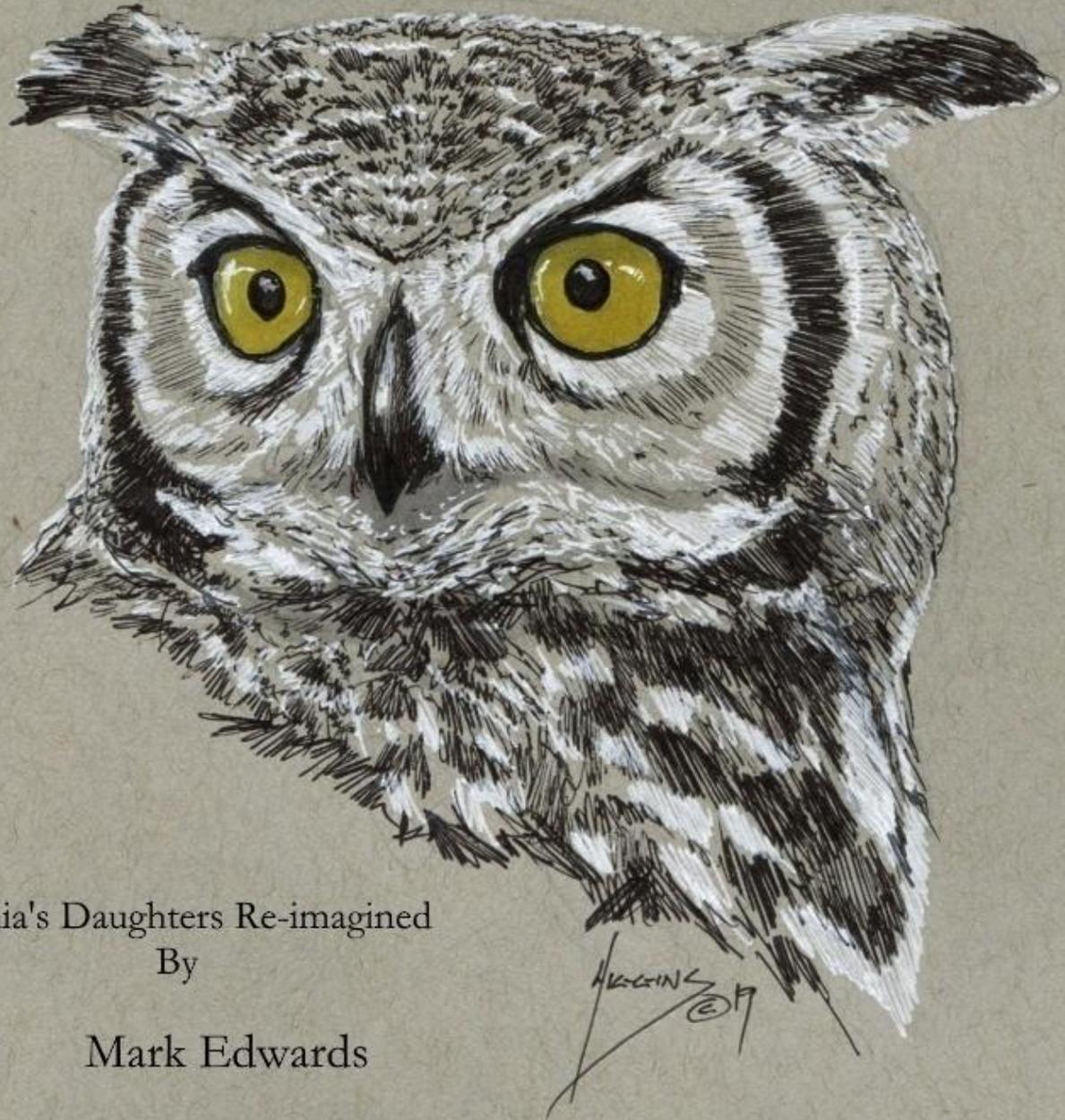


The First Tome



Sophia's Daughters Re-imagined
By

Mark Edwards

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The First Tome

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Sophia's Daughters Re-imagined



“Each time a woman stands up for herself, she stands up for all women.”
-Maya Angelou



The First Tome

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To every woman I know. You're all amazing.

Mark



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The Babe

The wind, cold and unforgiving, whipped up over the cliff. It carried along sea spray and the smell of the ocean. But the assembled women scarcely noticed, focused as they were on the tableau in front of them.

“Stay back!” yelled the one standing apart from the rest; her feet frighteningly close to the cliff’s edge. She was barely an adult, her face still hinted at the child she’d been not long ago. In her arms was a small package swaddled in cloth. Her stance was pure bravado as her eyes revealed her fear and desperation. *“If you come any closer, I’ll jump! I swear I will!”* For emphasis, she leaned over the edge and extended the package.

Several in the crowd gasped and some ran for help. But there were three who neither looked at their sisters nor withdrew. They stood as if oak, their faces deeply etched with the worries and wisdom of several lifetimes. The first spoke quietly, *“Eadgyð, you’re scared. I understand. I remember feeling desperate when my oldest, Ecgerbt, was born. But your injuries...”* she let the words trail off while she gestured at the dark, wet stain growing on the younger woman’s dress.

Eadgyð withdrew slightly from the precipice and looked down. A good sign but the three still held their breath. Unfortunately, when Eadgyð looked up, they saw their words had not impacted her as they’d hoped.

Her eyes were dark behind the matted hair. *“It doesn’t matter. I tried to tell you, but you refuse to listen. This is not my child! This thing is evil!”* She looked as if she had made up her mind to jump when the second interrupted her thoughts.

“Eadgyð, we can...we will...help you. There are ways...” the other two nodded in agreement. *“We can figure that out later. But for now we must stop the bleeding. Your life is just as important. Please, step away from the cliff.”*

Eadgyð exhaled. Without breaking eye contact, she leapt. Or would have, had the third woman not been the quicker. She grabbed both baby and mother in her iron grip; speaking softly and quietly but not relenting until Eadgyð began to relax.

Finally, it seemed, it was over. Eadgyð hugged the older woman tightly, desperately. In response, the older woman softened her grip.

Immediately, Eadgyð reacted, pushing back hard with her feet. The three of them went tumbling off the cliff. There was nothing to do but watch and listen to the distraught woman’s pitