very informal and sparse. Elaine rules through her Parlement, so few decisions of government are made in her court. Instead it is a place of music and art, and stories of Glamour and adventure. Since her fall and illness a cloud

has fallen over the colour and elegance of her court. Many of her greatest knights are no longer present, they roam the country looking to create legends and stories they can use to bring the light of Elaine back to her court.

Parlement itself is a strange environment, based on traditions like the Courts of former Kings but proud of its modernity. The House of the Lords is open to any landed gentry of the isles, or those appointed by the monarch to the chamber. The appointed positions include representatives of the Church, the law courts and also the merchants through the various Livery Companies of Luthon. Unlike in a Court where you plea your case to a single person, most matters that are brought to Parlement have been debated in private meetings or socialising in the Long Gallery well before anyone discusses or votes on them. A very complex network of favours and influences pervade the corridors of power that make it difficult for those outside the system to enact their own plans.

Castille

The court in Castille is overshadowed at all times by the Vaticine church. Even after Sandoval acquires the Rex Castillium, the presence of the church is a powerful force. Castillian courtly ritual is bound by much tradition and formality as, to many in the priesthood, ritual is everything. While this weighs down the very air of the court with seriousness and propriety, it also lends an aura of authority and respect. Many who visit the court are surprised by this, being used to the passion and temperament of the Castillian people. It seems the usual Castillian passions burn with an inner fire when matters of church and state come to the fore. Outside the capital in the leading Ranchos the courts are more vibrant affairs. However they still take the business of government seriously and often debate issues like opposing thunderstorms.

In Castille the Church itself as has its own model of a court in the form of the Concilio de Razon. This body of leading Church officials is designed to advise the King, although up until recently it basically ran the nation over the muted protestations of the young Sandoval. A supplicant with influence to bring a matter before the Consilio and gain their support would find themselves in a strong position when it

was taken to the King himself, perhaps bypassing the waiting that many would have to do to hear their case being brought before the Court.

Eisen

The central court of Eisen is no more. In its past days it was a marvel of precision government. Everything had a place and courtly functions ran like clockwork. While the centre may be gone, it still serves as the model for the Iron Princes. Each of the courts of the Eisenfaust are courts in their own right. However, only Pösen, Sieger and Hainzl manage much of a model of good government and ordered courtly routine. Fischler is well organised but hamstrung by innumerable superstitions and odd rituals, which are all taken very seriously. In Freiburg, Trague simply did not hold court because he did not care, but Frau Probst has always done what she can. Wische is an empty place, with few left alive or sane to allow a court to function or even necessitate government. Heilgrund tries to ape the old ways of the Emperor's court as heir to that position. However they simply follow the empty rituals with no understanding that those days have past. With the rise of the Schattensoldat, the court of Heilgrund has become more a dark and dangerous place to be.



Montaigne

There never has and never will be a greater court than Montaigne. Even in the darkest days of the revolution the court still flew with rumour and gossip, and men and women could live or die on the words of courtiers. The days of l'Empereur filled the court with decadence and grandeur, and much of that still remains. However in Montegue's court the tones are muted as his people need to be fed. Even so, the Montaigne court is still a grand and decadent place. Power blocks of nobles seek every opportunity to return to the glory days or rebuild their power by destroying the reputations of their enemies. The court of Montaigne is the envy of the world, for its art, music and politics, and so to retain respect among nations they cannot let such things slide.

Unwilling to throw away all of the reforms of the revolution, Montegue has retained the Parlement of the People set up by the Jacob's Society. However, it is no longer the ultimate power in the nation and now includes the returned power bloc of nobles that had been suppressed during the murderous time of the Frenzy. The house can basically be divided into two main camps, those that favour the monarchy and those that still cling to the strongest ideals of the republican movement. Although this argument has lost some of its relevance in the new restored monarchy, it has lost little of its passion and energy.

Ussura

Perhaps the coldest and least entertaining court is that of Ussura. The court of the Gaius is a place for business, not entertainment. There is very little pomp and ceremony, with very few courtiers, as Ussurans cannot abide useless people. That is not to say the court doesn't have its share of entertainments and pageantry. However under the current Gaius the entertainments have become a little crueller than past times. Each of the other Knias also holds their own courts when they are in their homelands and not staying in Pavtlow. The most important of these is probably Rurik, which is also one of the most traditional to the extent of being archaic. The court of

Somojez is rarely opened as the Knias of that kingdom seems unwilling to engage with the nobility or the people on a regular basis. The courts of Veche and Molhyna have descended into fear and barely function, while Knias Tamara of Gallenia prefers an informal meeting of the important members of her lands to discuss matters of state.

Vendel

The Vendel court is really the League, as such it has its own way of doing things. There is no Ruler of the Vendel court, meaning that power comes in the form of alliances and bargains rather than Kingly favour. The Vendel keep their entertainments and ceremony outside their 'court' meaning the League time is exclusively for business. However, to the

Vendel, this is the entertainment they most enjoy.

Vesten

The Vesten court may be powerless, but it remains strong to this day. It is now almost the complete opposite to the Vendel League. They have little policy to make, so their court is often exclusively used for entertainment. This entertainment and grandeur serves to appease the deflated ego of the Jarls, that they are still masters of their own destiny and Kings of the land. The Jarls especially enjoy gathering to tell stories over many, many pints of strong Vesten ale. Local matters are left for local lords, so rarely does the business of state interfere with a night's drinking. The only matter of state the lords really discuss is how to rid themselves of the Vendel. The ale provides many worthy plans, but also ensures they are forgotten by the morning.

Vodacce

While there is no central court in Vodacce, each Prince holds court in their own way. The decadence of the Vodacce courts is renowned throughout Théah, like an underground party everyone wants to get invited to. There are rumours about a few additional posts in the court of the Vodacce, such as 'Court Assassin'. However few people have been able to report evidence of this, or, more likely, lived to deliver it. Like any court, each of the Princes of Vodacce has their own style. Falisci courts resemble huge parties, while the Bernoulli hold more sombre and religious gatherings. Villanova changes his style on a whim to keep everyone on their toes. The death of Merchant Prince Lucani threw the careful social circles of Vodacce into chaos, but things have settled back down again although the power balances and therefore attendances of the various courts have notably changed. While Modavi came out of his little coup with more land and resources, few tend to favour his court as even in a land of intrigue few now trust the young Prince.

The Crescent Empire

The Crescents have no less diversity than Théah, but like Théah it has many similarities as well. Crescent court is at once both more advanced and far more decadent than western culture. Crescent nobles enjoy making their courts places of learning as well as entertainment. They are often as impressed by a mathematician as they would a group of danc-

ing girls. This means court is a place of scientists and invention as well as splendour. However, the tastes of the Crescents can be darker than those of puritan Théah, and they delight in slave dancers and entertainments that would shock most Theans. While this all applies mainly to the courts of Iskander and the main cities, the tribal lands are very similar. The entertainments on the plains may be less grand but the attitude and tradition is the same. The Crescents know the value of doing things properly, whether in a palace or a tent, and accept no less respect or formality. One special difference with the Crescents is the segregation of the sexes, ensuring women have little access to statecraft. However the women have their own courts that men cannot intrude on. Also, the ladies of the Harem have more of the Ruler's 'ear' than any courtier could hope for.

Cathay

The most refined courts in the world are in Cathay. Like the Crescent Empire, science is regarded very highly, but unlike the Empire 'inappropriate' entertainment is unheard of. This is not to say the Cathayans are prudes, they just do not see court as the place for certain forms of entertainment. More decadent or sexual pleasures remain behind closed doors, and away from the business of government. Statecraft in Cathay is the centre of a complex web of tradition and formality. Many people find Cathayan courts stifling in the extreme, as there is a tradition for seemingly every action. Not even the Empress can escape the power of the old ways, and is bound by them as much as any of the supplicants. While it is rare, people have been executed for the offence they gave with the wrong gesture at the wrong time in a Cathay court. Getting close to the leaders of Cathay is far harder than anywhere else. Many layers of bureaucracy and tradition stand between you and the ear of the powerful. However, there are loop holes, and secret alliances that can allow you to skirt these barriers. However, most outsiders have little chance of insinuating themselves into the inner circles of the court.

Noble Titles in Théah

It is not enough for the nobles of Théah to just divide themselves from the commoners. Throughout the centuries it has been equally important among them to decide who is the

highest and lowest within their own ranks. This has led to a varied selection of titles that are based primarily on the amount of land the noble is responsible for. While the names change a little, most countries in Théah use pretty much the same system to divide their nobility. However, in addition to their noble title, each Lord or Lady may also claim a number of additional titles from their duties at court and other responsibilities. In general, the longer a noble can make their official title, the more important they are. It is unlikely that player characters will ascend to the highest ranks of the nobility, so this information is mainly for the GM to use for their NPCs. Many liberties have been taken with the historical detail of the real world, but we shouldn't have to point out that Théah is not the real world and different rules apply. It is also beyond the scope of this article to go into the noble titles of Cathay and the Crescent Empire. They have different systems, but more information can be found in their respective sourcebooks.

Avalon

The Avalon system is mostly derived from the Montaigne, but as the Montaigne have added many additional complexities, people often look to the more comprehensible Avalon model.

The head of state is the King or Queen, their children being Princes and Princesses. They are referred to as 'Your Majesty' or 'Your Highness', and technically control the entire country. Many children of nobility are awarded the title just below that of their parents as an honorary position until they inherit. Duke or Duchess is the next tier, and are referred to as 'Your Grace'. They control an area equal in size to a county. A Marquess and his wife the Marchioness are the next step down. They are referred to as 'Most Honourable' and control the smaller shires. Below them is the Earl and his wife the Countess, they control an area similar in size to a city and its immediate environs. The Viscount and Vicountess are next and rule a city-sized area. Both Earls and Vicounts are referred to as 'Right Honourable'. The last layer of Lordship is that of Baron and Baroness. They have only a castle or small city under their control. Below those ranks are the Baronets who are 'noble knights' and like Knights (and Ladies) are nobility but not lords. Only Lords can sit in council with a King or Queen, but a

noble can own land. Baronets and Knights are referred to only as 'Sir'.

In some cases titles can be shared if there is enough land to go around. For instance, a county is rather big, so for the county of Camlann there may be one Duke of Camlann, but several Earls of Camlann, and a few more Vicounts of Camlann. Only the Duke can refer to himself as 'Camlann' as there is only one Duke for each county. In the case of children given honorary titles, they may not have a specific area. The children of the Duke of Camlann will be Marquesses, but not necessarily Marquesses of Camlann.

Castille

In Castille all the nobles are technically of the same rank. They are all Dons, or Don^a if female, which is the title given to all landowners. However, the nobles were not content with that and have adopted additional titles to differentiate. They still refer to themselves as 'Don Alfonso' for instance but often add a more Avalon style title so everyone knows how much land they control, such as 'Don Alfonso, Duque del Aldana'. Adding the title is optional and only used for formal occasion or when you want to point out how much land you control. The interesting difference is that the land you claim need not be land you have direct responsibility over. Nobles actually have roughly the same amount of land area under their direct control. So they claim domain over that of their children's land as well. So our Don Alfonso might not run a larger area than another Don, but he claims Duque as a title because his many children also have land, which as head of the family is his to command as well. So noble title becomes not only a measure of power, but of how high you stand in your own family as well.

The additional Castillian titles are much the same as that of Avalon, so it is only necessary to provide the Castillian translations here:

Duke – Duque / Duquesa
Marquess – Marqués / Marquesa
Earl/Count – Conde / Condesa
Viscount – Vizconde / Vizcondesa
Baron – Barón / Baronesa
Baronet / Knight - Señor / Señora

Eisen

Like everything else, the Eisen like to keep their noble titles simple. There was once an Emperor who ruled with the help of his Eisenfaust. The Eisenfaust are the equivalent of Dukes, but within their own areas have almost the power of Kings.

However, this is still a large area for one person to manage, so there are two other Eisen titles in popular use. The 'Graf' is equivalent to an Earl and rules an area about the size of a county. How many Grafs serve a particular Eisenfaust is entirely up to the Eisenfaust, but most have between two to five. Serving the Grafs are the Vizegrafs. This title was originally given to administrative assistants and deputies of the Graf. However, now the term generally applies to the ruler of any city or town within a Graf's province. A Vizegraf is also used to apply to the heir of a Graf, should the title be hereditary. While not many remain, the Eisen have the equivalent of a Baron called a Freiharr. However, there are very few of these left after the war, or enough land to warrant a title below Vizegraf. So Freiarr has mostly become a title of respect used for 'a noble gentleman'.

Montaigne

As noted above, what is perceived as the Avalon system actually comes originally from the Montaigne. Since the founding of the country there has been an official list of which areas granted title and how many such titles could exist. This could be rather limiting if you wanted a title of your own. So the Montaigne began taking existing titles, and adding another title to explain how they are 'not that Duke but another one'. As long as the additional title didn't place them above the original title bearer, no one seemed to mind, as that meant everyone's children could have titles of their own. This has meant Montaigne titles can be quite bewildering, with all the sub-sets in existence many have wondered if it is possible for every Montaigne citizen of any birth to claim a title, despite the limit of the original list!

The basic Montaigne titles are similar to the Avalon, and they are named below. Technically the head of state in Montaigne is the King or Queen, called the Rei or Reine in native Montaigne. However Léon's arrogance led him to decide to call himself l'Empereur making his wife the Imperatrice.

Duke – Duc / Duchesse, who rules a Duché
Marquess – Marquis / Marquesse, who rules a Marquisat
Earl/Count – Comte / Comtesse, who rules a Comté
Viscount – Vicomte / Vicomtesse, who rules a Vicomté
Baron – Baron / Baronesse, who rules a Baronnie

These titles as mentioned above are divided into a selection of different groups. Not every title is present in every group, it depends who wants what, and what they can safely claim.

Noblesse d'épée (nobility of the sword)

Which is also called noblesse de race or noblesse ancienne. These are the much-respected original holders of the title, old nobility who have 'fought for Montaigne'.

Noblesse de chancellerie (chancellor nobility)

These nobles ascend their position by serving in high office in the court. While this group contains aged families who have served for generations, it also contains clever academics who were given a title. This was usually for no better reason than that their new promotion placed them near the King who could only associate with nobility. So opinion is divided about the general nobility of this class.

Noblesse de lettres

These people are usually friends of the King, granted a "lettres patentes" which basically says 'I can't think of a good reason to ennoble you, but you are a good friend of mine so have a title'. This is one of the least respected areas of nobility, but as they have the ear of the King it is best to play nicely with them. In some cases these "lettres patentes" were considered a source of revenue and granted by some Kings to anyone who could pay.

Noblesse de robe (nobility of the gown)

A noble who is granted his title due to service in an official charge such as magistrate comes under this title. This kind of service is not especially grand so produces Barons rather than Dukes. It is used as a reward to keep the lawmakers on the side of the King. Only the King can make law, but the magistrates are there to interpret and enforce it, so they need a potential reward for loyal service to keep them in line.

Noblesse de cloche (nobility of the "bell")

This is one of the lowest forms of nobility and is considered by some to verge on peasantry. It covers those nobles granted title for service as leaders of towns and cities as Mayor or the like. Such positions are often held by the middle classes or well-respected commoners.

Noblesse militaire (military nobility)

A low but very respected class of nobility, this class refers to those who gain title from war and military operations. General Montague belongs to this class, and while it often contains lowborn nobles, they are all people who have shed blood or put their life on the line for Montaigne. As such their actions are a source of national pride and they are granted respect accordingly.

Noblesse chevalresque (knightly nobility)

This very old group contains anyone who can trace their nobility back to the founding of Montaigne. There are very few nobles of this group left, but they are among the most powerful families in the country.

Noblesse d'extraction

This is an additional title that anyone who has been granted nobility for at least four generations can claim. However, very few do as to do so shows you can't show off anything more impressive. Many of the Noblesse de Cloche change to this title when they can, but few others do.

Montaigne nobles have spent many years trying to make their titles more complicated. This has led to many rights dependant on rank, often of a petty nature. For instance, only Dukes could enter royal residences in a carriage and only a Duchesses could sit on a stool with the queen. These rights may seem petty, but any weapon and privilege in Montaigne can be used to devastating effect in the right hands. All such priviliages are designed to allow the noble to show off just a little more than his peers.

In addition to the titles of the nobility, there are plenty of orders and other cliques that the nobles are party to. The *Cour des Pair* (Court of Peers) is a gathering of the heads of the six most important families. Who these people are is arranged by unspoken agreement, and they have the right to sit

nearest the King or see him, at his convenience, at any time.

There are times in Montaigne's history when the Cour des Pairs has run the country because of a weak King. More open to the rest of the nobles are the knightly orders. These orders are little more than gentleman's clubs, but a few of the older ones have grown up from distinguished battlefield actions. However, few orders are made up of nobles with any battlefield experience, and a good few have never even held a sword before. In general, membership in such an order grants no more than a few contacts, and members agree to serve and protect one another. In practice, few members actually look out for each other that much, but there are stories of the orders forming terrible secret conspiracies.

After the revolution the nobility of Montaigne had rather a substantial reorganisation. However the system itself didn't change. Plenty of revolutionaries promoted themselves to ancient titles and many older nobles managed to escape. Before the restoration there was a plan to create a new group of nobility especially for those who had earned their title for actions in the revolution. However it would have created a dangerous precedent, as it would suggest that the old system was still appropriate, and that the new nobles were part of the old order. It was also proposed that all noble titles be removed and reallocated. However, if the old nobles were no longer nobles they couldn't be tried and executed anymore, their 'sin' having been washed away. Luckily, the restoration made these vexing questions no longer necessary to the Montaigne and the old system with whoever survived and a few new faces rose up again just as before.

Ussura

Simplest of all noble systems is that of Ussura, and the system of the Gaius and the Boyars is well documented. However the Ussurans do have one additional title, that of Dvoryan. This title is quite simply anyone who qualifies as a noble but has no land or direct responsibility. It is usually granted to the children of the Boyars, or granted as a mark of respect to those Boyars who retire and pass their power onto their children.

Vendel / Vesten

One thing the Vesten and Vendel agree on is keeping their society simple and efficient. The Vesten system is based on

hereditary and might makes right. All nobles with direct responsibility hold the title of Jarl. They serve their clans and families in the name of the High King, should he return to take the throne. Nobles without direct responsibility, such as the children or heirs of the Jarls are referred to as 'Huskarlar' and are expected to serve their Jarl as bodyguards to prove their worth and strength as potential leaders. A third title that is rarely used is that of 'Hersar' which refers to any other noble. It is often used as an insult as it implies the noble has birth, but has not or cannot prove himself worthy of becoming a Jarl.

The noble titles in other countries are based on who runs what areas of land. As the Vendel leave the running of the islands outside Kirk to the Vesten, they have no need for such titles. However, they have noticed that someone needs to be in charge of the day-to-day organisation of the country. So each city has a Mayor and all the towns and villages report to a 'Watchman' who governs that area. Both positions are simply civil administrators, law and order is left to the courts and the city watch. The Vesten areas are left to their own devices, and if trouble starts brewing the Vendel send in the Eisen Mercenaries.

Vendel nobility is simple; the ones with the most money are at the top. Birth does not make the slightest difference to the Vendel, if you can prove yourself in business; you are part of the club. The Vendel have no desire to ape Vesten nobility or create vulgar titles based purely on how much money you have. So the only titles they have are that of holding a Chair or a Seat in the Vendel league. They reason that anyone who knows business will be able to tell who is better than who, or they are not very good businessmen. So noble titles become unnecessary to the Vendel. This may make the Vendel seem egalitarian, but in fact their society is just as full of dangerous politics. In fact their world is harsher than most as the real power brokers are not apparent until you are in the lion's den.

Vodacce

There is only one power in Vodacce, the Princes. However, like the Eisenfaust, they too have a need to divide their kingdoms so they can rule effectively. The Princes, which in native Vodacce would be Principe or should a lady ever ascend to the title, Principessa, rule their realms like Kings, and have always been the highest nobles in the country. They are referred to as 'Your Excellency' and their children are granted the title of Don or Donna.



Like many other nations the Vodacce have adopted a version of the Avalon model, but they have changed its meanings to a vast degree. Like the titles of other countries, lesser nobles are granted dominion over a part of the Prince's estate. However in Vodacce they do not mark this estate in land so often as in responsibility. Many of the lesser nobles do own and run land for their lord, but rarely does that land equate in size to that of their equivalent in other countries. In true Vodacce style, few nobles admit to their title. They are simply noble and that along grants respect. What they actually do for their lord is no one else's business.

The first and highest title is that of Duke (Duca / Duchessa) he is responsible for the military might of a Prince. They can but are not expected to lead troops into battle, but are more concerned with ensuring that the Prince has an effective and well trained army at his disposal, placed in strategic positions across the country.

The title of Marquess (Marchese / Marchesa) originally applied to 'the one charged with guarding the marches or borders'. Now that meaning is taken less literally and applies to the Prince's spymaster. These shadowy figures are rarely seen, but are feared almost as much as their Prince. Many of the 'Lord's Hands' report first to these nobles. Needless to say, the Marquess' fate with wife has an important part to play in her husband's work. However there are rumours that

the wife rather than the husband has occupied this position on the occasion.

Possibly the oddest title in Vodacce is that of Count (Conte / Contessa). These nobles are given domain over a county on the mainland, but not by the Prince. These titles were given out to the most loyal Vaticine families by the Heirophant hundreds of years ago and remain hereditary titles. If a family dies out completely, which is a great rarity, the Heirophant decides on another family to replace them. Each Count is loyal to the Prince who controls his land, but not actually a vassal. His responsibility is to the people in his charge, and as such the Counts have protected their people from the ravages of Princely wars for centuries. However they all owe some form of fealty to their Prince, which is unavoidable. So each Prince sends a Viscount (Visconte / Viscontessa) to watch over each Count who rules in their domain. The Viscount is effectively a Lord's Hand with extra powers and a far more open portfolio. While they cannot make important decisions themselves, they can remind a count if any of their actions would not be in the Princes best interest. The Prince cannot remove a count he does not like, but he can see to it the Count is replaced by his heirs when he is found mysteriously deceased one day. With the recent fall of the Caligari and the expansion of the Mondavi, many Counts found themselves working under different masters. The Princes cannot replace them, but any Count who is going to remain alive knows not to cross their new Prince. Even so, politics and loyalties on the mainland are now a hotbed of deceit as some Counts sell out their old masters to gain favour, and others spy on their new lords.

Baron (Barone / Baronessa) is the lowest form of landed noble. They serve the Counts, running smaller domains. However, they are appointed by the Princes, even though they are directly responsible to the Counts. In the recent shifting of borders, many Barons found themselves replaced, but not as many as you might think. Those who were keen to keep their titles became a useful form of bribe revenue for their new Prince.

In the cites of the mainland, the title of Patrician (Patrizio) remains as a holdover from the days of the Numan Empire. A Patrician is essentially a Mayor who is appointed by the

Prince of the region. Each of the islands has a Patrician as well, who runs the day-to-day affairs of the island on behalf of the Prince. They are extremely powerful figures, as they have the confidence of their Prince as well as power over their island home. Most often a Patrician has distinguished himself by working as a Lord's Hand (the *Cavaliere del Mano*) for some time, making them capable and dangerous men in their own right. The Patrician the Prince chooses to manage his island is usually the best of these spies and assassins, and not a man to be crossed.

You are What You Wear

One thing common to all the courts is fashion. There are no words to express how important this is for any courtier, be they male or female. While there is not enough space here to go into the subject in full detail this article is designed to give you a few hints and tips about your character's couture. If you wish to discover more about Renaissance fashion there are plenty of books and information on the web. So take this as a rough overview to begin with and move on from there.

Originally, fashion first began with the rise of the merchant classes. The nouveau riche merchants of the new 'middle class' wanted to ape the nobility in any way they could, using their money to prove their equality. The best way to do that was to wear the same things the nobility wore. When the nobility saw they were being copied, they bought new clothes, so the merchants did the same and so it continues today. Often the merchants could afford more than the nobles, so the fashion couldn't change too much or other nobles might be left behind!

Another reason for fashion in court is to keep out the pretenders. Clothes are expensive, especially rich clothing. Embroidery and lace are all made by hand in Théah and take many hours to produce. The rich noticed that if they kept changing their clothes, only other rich people could afford to do the same. If this drove out those who couldn't follow the fashion, then they were simply weeding out the lower classes.

Most fashions follow the Ruler of the court. What they decide to wear sets the trend. Usually this is driven upon gender lines, the ladies wish to copy the Queen, and the gentlemen look to the King. However a particularly stylish individual can set the trend themselves. Maybe they dress the Ruler themselves or they just always look good. Crown princes and princesses are a favourite as this sort of fashion leader. They usually have a younger style to their dress, but are high enough up the social scale not to upset the Ruler by setting the trend.

So where do you go to get outfitted for court, and how much does it cost? Sadly in Théah there are no 'off the peg' clothing stores. Everything is hand made and tailored to fit. What is helpful though is that the undergarments are usually the same and, to Thean eyes anyway, mass-produced. Under shirts are made in plentiful supply and usually fit most people in categories of small medium or large. Men and women often wear similar undershirts, with the ladies adding an underskirt and a corset. This means that the odours and dirt of the day are absorbed by the undergarments, which are changed, but the over clothes can be worn day in day out. So a gentleman might have a travelling jacket and trousers, and a formal jacket and trousers, but he would carry several shirts. While ladies clothing can be more complicated, it follows the same lines, so the lady will only need to carry one or two dresses on her travels.

For the noble in town it is a different matter. One set of nice clothes will just not do, but they have the time and money to visit the tailor. Adventurers are not often in one place long enough to have clothes made and fitted for them. They can usually visit a tailor and pick up a shirt or two, and have the sword holes in their jacket stitched up, but not to stay for a fitting or wait a month for the result. So many tailors can re-fit a jacket or dress to follow the latest fashions. A little more lace round the collar, a sash around the waist and a new lining can adapt most garments to the latest fashion. This takes a lot less time, and is the best way to fit an adventurer for court. However the more sharp eyed nobles can spot an adapted garment at several feet and will gossip quietly about it with disdain.

If you have the time to have proper courtly clothes made,

their appeal can add to your standing at court. Great tailors and seamstresses are very sought after and jealously guarded by the nobility. In general it costs a lot more money to hire a more talented tailor, but such expense grants the clothing an appearance bonus. This can range from +1 to +3 and grants a bonus to all social rolls at court, the same way as social reputation dice. Unfortunately, all the obvious garments must be of the same quality too or the lowest bonus applies. So a lady in a +2 dress need not worry about the quality of her underwear, but a Gentleman with a +3 coat will get no reaction if he is wearing his travelling trousers. Also, this bonus only applies to one social occasion, as the clothing is remembered, and it would be gauche to be seen in it twice. Also, you suffer a penalty equal to the previous bonus if you turn up to the next occasion in anything that does not yield a bonus. Not being able to maintain fashion is nearly as bad as not managing it at all.

To understand the current fashion and allow herself to dress properly and appropriately, the courtier must roll Panache and Fashion. The difficulty is usually 15, but being out of court, foreign or lower class can make it harder. If they manage to dress appropriately each courtier can make a second Panache and Fashion roll with a bonus for finer clothes as above and for the 'Appearance' advantage, to see how good they look. Note it down for the duration of the function, and they gain +1 reputation dice in any roll against someone less well dressed. This even includes swordplay at court should you be so vulgar as clothes are seen to 'make the man'.

However, it doesn't include rolls you make alone, such as lock-picking or shooting targets as there is no opponent to impress. The amount of difference between the rolls is unimportant. For example, Henri rolls 17 and Jacques rolls 35 for one function. Jacques gets the bonus as he is obviously better dressed, but no one is stunned at the difference between the two. If you roll high, you will simply be able to lord it over more people. If you are the best dressed in the room you gain a +2 reputation dice bonus, but if the Ruler is present, or his wife, you may be in more trouble than that extra dice is worth. Players may wish to use this system out of court to see who is the best dressed, however the extra dice bonuses only apply at courtly, or at least social, functions.

Below are the costs for some clothing in Théah. They are de-

signed as a general description rather than a definitive one. Fashion through the ages is a far larger topic than can be covered here. However, this should give you the basic feel for what your characters are wearing. The costs for items that grant appearance bonuses are listed as well. Unfortunately the masters of the craft are often jealously guarded, and players may have to work hard for a patron to be allowed to use their tailor. Many patrons will be happier for you to marry their daughter than borrow their tailor! However the GM may allow the players to come across an undiscovered talent, who will be much cheaper. Introducing the new seamstress or tailor to court could be a campaign in itself. The established masters of the craft never take kindly to an interloper, and the people who rely on their skill are powerful indeed.

Second to the cost of clothing is the time needed to create them. In the tables below the cost is noted in guilders and followed by the amount of days it will take to create it. There are more items and accessories listed in the Player's Guide

Levels of Expense

Travelling – Plain and hard wearing. They are the standard most adventurers will want as they last.

Standard – Fit to be 'Sunday best'. It isn't high fashion, but is worn for show rather than to work in like travelling clothes.

Cheap fabrics are used, but more colours and occasionally lace are used. This is the standard 'formal' apparel for adventurers, but not good enough to pass as a noble.

Fine – This is the minimum level of attire you can wear at court. Usually expensive fabrics are used, but they go easy on the heavily fashionable elements. This means it can often be worn regardless of current fashion.

Elegant – So well made as to grant a +1 appearance bonus

Inspiring – So well made as to grant a +2 appearance bonus

Exquisite – So well made as to grant a +3 appearance bonus

on page 166. If the buyer wants the item quickly they can pay half as much again to have it finished in two thirds of the time it normally takes. This is the extra cost required to get the tailor to put aside all other work and prioritise a particular client. If two nobles are using the same tailor and both need their garments quickly the gleeful tailor may institute a bidding war. Some ladies may choose to wear gentleman's fashions. In this case they simply use the gentleman's table. With everything tailor made, it is rare that a lady swordsman's choice of apparel will cause any problems. The notes on clothing are not exact, as each culture in Théah has a slightly different and distinctive clothing style. However, while a jacket is very different in Montaigne and Avalon, both countries have jackets and their costs are comparable.

Gentleman's Garments

Shirt & Underwear – Men's underwear is quite simple, but with the shirt likely to be on show their underwear can be quite elaborate. On their bottom half, men wore a braies or chausses, both a kind of tied-on pair of hose.

Trousers – This item is pretty standard, and is more like a pair of leggings compared to its modern counterpart. The trousers are usually tucked into boots in most fashions, except in court when wearing shoes. Some gentlemen such as Highlanders and Vesten wear kilts. In such a case use the entry for Skirt under ladies fashion. It may be different, but the costs and times are the same.

Jacket – This is a short jacket as favoured mainly in Vodacce. It is worn over a shirt, but some men go without a jacket in hot weather, or when duelling.

Coat – Much like a jacket, the coat is simply a little longer as favoured in Avalon and Montaigne.

Gentleman Clothing Table

Garment	Travelling	Standard	Fine	Elegant	Inspiring	Exquisite
Shirt & Underwear	1.5g / 3	1g / 2	2g / 4	5g / 6	10g / 12	20g / 18
Trousers	2.5g / 5	1g / 4	2g / 6	15g / 8	20g / 16	25g / 24
Jacket	2g / 8	2g / 7	3g / 9	10g / 11	15g / 22	20g / 33
Coat	2.5g / 10	2.5g / 9	3.5g / 11	20g / 13	35g / 26	50g / 39
Cloak	3g / 4	1g / 3	5g / 5	10g / 7	15g / 14	20g / 21
Hat	1g / 5	1g / 4	3g / 5	8g / 7	12g / 14	18g / 21
Boots/Shoes	3g / 4	1g / 3	2g / 5	5g / 7	10g / 14	15g / 21

Numbers refer to cost in Guilders / number of days to make item

Ladies Clothing Table

Garment	Travelling	Standard	Fine	Elegant	Inspiring	Exquisite
Undershirt / Underskirt	1.5g / 3	1g / 2	2g / 4	5g / 6	10g / 12	20g / 24
Corset	N/A	3g / 7	6g / 10	12g / 12	20g / 20	30g / 30
Top/Skirt	1.5g / 8	3g / 7	5g / 9	15g / 12	30g / 24	40g / 36
Dress	2g / 10	5g / 12	7g / 16	20g / 18	40g / 32	60g / 45

Numbers refer to cost in Guilders / number of days to make item

Cloak – While styles may differ, this item is essentially the same for men and women. More expensive versions use furs and thicker materials. Travelling versions are extremely thick and durable.

Hat – Another unisex and common item. These come in all shapes and styles and are common wear for men and women.

Boots / Shoes – Both these items cost the same usually.

Boots use more leather, but shoes are more formal and usually better made. Men tend to wear boots more often, but many court functions in Montaigne especially require shoes.

Ladies Garments

Undershirt / Underskirt - Ladies underwear in this age is many and varied. However this is assumed to be a simple undershirt and a plain shift. Women may also wear a braies like the men to keep her legs warm. Travelling versions are made of tough cotton, with more expensive ones adding lace edging. Very expensive versions will be made in silks and other fine fabrics. Even if no one is going to see them they are more comfortable, but some risqué fashions call for the underwear to show a little. Some ladies clothes require certain underwear to hold its shape. Hoops and bustles are often worn under a dress to widen the skirt or accentuate the hips depending on the fashion. However, to keep things simple, these items are considered part of the cost of the dress.

Corset – This item of underwear deserves a special mention. While it is usually functional, some ladies can afford to buy extremely expensive versions. The courtesans of Vodacce do not cover their corsets, and the fashion has cropped up in other places from time to time. The better the quality the better the boning and the longer it will last and maintain the figure. More expensive versions also use better padding, making them a lot more comfortable.

Top / Skirt & Dress – The dress has remained unchanged as an item of fashion for many years, even if it has never been quite the same. In some cultures a dress is not one item, but made and worn as a top and a skirt, even though the two often look like one piece. If the dress is made of two pieces but meant to look like one it is still considered a dress. However if only one part needs replacing, then the dress counts as a Top/Skirt. Some fashions call for the top and skirt to look different, but this is usually only in lower class areas as it is cheaper to mix and match.

Boots / Shoes – These are no different to their male equivalent, so use the prices above. In general ladies wear boots to work in and shoes on formal occasions.

If you wish to have an article of clothing altered, it is a lot less expensive. The difference in the cost and the time needed to make the original item and the cost and time needed to create the desired item become the cost and time needed to adjust one to the other. You can only improve an item by one step, otherwise the alteration is too obvious, and the original item must be in a good state.

After several fights, you may insist your characters need to get their clothing fixed. You can assume any damage they receive will have an adverse affect on their clothes. Certainly taking three dramatic wounds will require serious repair. Anyone who is crippled or knocked out should consider investing in new clothes. However, only edged weapons tend to damage clothes. So the noble beaten unconscious by brigands can rest easy knowing he will not usually need a trip to his tailor upon recovery. Most repairs can be done for the cost of half a guilder for each dramatic wound the clothing has taken. The GM has the final say about any clothing that is irreparable.

Swordsman and Socialite

The reputation system in 7th Sea does a good job of showing the level of renown your character has gained for their actions. However, not every character gains reputation in the same way, or becomes well known for the same things. Also, reputation should show only the reputation of a character, not what they are really like. While Villanova may not care that he is known as a villain, plenty of other evil doers masquerade as heroes. Unfortunately your rating as a villain, hero or scoundrel is defined by reputation, which makes little sense if reputation does not define the 'real you'.

So this new system is designed to help reputation make more sense. Rather than rewrite to the system completely, this optional adjustment uses the available rules by adding more detail. You may be happy using the original version, in which case there isn't a problem.

The adjustment presented here is very simple. Instead of having a single reputation, your character now has three. Each of the three reputation scores is used in the same way as before, generating reputation dice to be used in social encounters. As before, you gain 1 reputation dice for each ten points of reputation you have. However, you can only use those dice for the right sort of situation. For instance, dice generated from Martial reputation cannot be used to impress a priest with your piety. The three kinds of reputation are as follows:

Social – This is your reputation in society. It does not suggest you are a nice person, or a villain. It charts how well received you are as a courtier. People of high social reputation have the ears of Rulers and get invited to all the best parties. They are considered polite, well read and witty. Social reputation is gained or lost by duels of wit, not steel. Gaining position and power within the court, or acting on behalf of noble patrons will also raise your social reputation. Social reputation dice are used in social occasions such as balls and parties, or when you are dealing with those of a higher station.

Martial – Each swordsman gains renown for himself. This rating is how well you are known for your mastery of the

Social reputation comes in two forms, and each player must decide which applies to him. High social reputation is built in the court among the gentry. Low social reputation applies among the criminals and the peasantry. Nobles have less respect among the criminal fraternity, and the lower born must work much harder to impress a court. So each character has either high or low social reputation, and in any situation where they are in the arena of the opposite social reputation they must half their rating. So a peasant who has low social reputation at a level of 26 who visits the court, is considered to have a social reputation of 13. For the purposes of adding to subtracting to the rating, you use their higher rating as their reputation hasn't actually changed.

It is up to the player which social reputation he chooses. Some servants may be low born, but become known in courtly circles (High) rather than their own neighbourhoods. A few nobles shun the court and, while still wealthy, gain (Low) reputation among the gamblers and thieves. Whatever reputation the character picks, the rules about halving it in the opposite area always apply. No social circle allows you to play both sides no matter who you are.

It is possible to swap your social reputation over to the other form, and it is just as hard no matter which you chose. The player must publicly side with the opposite arena and make it clear they are part of the other society. This may mean shunning parties or selling out old contacts. Either way, it will invite social death from the society they are leaving as a necessity. If the GM feels the player has successfully proved themselves to their new society by shunning their old one, they may swap to the other version of social reputation. Unfortunately the game effect of swapping social reputation is that their social reputation is halved permanently. Their new peer group has only accepted them not welcomed them, and they have burnt their bridges with their old friends. As this is rather harsh, the GM should forgive any social transgression in the form of social reputation loss when a character is shunning their peer group. The loss of reputation is covered quite adequately by halving it when the change is complete. As there is no initial statistical benefit from changing sides, few characters will want to do it.

blade. Each duel you win or war you survive adds to your martial reputation. A high martial reputation marks you as a swordsman to be feared. Martial reputation dice are used to intimidate other duellists, and also to impress potential patrons who may be looking to hire a swordsman.

Moral – finally this reputation determines how people see

your moral character. Are you known as a villain or a hero? A high moral reputation suggests you keep your promises and your discretion can be assured. Moral reputation dice can be used to impress priests and monks that you are just and noble, or to show the Queen you are a discreet and trustworthy agent.

So when you put this system into action, you keep track of all three reputation ratings separately. A character with the reputations of Social 5, Martial 15, Moral -12 is a reasonably renowned swordsman with the character of a scoundrel. They have 1 Social reputation dice, 2 Martial reputation dice and 2 Moral reputation dice. Glamour sorcerers gain their glamour dice from their reputation. So they are allowed to generate glamour dice equal to all their reputation dice added together. If the above example was a glamour sorcerer he would have 5 glamour dice.

The difficulties of reputation actions remain unchanged, just that the GM decides which of the reputation ratings is appropriate. The effects of reaching certain reputation values such as the acquisition of patrons and enemies are defined using the highest of the three reputation ratings. The sort of patron you attract is therefore dependant on which rating that is. High social reputation characters will attract rich and powerful courtiers, high Martial reputation characters will find a patron in need of a strong swordsman. Finally high Moral reputation characters will find themselves in the service of priests and devout nobles.

Negative Values

Just as before, reputation can reach negative values. Just as before these generate reputation dice, but they are not so useful. Obviously negative values demonstrate a severe lack of reputation in that area. So the dice generated from negative reputation are used to remove unkept dice instead of awarding them as with positive reputation. The only exception to this rule is when a negative reputation might be help-

ful. For instance, Villanova has little chance of impressing a priest with his piety, but convincing a victim he has no problem with torturing him for information should be a very simple affair. Only the GM can decide when negative reputation might yield a positive result. In general you must assume it doesn't help you at all.



Usually the only negative value that can be helpful is the Moral reputation. A negative Martial reputation shows you to be a bumbling idiot with a blade, and a negative social reputation marks you as crude and ill-mannered. A negative moral reputation shows you are regarded as ruthless and evil, which is occasionally helpful when trying to intimidate. As reputation dice relate

to Glamour dice for Glamour sorcerers, the GM may consider dice gained from negative reputation scores to be tainted with unseelie glamour. What that means in game terms can be left to the cruel nature of the individual GM.

If a character has a reputation of zero in a reputation, it just means they have no reputation in that area. Many priests might be able to handle a blade, but will not have a Martial reputation. This just means his skills with a blade haven't been tested or given importance, rather than he is regarded as having no Martial ability. As soon as his reputation drops to -1 however, he has begun to build a bad reputation and will begin to suffer for it.

Awarding Reputation

When you come to award or remove reputation points, the system is almost exactly the same. The only difference is which pool of reputation points is adjusted for any actions the character takes. The tables below show how to award points among the Social, Martial and Moral reputations. The difference here is that you can gain reputation across multiple scores for a single action. For instance, if you win a duel while behaving with great honour and civility you may gain both Martial and Moral reputation. In the same way you can lose reputation from multiple score. In other circumstances

you might gain and lose reputation across the board. For instance, if you win a duel but do so by with brutality and cruelty you might gain Martial reputation but lose Social reputation. You have proved yourself to be dangerous, but also crude and dishonourable.

The original reputation system is a little cagy in some places about the exact amount of reputation awards that the GM should bestow. In general, one point should be the standard award. Two or even three point awards should be reserved for especially noble actions. However it is really up to the GM and he can award five or even ten points in a single go if he desires. It all depends how quickly he wants the characters to rise or fall. High awards can also be offered for deeds that aren't that great, but get a lot of attention. It may not be much of a deed to stop a lady falling into a puddle as she steps from a coach. However, if the lady is a princess you may well get reputation for it. Remember, reputation is for great deeds, but also for noticeable ones.

The GM's guide has a short guide on awarding reputation (p187-189). To help you decide on which reputation to award or remove points to, here are those categories revisited:

Gains

Battles - When using the mass combat rules (GM's guide p176) the reputation awards are pretty clear. They should usually apply to Martial reputation. However each 'Heroic Opportunity' managed well and with honour could also yield Moral reputation as well.

Craftsmanship - The rules for creating items of quality still work as they are in the GM's guide. The award should go to Social reputation as they prove you to be talented and useful. If the item is a weapon it is possible the GM may award Martial reputation instead.

Chivalrous Acts - These acts can gain the character reputation in all three areas. Usually Moral reputation is the most likely. However Social reputation can be gained if the action involved someone of high status, and martial reputation can apply as well if swordplay is involved.

Marriage - As described in the book the bride and groom earn each other's reputation rank in points. These points should all be added to Social reputation.

Romance - Most of the points awarded for romance will be Social. However a chaste and virtuous affair can often earn Moral reputation as well.

Keeping your word - Without doubt, Moral reputation applies in this instance. However, some bonus Social reputation points can be awarded if the parties involved are of sufficient status. Those who keep the confidences of a King are noted indeed.

Skill success and performance - Generally this will depend on the skills used. Obviously, uses of Martial Skills will learn Martial reputation. Anything else will earn the character Social reputation.

Vendetta - The award here will depend very much on how the vendetta was dealt with. Finding and facing your enemy with honour can earn reputation in all the values. However, if (for instance) you get others to actually finish him off, you won't gain any Martial reputation. If the Vendetta was somehow dishonourable or unfair you may end up losing Moral reputation. Villanova has made a habit of this.

Losses

Breaking a vow - Usually such actions lose Moral reputation. If the other parties are noble there will be a Social loss as well. If breaking the vow involved backing out of a fight, Martial reputation could be lost too.

Breaking things - The reputation loss here is usually Social, you clumsy oaf. However, should you prove clumsy while fighting you could lose Martial reputation. If the objects are holy or sacred in some way you could drop a few Moral reputation points. So be very careful when fighting your enemies in a cluttered church.

Cowardice - 7th Sea is a game of heroes, so cowardice is treated harshly. Usually the loss will be Martial reputation, but circumstances may also force a loss of Social and Moral reputation. If the display of cowardice is particularly public,

or with a noble, then Social reputation will suffer. If the character should have acted to save others, such as not raising a hand as children are abducted, then his Moral reputation will suffer.

Romance - Just as above, Social reputation is the first to go in a romance. Getting dumped is not a good way to impress people. However, beating a woman or anyone weaker than yourself will lose you Martial reputation for such bullying. If you behave especially badly, such as cheating on your partner or abusing them, then Moral reputation will drop as well.

Unchivalrous acts - As above with chivalrous acts, the same applies. Reputation can be lost in all three areas, but mostly in Social and Moral. It all depends on what you do, who you do it with and how bad it is.

What must always be remembered with reputation is that it only really applies when it is observed by others. If you murder someone in cold blood but there are no witnesses, you shouldn't really lose reputation for it. After all, who is going to know? The same applies if you crush an opponent with your witty repartee and no one hears you. You won't gain anything for your actions. Having said that, remember that you need only one person to know what you are doing to lose or gain reputation. Anyone who sees what you have done may talk and gossip about it. Remember at all times that reputation is awarded for what you are seen to do, and not what you are really like.

However, 7th Sea is a game of heroes, and acts of evil stain the soul. So you may take away especially Moral reputation if characters do evil acts, even if no one notices. Obviously the reduction of reputation wouldn't be as much as if the act had been witnessed. However, terrible actions leave something with the character, making people distrust and shy away from them, even if they aren't sure why. The same can be true for action of great worth and charity. However it is far easier to fall than rise up and GMs should be far happier to remove reputation than award it.

Characters may wish to keep track of the highest and the lowest their reputation scores have reached, as it can have a bearing on how people see them. If a knight has a reputation

of 30, he will not be seen as particularly special if he has previously had a reputation of 60. Anything he does will still be seen as just catching up with his previous self, and therefore not as impressive. This counts for Villains trying to intimidate people as well. Villanova with only one eye is still very dangerous, but having been bested by two women makes him a little less scary. So to represent this you must keep track of the highest and lowest scores you ever achieve. If the current score is the highest rating you have ever had you can round up when you divide the reputation by ten to see how many reputation dice the score yields. However, if the score is lower than your best score, you round down. So for example, if Axel has a Martial reputation of 46 (his highest ever) he has 5 reputation dice. But if he loses a point of reputation making it 45 (which is lower than his highest ever score) he rounds down, now only getting 4 reputation dice. If he gains 2 points he is at his best ever reputation again (47) and rounds up for 5 dice.

Heroes Villains and Scoundrels

In the original system, a character's status as a Hero, Villain or Scoundrel is defined purely by reputation. Under these rules this is no longer quite the case. After all, how the rest of the world sees you has little bearing on the sort of person you really are. Under this system the worst villains can have the best reputations, and the darkest deeds can sometimes be thought the work of heroes. Each character is assumed to begin as a Hero, unless they take the Scoundrel advantage, which obviously marks them as a scoundrel. As before, a character that manages to become a Villain is retired.

Hero is the default state for all player characters and all characters begin as Heroes. This state allows them to gain as much reputation as they can and also grants them one additional drama dice. Fortune favours the hero after all, especially in 7th Sea.

The next state of being is the scoundrel. Here the character is basically good, but often only when it suits him. His motives have become a little more mercenary, but he usually comes through when he is needed. Characters can begin the game as scoundrels by taking the scoundrel advantage. However it doesn't work the same way as it used to. Instead of beginning the game with zero reputation, you begin with -10

moral reputation, but a zero in the other two. Even if you have done nothing, there is still an untrustworthy aura about any scoundrel, until he learns to mask it with good deeds. You don't gain the bonus drama dice of heroes, but because every girl loves a bad boy you gain the same bonus as the 'Dangerous Beauty' advantage and if you have the advantage as well, they stack. Sadly you can never have a moral reputation higher than 40, as no one believes you could be any better than that.

If you don't begin the game as a scoundrel, you can still become one later on. First you must gain a moral reputation of -10 or worse. You need not keep it there, but you must have crossed the line at some point. Next you need to do three 'despicable deeds'. These deeds are the sort of thing that will gain you negative moral reputation, but need not be too awful. Here are a few ideas of the sort of thing that counts: Cheating a friend, Doing a good deed only because you will be paid, Bullying the weak, Abusing someone who loves you, physically or emotionally, Stealing especially from friends, Accepting Bribes and any other form of corruption. These actions are not necessarily evil, but they are despicable and unpleasant, not the stuff of heroes. The character may lose reputation for such actions, but only if they are caught. Whether reputation is lost or not, the actions still count. Having committed such actions they remain with the character forever. Stains on moral character do not fade away. However a character can try and rid themselves of such stains by selfless acts of good will. Each time the character does something that would earn them 3 or more reputation for a single act, they may erase one of their despicable deeds if they choose not to add that reputation to their score. However, they can never be completely free, and cannot remove the stain of their first 'despicable deed'. No matter how many despicable deeds you commit or repent, once you have taken a step on that path you cannot entirely erase the experience, and so your character will always have one 'despicable deed' under their belt. The moment they commit a third despicable deed the character becomes a scoundrel. An extremely negative moral reputation can also turn a character into a scoundrel. Should moral reputation reach -40 the character becomes a scoundrel, if he can get that low without becoming one already. This only really applies if the character has earned the reputation with low deeds. If the

reputation is not deserved, the character having been the stooge in other's plans the GM may allow the character to remain a hero. However, plenty of heroes with such a tarnished reputation often decide to just give up and go with the flow, becoming scoundrels anyway.

Once a scoundrel, it is still possible to become a hero again, albeit a possibly tarnished one. First they must erase all three of their 'despicable deeds' as noted above. Of course they will always be considered to have at least one, no matter what they do, but they must try to erase all three. This must all be done while they have a positive moral reputation. If it drops below zero they do not regain all they have repented, but they cannot repent any more until they have reached at least 1 moral reputation. When they have repented all their transgressions they must also rebuild their reputation. To do this they must gain a Moral reputation 10 points higher than they have ever had. So a knight who managed to gain a moral reputation of 50 before his fall must gain a reputation of 60 to become a hero again. However a scoundrel who has never had a better reputation than 0 need only build theirs to 10. This may sound unfair, but the greater the fall the more you need to prove, to yourself and others, if you intent to mend your ways. To repent changes the character on the inside, but they must also change how the world sees them with open and obvious acts of heroism.

Becoming a villain is also not dependant on your reputation. Firstly you need not be a scoundrel to become a villain. Heroes can fall to villainy just as easily as a scoundrel after all. The system works just the same as a hero becoming a scoundrel. However the deeds needed to become a villain are far darker. These 'wicked deeds' encompass the most terrible parts of human nature, including murder and torture. As with scoundrels a character must commit three 'wicked deeds', but these are far worse than 'despicable deeds'. A few examples of wicked deeds are: cold-blooded murder whether attempted or successful, Torture, Murdering children by accident or on purpose, Rape and Mutilation. Essentially, murder and intense cruelty are potential wicked deeds, and when any character has committed three of them they become a villain, and therefore an NPC.

When it comes to deciding whether a deed is despicable or

even wicked, it is the GM that has the final word. However each time a character risks such an action they should be warned that it may taint their soul. The GM should give the player a chance to decide on a different course of action. If the player still insists on committing the despicable or wicked deed, then they cannot say they were unaware of the consequences.

Wicked deeds are so terrible that there is no way to cleanse the soul of their taint. No matter how far apart they are, or how much repenting a character does, such evil remains with them forever. The only true recompense they can make is to never act in such a way again. This may seem harsh, but they always have the choice about their course of action, and therefore no one to blame but themselves. Just as with scoundrels, the GM may rule that a suitably low moral reputation is enough to cause a character to fall to villainy. Any character who reaches -70 moral reputation has certainly made a life of questionable activities. If they do not begin a concerted effort to reform, the GM can decide they have fallen, no matter how many wicked deeds they have committed. However this should not be as straight forward as becoming a scoundrel. Being a villain in 7th Sea is to embrace true evil, so even a nasty criminal may not qualify after a life of stealing and corruption.

Once a character is a villain they are an NPC, but there are a couple of other rules to note. The first thing is that unlike scoundrels there are no limits to the reputation values that a villain can acquire. Secondly, while Villanova may revel in his villainous reputation, there are plenty of evil manipulators who manage to convince the world they are saints. Both villains and scoundrels can often learn to hide their nature from detection, so good is their mask. When someone such as a male scry sorcerer or a cold reader attempts to perceive their true heart they may roll dice equal to their positive moral reputation dice. A character with no positive moral reputation has not built a façade and so cannot cover their real feelings. The person wishing to divine the true nature of the villain or scoundrel must then make a wits roll, with the cold read knack if applicable, using the reputation roll's result as their difficulty. If they fail the roll the villain's heart remains secure and the scryer is none the wiser.

For example, Richard Allen, Avalon scry sorcerer and socialite is trying to divine the true nature of Vincent Leveque D'ur at a ball. Although Vincent is a cold hearted villain, he has built a moral reputation of 35. This gives him 4 dice to resist Richard's perception and he rolls 5, 8, 2 and 9 for a total of 24. Richard has a Wits of 2 and no Cold Read knack, he rolls 2 and 10, which explodes and yields a 6 for a total of 18, not enough to beat 24 though. The façade Vincent presents is too clever and even the magical senses of Richard show Vincent to be the hero everyone believes him to be.

It is possible for a villain to become a hero again, but there is no system to do so. For such a fallen person to reclaim their better nature should be the subject of a heroic quest. Creatures so fallen as Villanova or Reis rarely return to the light.

Converting Existing Characters

It is simple to convert existing characters to the new system as their reputations are built on all the same deeds with both systems. A standard reputation in the old system is the simple combination of Social, Martial and Moral actions. So each player simply divides a positive reputation among the three new scores in whatever way they feel is reasonable. If they have no reputation, their Social, Martial and Moral reputations will all remain at zero.

The problems come with negative reputation. In this case you take the negative points and assign them to the three scores as above. Anything assigned to Moral reputation should be considered negative, and the GM may insist a certain amount of the points are assigned to the negative score. The original rules assume negative reputation applies more to moral reputation. However an especially bad swordsman or courtier may apply negative values to Martial and Social reputation. The point here is that not all the negative reputation points need be negative under the new system. The GM may allow character to give themselves negative reputations in one area to spend the points on a positive reputation in another. In general, as with any conversion, the GM and player should work together to make a reasonable adjustment rather than slavishly adhere to the exact numbers.

The only two advantages affected by the changes are Scoundrel and Citation. The adjustments to Scoundrel have been explained above and Citation is no more complicated than before. Just as before, the advantage grants 10 reputation points at character creation. Under the new system you pick one of the three reputations for those points to apply to, depending on the deed. The advantage can be taken up to three times but not twice for the same reputation, earning the character reputation in any or even all of the three new reputations.

When it comes to NPCs things are just as simple. Decide what the most important of the three reputations is to that NPC and give them a score equal to their old style reputation. Then give them a reputation equal to half that score in the other two reputations. This is a general guideline, to help you convert things on the fly. For important NPCs you can simply give them whatever you feel is appropriate, after all, you are the GM. Their status as a hero, scoundrel or villain remains unchanged, but you may wish to turn some reputations positive or change others completely.

In general this system should allow you to reward players in different ways and grant a little more flavour to reputation in general. In many player groups there is a mixture of martial and courtly characters, which will all have reputation for different things, useful in different ways. However, if for instance all the characters are musketeers and working in the same way, a single reputation score may suit things far better. You may feel the original system works fine, in which case keep it. Take from this system whatever parts suit your game.

Are you Speaking to me, Sir?

In the salons of Théah, words can be as dangerous as steel. Those unarmed with wit can often find themselves the targets of scorn and derision. This may seem inconsequential, after all anyone can deal with a few insults. However, the masters of social duelling are not looking to just upset a target or appear rude. Their jibes can strike the very heart and confidence of the strongest swordsman. Those they crush can be cast from society, made to doubt their abilities or even driven to suicide with such cutting words.

If you watch the genteel world of the Montaigne or Vodacce court you may be forgiven for seeing only elegant soirees and polite society. However those who know the intrigues of the courts can see a world of vicious war and treachery that leaves plenty of victims wounded or dead. The salons become battlefields no less bloody than the mud-soaked fields of Eisen and Castille.

Deadlier than steel

Social combat involves duels of wit and insult. The combatants must never appear rattled or overtly rude in their behaviour, but the rules for what qualifies as such change depending on the social class and wit of the contestant. The rules system works in a very similar way to physical combat, but involves the edge of the tongue rather than the blade. However, do not make the mistake of thinking it is any less dangerous. There are not very many masters of this art, but you would do well to be polite to them should you meet them. Social damage can ruin reputation and even destroy the confidence of the loser.

When you enter social combat, you roll action dice depending on your Panache, just as you do for physical combat. Most social combat is resolved using Wits, but damage is absorbed by how well you carry any insult with your Panache.

Attacks are made using a Wits roll (instead of Finesse) and adding a skill depending on the situation. Some suggestions are:

- Etiquette* – to shame someone not part of the prevailing culture
- Fashion* – to attack the dress sense of the target
- Gossip* – to wound from afar (for passive defence use Unobtrusive)
- Oratory* – general attacks
- Sincerity* – for outright lies
- Socialising* – for more bawdy put downs and drinking games.

These skills should be enough, but you may want to expand the list with, Acting (when copying another's style) Bribery (when making deals), Incitation (for attacking crowds), Scheming (for any political attacks) and Seduction (an option if the opponent is a paramour).

Unless otherwise stated, the passive defence is calculated using the same skill as you are being attacked with. There is no separate dodge skill for social combat, and you can only fight using the same weapons as your attacker. This is the reason many duellists take the initiative in social war as they can choose the territory. An active defence uses that same skill coupled with Panache. An option allows you to make use of Cold Read with Wits (difficulty 20) to get the measure of an opponent before a contest and gain a +5 bonus any attack or defence rolls during the duel. However, if you fail the roll you make a wrong assumption about your opponent and suffer a -5 penalty instead.

So, just like in physical combat, you roll to attack when you have an action in a phase, and attempt to score damage. If you beat the opponent's active or passive social defence, you score damage.

Reputation can be very useful in social combat as well. Each combatant gets additional dice for the duration of the combat equal to their social reputation divided by 10. In other words, they may use their reputation dice for each combat as an additional dice pool. Each of these dice may be used as an additional unkept dice on any roll during the combat, but when used they are gone. The dice return for the next combat, whenever that may be, and do not count as spent reputation dice. This makes those with a high reputation score very dangerous contestants who can bolster their wit with the weight of their social power.

Social Damage

Social wounds can be just as dangerous to a character as physical ones. These wounds represent the damage done to the victim's self confidence and standing. When a character engages another in repartee, there is ample opportunity to destroy their self confidence and send them running from the room in tears. Social wounds work in a very similar way to physical wounds, but use different attributes.

Any social attack does damage equal to the Wits of the attacker, adding their Panache in unkept dice. So a social attack from a person with Wits 2 and Panache 3 is a 5k2 attack. This attack damage is dealt in Snipe (flesh) wounds which can lead to Social (dramatic) wounds.

Each time a character takes snipe wounds they must roll greater than the total of snipe wounds they have received using their Panache (just as Brawn is used against flesh wounds) or receive a Social wound. How a social wound effects a character depends on their Wits, much like the way Resolve controls the effects of Dramatic wounds.

An additional effect of social wounds is that they cost reputation as well. Anyone who takes a social wound loses three points of social reputation instantly. Reputation can also be gained from a social attack. Anytime you socially damage someone of equal or higher social reputation you gain two social reputation points, if they have less social reputation, you gain just one point.

Variant damage

You may wish to vary the rolls for damage, using the appropriate skills rather than the mixture of attributes. Such a rule would allow different forms of 'weapons' with different styles. For those who have a less subtle wit, you can rule that raw insult does a lot of damage, but can make the user look crass. So it adds 1 unkept dice to the attack roll, but increases the opponent's defence by 5 and always loses any ties on initiative.

When a character receives social wounds equal to their Wits, their self confidence is crippled, and they cannot explode any dice. This applies to every roll they attempt as they have lost the belief they can do anything well, so shattered is their confidence. They are also unable to use any reputation dice, including the bonus dice for social combat. When a character's social wounds are equal to twice their Wits their self confidence is utterly destroyed. They become totally catatonic, unable to do anything more than run away and curl up in a ball feeling utterly alone, unable to see or speak with anyone. They may even become suicidal. There is a 30% chance of this, modified by -5% for each point of Wits the character has to a minimum chance of 5%.

Healing a social wound will stop this state of mind, but finding the opportunity to heal even one wound is rather tricky. A suicidal character will not necessarily instantly jump out of the window, but will actively plan their own demise and must be watched constantly. Even if a character does not become suicidal, the GM may call for another roll if they do not recover any social wounds after a week of this. If they do become suicidal they may have to rely on friends to save

them from themselves.

Recovering self respect

Healing social wounds either takes time or must be healed like any other wound. Few people continue a social fight they are losing, and many run from the room as soon as they are wounded. After all, they have already been embarrassed, making it the perfect time to escape the contest.

Healing can only occur when out of the duel, just like in a physical confrontation. In general, one social wound can be healed any time a character does particularly well at something and thereby restores a little of their self confidence. This is best represented by healing one wound each time a character succeeds a skill roll by 15 points or more. Healing wounds by support and friendship is also possible. Those trying to bolster the confidence of an injured friend may try making a wits roll against a difficulty of 5, plus their friends social wounds times 5. So if a combatant has received 3 social wounds, the difficulty to heal them would be 20. Each friend may try to make such a roll, but only one wound can be healed in this way each day. There is only so much that friends can do for you in such a case. Remember that the most telling blows in social combat contain an element of truth and cannot just be laughed off when they find their mark. The character's total snipe wounds are considered the same as one social wound for the purposes of healing. They must be healed before any social wounds, but do heal naturally at a rate of 5 points a day. Such low-grade insults seem so much less important after a good night's sleep.

So, you can see that social wounds take a long time to heal. The GM is free to grant more healing whenever he feels the character has had a chance to regain self-esteem. An especially nice GM might allow a wound to be healed if the person who inflicted them is badly injured in a social duel himself. If they lose reputation they seem a lot less to worry

about. You could even allow a good day's shopping or fashion to heal the wounds of a lady or foppish gentleman.



Schools for Scandal

The masters of verbal battle are the Montaigne, Vodacce and Castilians, and they each have developed schools of wit. Avalon has one too, but primarily for defence against such attacks. These are not schools in the same sense as swordsman schools, although they work in almost the same way. They represent the abilities of those who are simply very skilled in a particular style of verbal battle. You don't usually learn them formally from a

teacher, more you learn how to fight by living in that sort of environment. However, there are many masters who can teach a young courtier how to deliver telling blows and defend himself at court. In such a way can the schools be taught, even though no one would consider them an actual school. However, each country has its own idea about what is polite behaviour, and this too has been a factor in developing the schools.

While each country has a school of social combat, it is possible for them to have two or more. Different courtiers through the ages have refined various styles of verbal repartee in the same way that swordsmen have. So it is perfectly permissible to create more schools for social combat using this model.

Take the swordsman schools as your model, and with a bit of lateral thinking, many can be adapted for social duelling. In all cases the cost of the school is 20 points for a native and 30 for a foreigner. They all offer the skill of Courtier, and in lieu of a second skill offer three extra character points to be spent on the Courtier skill. As with Swordsman schools, the rules for mastery and grand mastery apply. Lady Jamis Sices du Sices is rumoured to be a grand master of at least two schools. The schools themselves do not have names but rather represent the nature of their courts, which is the true and only training ground for such an art.

Avalon

"Sir, I would love to trade insults with you, but I fear I would not get a fair return for my investment."

The Avalon practice a school designed to repel the attacks of others and remain calm and reserved. Years of domination by the Montaigne helped them develop this ability to accept overblown remarks with stoicism and refute them with politeness. The polite refusal to be drawn into a contest is difficult to break. However, when the attacker is in no danger of reprisals, the weakness of the school becomes apparent. The opponent need only keep attacking until he gets through, as he is in little danger himself.

Knacks: Bind, Fortitude, Wall of Steel, Exploit Weakness (Avalon)

Apprentice: You gain +2 per mastery level to your passive defence.

Journeyman: The difficulty to use any social knack against you is increased by 5.

Master: You may have one free active defence each round, for use on any phase.

Castille

"Sir, I may be a liar, a cheat and a scoundrel, but I am also an excellent swordsman and a passable shot, so I suggest you take that remark back."

The Castillians like to show off, and words are no different to steel. Castillian word play is loud and expressive; such duels often gather large crowds and can be quite entertaining. The Castillian word master knows how to use the crowd's scorn to attack their opponent. The weakness of the school is the use of long and unusual words. They can make the duellist seem very well read and clever, but also make him more obtuse. Many opponents may not understand the insult and so are not affected; also the Castillian may embarrass himself by using words that he is not as familiar with as he thinks he is.

Knacks: Beat, Double Attack, Whirl, Exploit Weakness (Castille)

Apprentice: If you are being watched openly by at least 3 other people of 10 or more reputation you gain +1 unkept dice to all rolls you make during social combat.

Journeyman: You may do an extra point of snipe damage for every person of 10 reputation or higher who is actively watching your duel.

Master: You gain 2 reputation points for any social wounds you do to an opponent regardless of their reputation.

Montaigne

"So shall we fight with blade or wit? I suggest for your sake we choose steel, as you can at least borrow a blade."

The Montaigne school is a nasty and vindictive one. Nothing is too low for a Montaigne duellist, and every word they utter is barbed with poison. They excel at sending their enemies in tears from the ballroom with only a few offhand remarks. However this also forms the weakness of the school, making them appear rude rather than clever which opens them to attack.

Knacks: Beat, Lunge, Pommel Strike, Exploit Weakness (Montaigne)

Apprentice: You may put an extra twist into your attacks, granting you and extra +2 to your damage roll.

Journeyman: Your wit is so vindictive, once per attack you may spend a Reputation die to make an opponent reroll a successful social wound check.

Master: Your attacks are now so biting that you do an additional snipe wound for every point you beat our opponent's passive or active defence by.

Vodacce

"I would take you on in a battle of wits, but as a gentleman I could not attack an unarmed man."

The Vodacce are masters of the veiled insult. Their school is clever and underhand masking insult within complement and normal conversation. This can lead to the school's weakness, as only a clever opponent can understand the subtle insult implied in the words.

Knacks: Feint, Riposte, Stop thrust, Exploit Weakness (Vodacce)

Apprentice: You are able to capitalise on your opponents mistakes, if they miss your passive defence by 5, you get a bonus of +5 to your attack if you strike on the next phase.

Journeyman: Your mastery of subtle attack grants to +1 to your Feint knack which may now raise to a maximum of 6.

Master: You know how to play a waiting game, add 1 extra unkept dice to your next attack for each phase you hold the action. These dice do not carry over to the next round.

Courtesans

"Why don't you come upstairs with me? That way my other guests won't have to bear your company."

The courtesans of Vodacce practice their own school of social combat, which involves seduction as well as insult. The courtesan draws her opponent in with the implied promise of her wiles, and then attacks her enemy when his guard is down. It can be devastating, but anyone who remains cynical

of the ladies sudden attachment often fails to take the bait.

Knacks: Double Attack, Feint, Pommel Strike, Exploit Weakness (Courtesan)

Apprentice: You may add your rank in the seduction knack to any attack rolls you make.

Journeyman: You can make anyone seem rude when they take an aggressive stance, they suffer a -10 penalty to any attack roll they make against you, but only if you have not yet attacked them.

Master: Your control of the combat lets you roll an extra action dice each round.

Pirate

"I like the front of your coat. Shame I never see it when there's a fight."

Pirates may not use the same genteel words as the Montaigne court, but social combat is just as important to them. In a world where reputation counts for all, no one likes to be insulted in public. Those who lose such pirate banter sessions often resort to fighting to restore their honour and respect, but the damage is still done. Pirate social combat is far more raucous and obvious than more refined versions, but no less telling. However its lack of wit allows the opponent to write off the insult as just the ravings of a drunkard.

Knacks: Beat, Fortitude, Lunge, Exploit Weakness (Pirate)

Apprentice: Your rather blunt attacks do an additional +2 damage.

Journeyman: Your brazen nature allows you to only lose 1 rather than 3 reputation points when you gain a social wound.

Master: Your brutal nature gives you a Fear Rating at +3 in social situations.

As the same system is used for social and physical combat, the swordsman's knacks also fit into social combat. These work in much the same way as they do in physical combat. However it should be noted that they are entirely different skills. An Ambrogia swordsman has no skill in the social combat pommel strike just because he is familiar with the physical variety of the knack. The list of swordsman's knacks already in the game is extensive, but not all of them fit for one reason or another. However, you may choose to add and adapt some of the ones not used here. The swordsman's knacks used are detailed below, and include a tagline to show how they can be used. The rules for the knacks are usually exactly the same as for the physical version. Any differences in their use are noted in their description.

Dismiss (Beat)

"Well, I don't know what you..."

"Do be quiet dear boy; the clever people are trying to talk."

When using Dismiss you steal your opponent's ability to attack or defend by attempting to dominate their personality. Often you speak over them or but into their conversation. This is very tricky to pull off without appearing rude. This knack uses Panache+Dismiss and you must raise equal to the opponent's Panache rather than their Brawn.

Shame (Bind)

"I'm sure that for men of good taste, such rude conversation is seemly"

Although you cannot disarm your opponent very easily, you can force them into such a position that it becomes difficult for them to attack. The best way to do so is to suggest that trading insults is deeply unseemly. However, this binds you to the same situation, until one of you can think of a more subtle witticism with which to renew the battle.

Again, this knack works as it does in the main rule book, however, Wits is substituted for Brawn in all cases. It is also worth noting that you need not have a specific weapon to attempt a verbal Bind but as no one is able to use two weapons in such a fight binding leaves both combatants in the same position.

Disarm

"I am quite sure you would not be so gauche as to bring up that topic in such company."

Here the speaker attempts to prevent a specific attack by making it socially impossible for the opponent to use a potentially embarrassing topic against them. On a successful roll, the opponent is prevented from using a specified topic (ie. Fashion, Etiquette) during the combat. Only one topic may be Disarmed on each opponent, any further use of the skill changes the barred topic instead.

Quick Wit (Double Attack)

"I'm so glad you chose to wear that awful wig today, it distracts me from the horror of the dress you have chosen."

Here you attempt to use two insults at the same time. It is very tricky to find two that fit, and both are usually a little more crass than usual, making them easier to fight off. In combat this functions exactly as in Die Kreuzritter (p70)

Feint

"That lovely dress must have taken ten maidservants to get you into it; of course I hear it only takes one stable boy to get you out of it."

This is an attack that seems to be made against on aspect of the opponent, only to shift at the last moment to attack another aspect, such as from fashion to sexual habits. This knack works the same was as the main rulebook, except that you use Wits+Feint to make the attack.

Thick Skin (Fortitude)

There is no tagline to go with this knack as it simply represents a resilience to taking insult. You have hardened your self confidence over time to better ignore the sniping of others. Just as noted in Ussura (p99) you can add +1 to any social wound check for each level you have in this knack.

Scathe (Lunge)

"Good Lord isn't that the same dress I gave to my serving girl last week. Ah yes, here is the damaged hem that meant I couldn't wear it. Really my dear, are you sure you are fit for such company as this? Nobody else is wearing a servant's cast off."

When using this knack you insult your opponent with something unspeakably rude, but difficult to disprove. This leaves them flustered by the cruelty and crudeness of your attack and rather exposed. As they need evidence to refute your claim they are also left badly socially damaged. However, your own overt rudeness leaves you open to a multitude of attacks from other quarters as your own wit and social grace. This knack works in exactly the same way as the version in the main rulebook.

Cheap Shot (Pommel Strike)

"Are so many feathers on a gown really necessary for a creature that does not fly?"

This knack is a sneak attack. Unlike its physical counterpart, it can only be used when you have the element of surprise on your opponent. Having said that, you need not leap up behind someone and attack them. If you have been watching a verbal combat and suddenly decide to chime in, then you may use pommel strike. When it is used the opponent is so shocked to be attacked when off guard they are left open for a moment. The attack itself is a short barb, designed as the prelude to a larger attack. This knack works in exactly the same way as noted in the main rule book.

Riposte

"Darling, that wig is so last season."

"Oh you are so right; I should never have copied your style."

This move allows you to take an insult thrown at you and use it to insult your attacker. In combat, this knack works just the same was as described in the main rules, just different attack and parry knacks are available.

Side Step

"Great Theus, what is that apparel you are wearing."

"Thank you my lady, it was made by the same seamstress that I believe you engaged for your dress."

With this Knack you simply avoid the insult as it flies towards you, perhaps even by taking it as a complement. In combat this functions exactly the same as in Castille (p97)

Interrupt (Stop Thrust)

"That jacket..."

"...uses the finest silk. So much in fact there were obviously only the cheaper materials available for that sack you are wearing."

With this knack you simply get your insult in first. In combat this functions exactly the same as noted in Vodacce (p97)

Filibuster (Wall of Steel)

"What lovely weather we are having this time of year, did you see that play recently..."

The use of this knack means you simply do not stop talking. Your constant babble makes it tricky to get an insult in. The truly skilled keep changing subjects as well to further confuse the opposition. However, in this mode it is very tricky to level an attack yourself. In combat this functions exactly the same as noted in Invisible College (p79) except that you need not be using fencing parry as your passive defence!

Barrage of Insults (Whirl)

"You, what sort of costume are you wearing, and you how dare you look at me that way, you pick your feet up idiot..."

This knack is designed to work against Brutes by quickly picking out some failing in each of them in turn. In this way it has similarities to 'Wall of Steel'. The comments are quick and authoritative, but often lack subtlety. In combat this functions exactly the same as noted in Castille (p96). Brutes in this case are often a group of inexperienced debutants eager to win a social combat through force of numbers rather than skill.

Exploit Weakness

Works exactly the same as it does in the main rules, and the style depends on the school you are against.

The limits of Social Combat

The ability to drive someone to suicide may sound very powerful, and it is, but social combat is limited in ways physical combat is not. For a start, you need to engage an intelligent opponent, in a language they understand. After all, no one can be truly insulted if they don't understand how they are being attacked. In which case the GM may apply a 5 point penalty to any target numbers a combatant rolls against when not duelling in their native language.

It is also important to have an audience. Without anyone watching there is no reputation loss or gain for either party. It is also impossible to play to a non-existent crowd. So without the additional humiliation of society's laughter the wounds delivered are not so telling. So without an audience, damage is rolled only with kept dice equal to Wits, you do not gain any extra unkept dice from Panache. While Social combat can take place in a bar or duelling field as much as a ballroom, the GM may disallow social duelling if they feel the circumstances are not appropriate.

To finish, we should point out that this system is designed as an aid to role play rather than a replacement. So when using this system, it is vitally important that you do not reduce it to pure dice rolling. As each player makes an attack or defends themselves, the player should try and at least offer a suggestion for what their character is saying. If the suggestion includes the right mixture of insult and intelligence then the GM should allow a bonus to their roll. This encourages them to role play as much as possible during such encounters.

If you already play a game of verbal duelling with a group adept at word play and banter, then don't change a thing. However, it is often the case that players create characters with far more wit than they themselves possess. Even the few players who occasionally manifest the wit of Oscar Wilde or Jane Austen can manage to maintain such a level for each game session. So at times like these this system is there to even the balance.

The Délicatesse school

History

The history of Délicatesse begins in 1664 with a lady duellist of Montaigne called Arielle Valroux du Martise. In her career as a fencer, she became the nemesis to Duke Marcel Sices du Sices, a powerful noble of the Montaigne court. His men had failed to despatch the young women on numerous occasions due to her superior skill. So he hatched a dishonourable plan to rid the world of his enemy. Lady Arielle was invited to a ball in L'Empereur's honour. This being a formal affair she had no choice but to attend in a full ball gown, completely unarmed, lest doing so offend her host or invite social death from the other ladies. It was at this ball the Duke's men attacked.

Unarmed and almost unable to move in the bulky skirts, Arielle had to think quickly. Grabbing a sword from one of the guards she dealt with the problem of being unarmed. But the ball gown proved more difficult. Due to the changing fashions of the court, she had borrowed the dress from a powerful patron, Countess Roseline Étalon du Toille. To return it ripped and torn was unthinkable, and could lose her a powerful ally. So she improvised a new style of swordplay.

Instead of grasping a 'main gauche' in her left hand, as her Valroux training taught, she delicately grabbed her skirts to allow more movement. She used lunges and jabs to keep the attackers at bay and took great care to let not one land a blow to her costume. However this still didn't grant her much of an advantage. That was until she realised the clothing she wore was at least designed with one movement in mind, dancing. Using the steps of court dance rather than a swordsman's footwork, she quickly dispatched her would be assassins, all of whom were unprepared for her new swordplay. She even managed to remove them without damaging the dress, all the time dancing about the ballroom.

The Countess Roseline was impressed, as were the rest of the court, as she had seen the whole thing and marvelled at the duellist's ability. So much so that she commanded the lady to teach this new trick to her daughter. The Countess wanted her daughter to be able to defend herself, but not go running about the country like a musketeer. Eager to keep

Nicole Étalon du Toille

Nicole began learning the school when she was 14, and three intense years later she was a master, albeit one who had never been in duel outside the training room. During the revolution she found herself trapped in the Chateau du Soleil. She was there to try to convince Anne du Montaigne to talk to her husband, Captain Jean-Marie, on her behalf. Nicole hoped that if a few lady musketeers visited the academy to study, she might gain more support in her attempts to get the school recognised. However, the revolution interrupted their conversation, even as the two ladies were getting on very well. When musketeers came to spirit Anne away, Nicole saw a chance to distinguish herself. So she joined Anne in her flight to Eisen, and finally tested herself in real combat. By the time they reached Eisen, Nicole's training had moved from the school to the real world. She was horrified to have spilt blood, but she was even more glad to have survived the journey. The experience has made her and Anne very close, and she now acts as Anne's unofficial bodyguard. She has also taught many of the émigrés her style. Nicole still wants to return to Montaigne and reclaim her family's estate so she can build her school again. However, as one of the few heirs to the Étalon du Toille fortunes, her family is pressuring her to marry.

Nicole is a pretty but quite average Montaigne noblewoman. She dresses well in elegant gowns as befits her station, but her grace makes her sword training obvious to a keen observer. However, she is a courtier before she is a duellist and has only fought to protect Anne or defend the name of her school. She does not always carry a blade, but usually has one close to hand.

Nicole Étalon du Toille – Hero (7th Sea™)

Brawn: 2, Finesse: 4, Wits: 3, Resolve: 2, Panache: 3
Reputation: 25

Background: None

Arcana: Willfull

Advantages: Castillian (R/W), Eisen (R/W), Montaigne (R/W)
Combat Reflexes, Indomitable Will, Noble

Athlete: Climbing 1, Footwork 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 1

Rider: Ride 2

Délicatesse (Master): Feint 5, Side-Step 5, Disarm 5, Exploit Weakness (Délicatesse) 5

Courtier: Dancing 4, Etiquette 3, Fashion 4, Gossip 2, Oratory 2, Politics 1, Sincerity 2

Nicole Étalon du Toille (d20™)

Noble 3 / Délicatesse Swordsman 5: CR 8

her patron happy, Arielle was forced to agree and worked to turn her improvised style into a full sword school. The daughter, Nicole, did well at the new school despite the fact that Arielle was making it up as she taught and many of her friends asked to join. Arielle tired of the teaching and quickly left the school when Nicole became a master, having discharged her duty to her patron.

But as luck would have it, Nicole enjoyed the sword and teaching it, but didn't want to become a swordswoman.

Many young women became students at the school, but few dedicated themselves enough to become masters. The school remained a 'hobby' for Nicole and a 'play school' for nobles with nothing better to do. It was considered a 'ladies fencing class', and not worthy of a dedicated swordsman or woman. It was untried on the battlefield and sneered at by every other swordsman. That was until in 1667 and Eisen lord called Joseph Von Weisburg came to learn its ways. He realised the school allowed you not only to fight in a skirt, but also in bulky armour. He was right, and used Délicatesse on the battlefield to great effect, but not for long. He reverted to his usual style when he realised that other troops were laughing at the 'dancing drachen' even when he won. His use did however give the school a little respect, but as it rarely turned out a duellist, any sneer against its honour went undefended.

The school has very few dedicated practitioners. Vodacce courtesans are often visitors to the school, and think highly of it. However, Montaigne nobles do not want their daughters mixing with such women, and Veronica Ambrogia works very hard to see her school remains the most popular in Vodacce. Nicole fights hard to see the school on her estate in Toille gain respect. Unfortunately, she does so politically, not by proof of arms and technique, so she remains unsuccessful. She works hard to gain favour and respect from the Swordsman's Guild, but Veronica Ambrogia has continually blocked its acceptance as a sanctioned school. Still, it is rather fashionable to allow daughters to train at her school. Perhaps one day the school will gain respect when the ladies of the court and not the Musketeers repulse assailants at another ball.

Weakness

The weakness of the school is that it teaches the student to move as little as possible and keep the opponent at a distance. Close fighting in a gown is very difficult, although all that corsetry does help posture quite a lot, and reducing movement reduces the worry of tripping on the skirts. An opponent who takes the fight to the student or makes her move to avoid such close combat has her at a disadvantage.

Skills

Fencing, Courtier

Swordsman's Knacks

Feint (Fencing), Side Step, Disarm, Exploit Weakness

Apprentice

The apprentice learns how to avoid bulky clothing getting in the way of fighting, gaining no penalty for fighting in bulky skirts and foolish hats. Although designed to be used dressed in ladies fashions, it also halves any penalty gained for fighting in armour. As the style of the school uses dance, a student of D  licatesse may use the dancing knack in place of footwork during any combat. She also gains +5 to her passive defence against 'Tagging' attacks for each mastery level.

Journeyman

At this level a lady uses her dancing skills to allow her to change partners, even while fighting. She can defend herself from multiple opponents, not just her current 'dance partner'. So she gains an additional active defence each round, which may be used against any attacker without penalty.

Master

To maximise ease of movement, the D  licatesse master learns how to change hands during a duel by momentarily dropping her skirt. She can make this switch during any Phase prior to an attack and receives a free Raise to her next attack roll or attempted Feint. Her TN to be hit also increases by 5 for that Phase only (in addition to the increase against Tagging attempts), but she may not attempt any Active Defences or use any Swordsman Knacks except for Feint until the end of the Phase, or until she takes another action that does not involve changing hands. Thanks to extensive training in this switch method, she does not suffer a penalty from wielding a weapon in her off-hand, and may benefit from the Left-Handed Advantage when using that hand.

New Prestige Class - D  licatesse Swordsman

The D  licatesse school is designed to allow a student to defend themselves while dressed in ungainly flowing courtly dress. While it is of most use to young ladies wishing to use a blade and still wear elegant gowns, it is also useful for those burdened with heavy armour. The school uses dance steps to allow the practitioner to move naturally in their dress and avoid their opponent's blade. However they must keep their enemy at a distance, because if the opponent starts to lead the dance, all is lost.

Requirements

To qualify as a student of D  licatesse, a character must fulfil the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus +4

Feats: Dashing and Daring, Weapon Focus (Rapier)

Skills: Perform (Dancing) 4 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks

Special: This school is usually open only to well born female characters. Men and low born characters require the GM's permission to be trained in this school.

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+2	Elegance
2	+2	+0	+3	+3	Bonus Feat
3	+3	+1	+3	+3	Change Partners
4	+4	+1	+4	+4	Bonus Feat
5	+5	+1	+4	+4	Lead the Dance

Game Rule Information

Alignment: Any

Hit Die: D8

Class Skills

The D  licatesse student class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha/Dex), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis) Swim (Str) and Tumble (Dex). See chapter 4 in the Player's Handbook™ for skill descriptions

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

All the following are class features of the D  licatesse swordswoman school.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A student of this school is

proficient with all simple weapons and all non-exotic long blades. This school does not encourage the use of armour and shields.

Elegance: At 1st level the student receives no penalty for fighting in courtly dress. Also, the Tagging feat cannot be used against a student of this school.

Bonus Feat: At 2nd and 4th level the student receives a bonus feat as a fighter of the same level.

Change Partners: At 3rd level the student is no longer surprised by attacks from additional opponents. She gains a bonus of +5 (to AC or skill rolls) to defend herself against attacks of opportunity.

Shift of Lace: At 5th level the student may switch hands with their sword granting a +2 attack bonus but suffering -1 AC penalty.

The Lost Art of Mirage

In the land of Théah, mirrors have power. A sorcerer of Mirage has learnt to harness that power. No one is sure where the discipline originated. It is assumed to be one of the arts founded by the bargainers, and therefore as tainted as Porté and Sorte magics. However, the actual bloodline related to it is a mystery. It is most often found in Avalon and Montaigne, and has occasionally occurred in Vodacce. No other blood has produced a Mirage sorcerer yet. This selection of bloodlines has lead to different theories as to the origin of the power. Many Avalon believe it derives from glamour and the Fae. After all, the Sidhe are known in legend for using mirrors for magic. However, the actual powers bear similarity to Porté, leading to a Montaigne origin. Some say that the Montaigne have gained the power purely through their vanity, and sold their souls to mirrors years ago. The last theory is that the talent is possibly a gift for the children of sorcerers who lost their souls to mirrors, and were born with a part of their soul on the other side of the glass.

Mirage works like any other Sorcery. It draws no power from a spirit like Glamour and Pyeryem and functions in similar ways to Porté and Sorte. In just about every case you need mirrors or at least a reflective surface to do your magic. This is another reason Mirage sorcerers stay quiet. The easiest way to defeat one is to break all the mirrors you can find. The sorcerers themselves have worked hard to see their art

fade from public knowledge. Even though the power shares nationality with other magicians, only those twice blooded can have the power with another. There are no full blooded Mirage / Porté Montaigne magicians. What you can have is a character twice blooded in Mirage and Porté, yet have only Montaigne blood.

Like all other sorceries, Mirage has three levels and various knacks. They gain the same starting points and advancement rules as any other sorcerer. While Mirage should not be too unbalancing to ban players from using, as with all the lost sorceries it is really designed for NPCs. Carting around large mirrors is difficult for travelling adventurers. It is also a very rare power; something few people even know exists. For this reason it works better in the hands of a nasty enemy noble woman, manipulating her friends at court.

Knacks

Viewing, Farsight, Pastsight, Soul Stealing, Image Control, Shattering*

Apprentice

The Apprentice learns how to reach into a mirror. They can push their arm into the glass and leave anything they can carry inside the reflection. They can leave things in the reflection in such a way that they can't be seen by anyone viewing the mirror.

Adept

The Adept has learnt how to step into the mirror completely. They must be able to walk through the frame, they can't shrink to fit. If the mirror is broken they are trapped there unless a master can bring them out. They cannot leave the room the mirror reflects, doors and windows just won't open. If outside, reality just seems to blur and fade away where the mirror can't reflect the real world. A room appears just as it would in the real world, only back to front. They can hide in the mirror, and be seen only when they wish, or by another Mirage magician of equal or greater rank. Using this power they can reach out of the mirror to touch a viewer, or attack their reflection on the inside.

Master

A master has learnt to navigate the space between mirrors. They can step into one mirror, travel to the reflection of any mirror they know. There they can step out, or attack anyone looking into the mirror. The restriction is that to find the mirror they are aiming for, they must be able to picture what it is reflecting. Such a mirror is considered 'known'. If it has been moved from the last time they saw it by more than twenty feet, or placed in another room, they can't reach it. That is until they see it again.

Knacks

Viewing - This knack allows the user to see within any mirror they are looking into the reflection from any mirror they know. The difficulty depends on how far away the mirror is.

5	Next room	15	Next City
10	Next Village	25	Next Country

Farsight - This knack allows the sorcerer to look into the future reflected by a mirror. You must be looking into the mirror that will one day hold the reflection you want to see. However, if you cannot get to the mirror in question, but know where it is, you can link to it with Viewing first. The trouble with this power is that you have no guarantee that the mirror in question will reflect what you want to see in the future. If it gets moved after you use it you are not going to get the result you want. The difficulty depends on the time you wish to view.

10	Tomorrow
15	Next Week
25	Next Year
40	Next 100 Years

Pastsight - This knack allows the user to look at past reflections from any mirror they know. The same rules apply to this knack as to Farsight, but for the past, not the future. With Pastsight you can only see what the mirror has once reflected. It doesn't matter if the mirror gets moved as its life's reflections are stored within. However it is very frustrating to forget it was in a different castle when what you want to look at occurred. The difficulties are:

10	Yesterday
15	Last Week
25	Last Year
40	Last 100 years

Soul Stealing - With this knack a magician can drain the feelings and soul of a person into a mirror, rendering them susceptible to the commands of the sorcerer. The Mirage magician must be in contact with the person as they look into the mirror, or inside the mirror they are looking into. As long as these conditions are met, the actual mirror need not be the same one each time. Many people have fallen prey to this power believing that destroying a single mirror may free them of it.

No more than once per day the magician may use this knack against a difficulty of the victims Resolve times 5. If they succeed the victim gains one Shadow Point. If they fail the victim realises something is wrong. For each full day the victim avoids seeing their reflection in ANY mirror, they lose 1 shadow point. However, to pass a mirror and not view their own reflection requires a Wits roll with a difficulty of total Shadow points times 5.

Shadow points are good and bad for the magician. The victim is extremely suggestible under their influence. Any order or desire they hear the magician say to them will be obeyed unless they beat their total shadow points times 5 with a Resolve roll, whether they are aware of the enchantment or not. However, they have a +5 bonus to their roll if they are aware of their ensorcellment. Unfortunately, the danger is that the victim becomes more and more morose and depressed the more shadow points they have to a maximum of 5. Each day they must roll their Wits against their total shadow points times 5. If they fail they will attempt suicide by the most expedient means. Once they have failed the roll they will automatically fail it next time it is called for, assuming they survive, unless they lose at least one shadow point. However, if they still have any shadow points, they will have to roll again tomorrow. The magician may only have one victim at a time.

Image Control - This power lets a mirage wizard to change the image reflected in a mirror they touch. It can be subtle (the colour of curtains) or huge (everyone looks ugly). The effect will last until the magician touches the mirror again. The Difficulty depends of the degree of change, and the size of target group. The difficulty is in the hands of the GM, but the following list provides a guideline. Many Mirage magi-

cians use this power to give themselves reflections.

- 5 Everyone has different colour eyes
- 10 All ladies see their worst feature slightly amplified
- 15 The men of the castle will all appear to have beards and wear ladies clothing.
- 25 Lord Mortimer will see himself hideously disfigured

Shattering (can only be learned at Adept onwards) - This terrifying power lets the mirage user hurt someone by damaging their reflection from inside the mirror. They appear in the reflection attacking the viewer, damaging them while they can do little more than watch. The magician makes a knock roll against the victim's resolve times 5. Any shadow points the victim has reduces their effective resolve by one. If the roll is a success, the victim cannot take their eyes from the mirror. The magician is free to attack their reflection as if it were physical with anything to hand. They watch in horror as a stranger walks up to their reflection inside the mirror, and puts a gun to their head. After the attack, the hold on the victim is broken. This power puts a terrible strain on the glass. There is a 40% chance the mirror will break the instant the victim dies, which is bad news for an Adept.

It should also be noted that the reflection of the Sorcerer themselves changes as they rise in grade. An apprentice has an odd reflection, almost as if theirs is only two dimensional. In many cases the reflection also looks a lot better than it should, such as a wart not being present. For an Adept the change is more noticeable. They appear to be transparent and ghost like, easily noticeable as very odd. A master has no reflection at all, although they can see their reflection in the glass on the other side, looking out of the mirror.

Game Master's Secrets

Even the Masters of Mirage are mostly unaware of the origins of their power. The mirage bloodline has suffered from predators and antisorcery sects like the Rilasciare. As Mirage Magicians don't know how to protect their own bloodline, they stay very quiet.

In fact the originator of this power was one of Montanus's brothers, called Estrenius. Like Montanus, Estrenius was also a senator, but that was where the similarities ended. Estrenius was a fop and a weakling; he had been brought into

the senate to effectively grant his brother a second vote. He agreed with everything Montanus wanted, and in return was allowed to preen himself as much as he desired. He joined Montanus as he bargained with the Syrneath, but spent the whole time cowering. When the bargain was struck, for all his new magical power, he remained little more than his brother's tool. So much so, that any of Estrenius's abilities and accomplishments are usually historically ascribed to Montanus. When the dangers of the new Vaticine church became obvious, Estrenius was the first senator to leave Numa, and he settled with his family in the area that would become Montaigne. From their new home, Estrenius used his power to support his brother's family and did his best to retire from the spotlight. However, it wasn't long before one of his descendants was not happy with playing second fiddle to Montanus's descendants. During the rule of Careleman, the family attempted to take what little power remained to the descendants of Montanus, thinking them an easier target.

Unfortunately, the Estrenius family underestimated their relatives, and their desire to keep what little they had. After a very short family feud, the entire Estrenius family was forced to run for their lives. Sorcery was a mark of nobility and power, and the Montanus family knew that another sorcerous family could rise to challenge them again unless they put it down for good. They hunted down as many of the family as they could, forcing them to go underground in the forming nation of Montaigne. Some managed to run across the sea to Avalon and settled there. They severed all contact with each other to ensure their own safety and quietly disappeared. Satisfied that they were no longer a threat, the Montanus family left them alone. With the bloodline doing its best to hide among the people they lived with, the sorcery has quietly diluted into Montaigne and Avalon. Full sorcerers are rare, but have been known to crop up almost by accident when the right families happen to produce a child.

Like all other Bargainer's arts, Mirage has an effect on the Great Barrier. Every use of Mirage allows the races on the other side to see through the barrier. Through Mirage, the Syrneath watch with envy the pathetic apes who stole their lands.

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Apprentice, Mirage Checks +1, Image Control
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Viewing: Next room
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Mirage Checks +2
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Timesight: A Day
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Mirage Checks +3
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Viewing: Next Village
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Mirage Checks +4
8	+6 / +1	+6	+2	+6	Stepping, Timesight: A Week
9	+6 / +1	+6	+3	+6	Mirage Checks +5
10	+7 / +2	+7	+3	+7	Adept, Viewing: Next City
11	+8 / +3	+7	+3	+7	Mirage Checks +6
12	+9 / +4	+8	+4	+8	Timesight: A Year
13	+9 / +4	+8	+4	+8	Mirage Checks +7
14	+10 / +5	+9	+4	+9	Shattering, Viewing: Next Country
15	+11 / +6 / +1	+9	+5	+9	Mirage Checks +8
16	+12 / +7 / +2	+10	+5	+10	Glass World, Timesight: 10 Years
17	+12 / +7 / +2	+10	+5	+10	Mirage Checks +9
18	+13 / +8 / +3	+11	+6	+11	Master, Timesight: 50 Years
19	+14 / +9 / +4	+11	+6	+11	Mirage Checks +10
20	+15 / +10 / +5	+12	+6	+12	Soul Stealing, Timesight: 100 Years

New Base Class - Mirage Sorcerer

Mirage sorcery uses mirrors and reflective surfaces to scry and manipulate the souls of its victims. In the days before mirrors, pools and other bodies of water were used by the sorcerer, but nowadays, mirrors are far more use.

Apprentice: The first thing a Mirage sorcerer learns to do is take control of the mirrors around him and what they see.

They also discover how to break open the barrier between reflection and reality and pass their hand into the glass.

Adept: By now the sorcerer is able to enter the glass themselves, lurking inside the reflections of mirrors to spy and manipulate those who look within.

Master: Finally the Mirage sorcerer can move between reflections, moving from inside one mirror to the next. They learn how to draw the souls of their victims into the glass or murder them by tearing apart their reflections.

Requirements

To become a Mirage sorcerer, a character must be human, have some natural portion of Avalon or Montaigne blood, and fulfil the following criteria:

Feats: Either Half Blooded (Mirage) or Full Blooded (Mirage). Take Half Blooded (Mirage) as his 1st level feat, which makes them a Half Blooded Mirage Sorcerer. The character may advance to 7th level, but no farther. A character may, at 1st level, take the feat Full Blooded (Mirage) as his additional 1st level feat which allows him to advance past 7th level.

In non-Théan campaigns, Avalon or Montaigne heritage is not required, although the DM may assign other criteria based on the specific world.

Game Rule Information

Alignment: Any

Hit Die: D6

Class Skills

The Mirage Sorcerer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis) and Spot (Wis). *See chapter 4 in the Player's Handbook™ for skill descriptions*

Skill points at 1st level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

All the following are class features of the Mirage Sorcerer.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A Mirage Sorcerer is proficient with all simple weapons; he is not proficient in the use of armor or shields.

Apprentice: At 1st level, the Mirage Sorcerer may select one of the following abilities: Attractive Reflection (the sorcerer's reflection appears to have +1 greater Charisma than the sorcerer), spell (the sorcerer may select one Mirage spell, which does not count against his maximum number of spells, though other limitations still apply) or Image Repair 1/day (by manipulating his image the mage affects the real world,

healing himself (only) of 1D4 hit points)

Mirage Checks: When a Mirage Sorcerer wishes to make a Mirage check (as defined in the appropriate rules) he may add this bonus to the check.

Image Control: At 1st level the sorcerer can twist the images that mirror shows others. To use this power the sorcerer must have uninterrupted contact with the specific mirror and concentrate as he lays his curse upon it. Ever after, until the magic is dispelled by the sorcerer or another mage the enchanted mirror will reflect things as the sorcerer has commanded it to. However, should he use the enchanted mirror for scrying purposes he can see the true reflection if he chooses to. The DC of the Mirage check the sorcerer must make depends on how far he wishes to twist the image. Subtle manipulation (Everyone has different colour eyes) DC 5
Minor Twisting (All ladies see their worst feature amplified) DC 10
Obvious Adjustment (The men of the castle will all appear to have beards and warts) DC 20.

Major Manipulation (Anyone sees themselves hideously disfigured or stunningly beautiful) DC 25

If the sorcerer wishes to affect only one person when they look into the mirror he must hold something personal of their while enchanting the glass and the DC is raised by 3 points.

Viewing: Upon reaching 2nd level the sorcerer can see the reflection in one mirror that appears in another mirror. So he may see what is reflected in a mirror in another house in the glass he is looking at in front of him. This functions in a similar way to any other scrying. However as the sorcerer is targeting a mirror and not a person there is little anyone can do to resist the magic. Unfortunately this ability only shows the reflection of the other mirror, not anything specific in the room. So if the person you want to watch is not there or the mirror is turned away the sorcerer is powerless to see what he wishes to. As the character advances in levels the range between the mirrors gradually increases. The sorcerer must know the rough location of the mirror he wishes to target (it can be in a different

location in a room, but it must at least be in the same room) and he must also have been in physical contact with it at least once. To use this power the sorcerer must succeed in a DC 15 Mirage check, and the power lasts for one minute for each point above the DC gained.

Timesight: When the sorcerer reaches 4th level his viewing ability has advanced so far he can now look into the past or the future. The images a glass sees are stored within it forever, and a Mirage mage can access those images. This ability works in the same way as Viewing, and can be done in conjunction with viewing to see images from another mirror. As the sorcerer improves in levels he is able to see further back or forward in time. The problem is that if the mirror didn't reflect what the mage wishes to see, he cannot view it. Mirrors are often moved or adjusted as time passes. So the further back or forward you wish to go, the less chance you have of finding the image you wish to see. As in viewing, the sorcerer must make a DC 15 Mirage check to activate the power, which lasts for 1 minute by each point he succeeds.

Stepping: At 8th level the mirage sorcerer learns how to break the barrier between this world and the mirror realm. He can now pass into the glass and walk inside the reflection. Inside the mirror he can move around as if in a backwards version of real life. However other people's reflections appear as ghosts to him. Those who look into the mirror can see the sorcerer unless he

conceals himself with whatever is to hand. To pass into the glass the sorcerer must be able to fit through the frame, and he can take anything inorganic with him that he can carry. However the sorcerer cannot leave the confines of the reflection he is in, and should the mirror break he is trapped within.

Adept: At 10th level, the Mirage Sorcerer may select one of the following abilities: Attractive Reflection (the sorcerer's reflection appears to have +2 greater Charisma than the sorcerer), spell (the sorcerer may select one Mirage spell, which does not count against his maximum number of spells, though other limitations still apply)



or Image Repair 1/day (by manipulating his image the mage affects the real world, healing himself of 2d4 hit points). All these abilities stack with those gained from apprentice.

Shattering: When the sorcerer achieves 14th level he learns how to hurt the reflections of others when he lurks inside a mirror. He must first chain the image by paralyzing it within the mirror. This requires a Mirage check with a DC of 15. Should the roll succeed the victim must make a will save or be rooted to the spot outside the mirror. Now they have paralyzed their victim the magician can attack their image like any other paralyzed target. Unfortunately even if it could move the ghost reflection cannot harm the sorcerer within the glass. If the sorcerer fails to paralyze the victim he can still attack, but must deal with a moving target. When the victim is no longer reflected the sorcerer cannot harm them. All damage done to their reflection leaves no marks on them physically, but does damage as normal.

Glass World: Upon reaching 16th level the Mirage sorcerer learns how to leave the confines of a single mirror and travel between reflections. He can enter the reflection of one mirror and pass into the reflection of another, then leave the reflection of the destination mirror if he chooses. As with stepping, the sorcerer must be small enough to fit through the frame to leave the mirror. However he can visit the reflection of even the smallest mirror if he does not wish to leave it. This requires a Mirage check with a DC of 20 to achieve, and is a good way to escape a broken mirror. However the sorcerer must know the location of the mirror he is travelling to (in the same way as Viewing) or he cannot reach it.

Master: At 18th level, the Mirage Sorcerer may select one of the following abilities: Attractive Reflection (the sorcerer's reflection appears to have +3 greater Charisma than the sorcerer), spell (the sorcerer may select one Mirage spell, which does not count against his maximum number of spells, though other limitations still apply) or Image Repair 1/day (by manipulating his image the mage affects the real world, healing himself (only) of 3d4 hit points). All these abilities stack with those gained from Apprentice and Adept.

Soul Stealing: The most terrible power of a Mirage sorcerer is available at 20th level. This ability allows the sorcerer to steal away the will of a target. To begin the process the sorcerer must be in physical contact with the victim as they look into a mirror, or they must be inside a mirror the victim is viewing. The sorcerer then makes eye contact with the vic-

tim's reflection and makes a Mirage check with a DC of 20. If this succeeds the victim is rooted to the spot in terror and must make a will save against a DC of 20. If the save fails the victim gains a shadow point. Each shadow point reduces the victim's Level, Wisdom and Intelligence by one point against any mental attack the Mirage sorcerer makes. Should the victim gain a shadow point they remember nothing of the experience, except a terrible feeling of dread. Should they resist the sorcerer's power they snap out of the state and are fully aware they are under mental attack. If the victim can go for a day without seeing their reflection, and make a will save against a DC of 20 (applying the penalties for shadow points) he can remove a shadow point. Unfortunately the victim must make a will save against a DC of 15 to pass a mirror without looking in. The sorcerer can attempt to give a victim a shadow point once each day, but can do so as many times as they wish. However, when the victim has gained 5 or more shadow points he has lost too much of his soul for life to have much meaning. Each day he must make a will save against a DC of 10, and if he fails he will attempt suicide. So the sorcerer must take care if he wishes to keep his puppets working for him. The sorcerer may only practice this power on one person at a time, and the victim becomes more depressed and ill looking with each shadow point they gain. At any time the sorcerer can restore the victim by making eye contact with his reflection as before and letting the victim's souls return from the other side of the glass.

Mirage Sorcerer Spells

A Mirage Sorcerer may cast arcane spells according to the tables below. He is limited to casting a certain number of spells per day, but he need not prepare his spells in advance as they are part of his blood. The number of spells is determined by his level, as indicated on the tables below. Wisdom determines the maximum spell level the Mirage Sorcerer can access, along with the DC of the spells he uses. To cast a spell, A Mirage Sorcerer must have a Wisdom score of 10 + the spell's level. He gains bonus spells based on his Wisdom score, and the DC necessary to resist his spells equals 10 + the spell's level + the caster's Wisdom modifier. He otherwise casts spells as a sorcerer, as per the Players' Handbook™.

Note that these spells are all enabled by the Mirage Sorcerer's control of reflections and images, and the subtle manipulation thereof. A Mirage Sorcerer must have access to a mirror or other clear reflective surface to use his power. This is the only material component required for any Mirage Sorcery. To affect a person with their power the Mirage Sorcerer must be able to see their target's reflection, but need not see the target themselves. Unless noted, the Player's Handbook contains complete descriptions for the spells.

0 Level

Dancing Lights. Creates torches or other lights

Daze. Creature loses next action.

Detect Magic. Detects spells and magic items within 60'

Flare. Dazzles one creature (-1 attack rolls)

Read Magic. Read scrolls and spellbooks.

1st Level

Alarm. Wards and area for 2 hours/level.

Charm Person. Makes one person your friend.

Hypnotism. Fascinates 2d4 HD of creatures

Identify. Determines the most basic function of a magic item.

Sleep. Puts 4HD of creatures into magical slumber.

2nd Level

Augury. Learns whether an action will be good or bad.

Misdirection. Misleads divinations for one creature or object.

Mirror Image. Creates duplicates of you (1d4+1/3levels Max 8)

Obscure Object. Masks object to divination.

See Invisibility. Reveals invisible creatures or objects.

3rd Level

Bestow Curse. -6 to an ability score, -4 on attack rolls, saves and checks; or 50% chance of losing every action.

Clairaudience/Clairvoyance. Hear or see at a distance for 1 min/level.

Hold Person. Holds one person helpless for 1 round/level.

Suggestion. Compels subject to follow stated course of action for 1 hour/level or until complete.

Nondetection. Hides subject from divination/scrying.

4th Level

Confusion. Makes subject behave oddly for 1 round/level.

Divination. Provides useful advice for specific proposed actions.

Phantasmal Killer. Fearsome illusion kills or does 3d6 damage.

Remove Curse. Frees object or person from curse.

Sending. Delivers short messages anywhere instantly.

5th Level

Contact Other Plane. Lets you ask question of extra-planer entity.

Dominate Person. Controls a humanoid telepathically.

Magic Jar. Enables possession of another creature.

Mind Fog. Targets in fog receive a -10 to Wis and Will saves.

Scrying. Spies on subject from a distance.

6th Level

Analyse Dweomer. Reveals magical aspects of subject..

Eyebite. Charm, fear, sicken, or sleep one subject as gaze attack.

Find the Path. Shows most direct way to a location.

True Seeing. Lets you see all things as they really are.

Symbol of Persuasion. Triggered rune charms nearby creatures.

7th Level

Ethereal Jaunt. You become ethereal for 1 round/level..

Insanity. Subject suffers continuous confusion.

Plane Shift. As many as 6 subjects travel to another plane.

Prismatic Spray. Rays hit subjects with a variety of effects.

Mind Blank. Subject is immune to mental/emotional magic and scrying.

8th Level

Antipathy. Object or location repels certain creatures.

Clone. Duplicate awakens when original dies.

Maze. Traps subject in an extra-dimensional maze.

Sympathy. Object or location attracts certain creatures.

Trap the Soul. Imprisons subject within a mirror.

9th Level

Freedom. Releases creature suffering from imprisonment.

Gate. Connects 2 planes for travel or summoning.

Imprisonment. Entombs subject within fate threads.

Soul Bind. Traps newly dead soul to prevent resurrection.

Time Stop. You act freely for 1d4+1 rounds.

Spells per Level

Character Level	Maximum Spell Level	Total Spells Known
1	0	3
2	1	4
3	1	4
4	2	6
5	2	6
6	3	7
7	3	7
8	4	9
9	4	9
10	5	10
11	5	10
12	6	12
13	6	12
14	7	13
15	7	13
16	8	14
17	8	14
18	9	15
19	9	15
20	9	16

Spell Progression (spells per day)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1									
2	1	1								
3	2	1								
4	2	2	1							
5	3	2	1							
6	3	3	2	1						
7	4	3	2	1						
8	4	4	3	2	1					
9	5	4	3	2	1					
10	5	5	4	3	2	1				
11	6	5	4	3	2	1				
12	6	6	5	4	3	2	1			
13	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			
14	7	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
15	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
16	8	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
17	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
18	9	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
19	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
20	10	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2

Love and Marriage

To finish with, no book on the nobility would be complete without a note about love and marriage. In the real world, marriage was a business affair; love had nothing to do with it. This is often the case in 7th Sea as well, but in the romantic atmosphere of Théah, marriage often occurs for love, and love more often occurs without marriage! Any noble characters will be under a certain pressure to marry and carry on the family line. Some may find themselves married to a spouse they have rarely met ‘for the good of the family’. In game terms this can be a wonderful opportunity. Do the couple find love after being thrown together, or perhaps tragically do they fall for someone else? This is especially likely for Vodacce characters, and it is a good way to allow a Fate Witch to travel. If she is married to one of the other characters, she is able to adventure with her husband.

In general, do not sideline the romantic lives of your characters. Romance is as much a staple of the genre as sword fighting. D’artagnan gets involved in the plots of the Cardinal because he fancies one of the Queen’s ladies in waiting. The Scarlet Pimpernel has to hide his secret identity from a wife he loves, who is beginning to tire of his foppish mask. Your characters will want romance, so don’t be afraid of it. It is a great way to flirt with other members of your group after all! However, remember that any romance that happens in the game is doing only that. Don’t confuse love between

characters as potential romance between players. This is especially true if one of you isn’t single, and even more so if their partner doesn’t game. They may not understand how your character’s relationship is nothing to worry about, when their exploits are filled with passionate romance.

Just about every swashbuckling character should have a paramour. It is a lot more fun when it is a player character as well. Plenty of couples fight, explore and adventure together in Théah after all. If the paramour is an NPC, don’t sideline the character. Consider what your character really thinks about them, and you may realise they are destined for a far more intense relationship. Once you get going your character will be climbing out of their paramour’s window in the dead of night in no time. Hopefully they will do so before the spouse returns, as quite often in swashbuckling stories the paramour is married! To get you started, if you decide your character should have a paramour, or maybe more than one, you can roll on the table below. These are just starting ideas to help you kick start your character’s amorous adventures. You can roll or choose from either list, no one said you had to stick to your own gender when assigning a paramour after all. You can adjust the ideas below, change their sexes and invent your own ones if you like. Again, this is just a starting point, it is far better to decide on this sort of thing naturally through role-play.

Female Paramours

1. Gabrielle, the Jenny who refused to charge you that night
2. Sarah, the waitress at the local tavern, who always smiles at you when she brings your drink
3. Denevra, the mysterious beauty who won’t tell you anything but when you can meet again
4. Eva, the sailor who dragged you to her room that night
5. Minnette, the maid who sighs when you leave the house of her mistress
6. Arielle the Musketeer, who has fancied you since you duelled.
7. Collette, the shy but quick witted girl, who you talked with for hours at the ball
8. Isabelle, the sorceress who you found yourself mysteriously drawn to
9. Eleanor, the courtier who smiled at you from behind her fan

10. Nina, the princess who held your gaze all night, even when dancing with other men

Male Paramours

1. Allain, the beggar who rescued you from street thugs and tended your wounds
2. Estaban, the sailor who knows all the best bars, and how to show a girl a good time
3. Jerome, the man servant who flirts with you every time you meet
4. Boris, the barman whose strong hands seem gentle and kind when he holds your hand
5. Marcus, the swordsman whose cynical rudeness oddly makes you want him more.
6. Magritte, the quiet duellist, whose silence intrigues you all the more
7. Victor, the musketeer who treats you with far more respect and distance than you'd like.
8. Alejandro, the fop who sends you a ton of flowers each day
9. Oswald, the dashing courtier your sister married, who smiles too often at you.
10. Pietro, the dark eyed prince who danced only with you at the ball

So if it all goes well, you may find your character getting married. Most wedding ceremonies are pretty much the same. The bride and groom promise to stay together before a priest or official. He then blesses the union and declares them legally wed. Weddings are full of plot ideas, just go to one in real life and look around you! So you are cheating yourselves not to role-play out the happy occasion should it come about. The ceremony itself will depend a little on the religion of the couple. So to give you a starting point, we present the Vaticine version of the ceremony. This forms the basis of most other Thean ceremonies, and is the most ritualised. Below is the basic ceremony, but there are many superstitions that can adapt it. These are noted with numbers and explained afterwards.

Vaticine Wedding Ceremony

The ceremony begins with the Groom waiting in the church with his best man. He or his father must kneel before the

priest and ask for the attendance of Theus at his wedding.

Groom: Holy Father, I humbly ask that Theus watch over this, my wedding day.

Priest: Theus watches us always my son. Stand with your bride and present yourselves before his grace.

After the groom has asked for the presence of Theus. He goes to the door and opens it. This is a sign for the bride to enter. The Groom returns to the altar to await her. In another tradition he may not turn until she arrives at the altar. Meaning he cannot see her before he gets there, or know if she is coming at all.

Another tradition linked to this is that the mother of the bride or other close female relation comes up the aisle first. She looks at the groom and then returns to the bride waiting outside, supposedly to report that he is a catch. To ensure her good report the groom offers her a small gift when she comes to check him out, however he is not allowed to speak to her.

The bride arrives in the company of her father. Together they stand before the priest who blesses the congregation as a whole.

Priest: Children of Theus. We are gathered here under the gaze of all to witness the joining of two hearts and families. May the blessings of Theus be upon you all on this happy occasion.

Congregation: Thanks be to Theus.

Priest: Know that in this house, and in all houses your hearts are open to the lord who sees into the deepest parts of all men. Witness what you see here with an open and joyful heart, and seek not to interfere with that which our lord has ordained and blessed. Know also that if there is any just reason that this marriage is unfit to put before the lord, verily he does know. He who holds a sinful truth should speak it openly and before those here present now, lest it burn in his heart and taint the union of these two blessed souls. If any here present know of any lawful and just reason why this union is unfit for the blessing of Theus, they must speak it aloud now.

There is a pause for objections.

In some ceremonies the priest calls three times, one for each prophet, for any objections to be voiced. He uses the words –
In the sight of Theus and by the wisdom of the first prophet, I charge you to speak.
In the sight of Theus and by the purity of the second prophet, I charge you to speak.
In the sight of Theus and by the fire of the third prophet, I charge you to speak.
Then until the coming of the fourth prophet, you are charged to keep that silence evermore.

Priest: (to bridal party) The gaze and light of Theus is upon you, and the heart and law of man has blessed this union. Therefore I ask you to come before me and be joined as one.

The Groom steps forward and turns to the bride's father.

Groom: I <his name> ask that I may claim the hand of your daughter. That I may shoulder the burden of love and protection you have offered her until this day.

The father puts the daughter's hand in the grooms, and the priest covers both their hands with his.

Father: I grant you that burden and joy, freely and with all my heart before Theus.

In some traditions the father adds the following cheery threat.
"But if you should cast aside that burden, know that I shall come for you and deliver its full force upon you with the might of Theus to guide my hand."
 Adding these words is sometimes just traditional, and sometimes taken as a sign that the father does not approve of the match.

The father steps back taking his place in the congregation. The priest then looks to the bride and groom and gets them to repeat the following to each other. The groom goes first, then the bride.

(Exchange of Vows): I <Groom or Bride's full name> take you to be my <husband/wife>. I promise to love you, honour you and cherish you with all my heart always. As Theus is my witness, no other shall lay claim to my body and heart but you. No other shall I stand beside but you. No other shall have my trust and love but you. I promise here before the grace of our lord that we shall be forever joined as one, in

poverty as much as in bounty, in sickness as much as in health, until death part us. This I do swear before Theus and my family for evermore.

A popular tradition is that of wedding rings. Only an engagement ring is required. This is because the bride usually comes with a dowry from her family, which the groom's family has access to from the official engagement. Should the groom fail to marry his bride, she will at least have the engagement ring as compensation. So the ring is traditionally worth at least a month's salary of the groom. Wedding rings are pretty common if they can be afforded by the couple. Often only the bride is given a ring, but sometimes the groom wears one as well. This is becoming more popular. If rings are to be exchanged the ring is placed on the finger of the recipient while their partner to be says their vows. The exchange of vows speech is begun with
"Let this band be a token of the love I bear thee. As a circle never ends, so shall my love never fade. Let this ring forever remind us both of the promise I make to you this day."

When both bride and groom have offered their vows the priest wraps their hands with his scarf.

Priest: You have come before Theus and made a serious promise to each other before him. His light shines upon you both, and blesses this union. You are hereby bound as one flesh before him, made one with each other and sealed with his glory. No force of man may part you; no power of earth can sunder what Theus has wrought. By the authority vested in me under the light of Theus I pronounce before all here present that you are husband and wife. Go forth as one to love and serve each other under the will of Theus.

The priest unwraps the hands and the couple leave the church together. The ceremony is ended and the congregation can follow after.

For the romantics the priest may also add "You may now kiss the bride" at the end. The more traditional couple may opt for the original version of "Let those here present witness that you two are now one." Both versions have always been assumed to be an allusion to sex. Now the couple are married they can finally jump into bed together, although they may well have already done so, even in 1668.

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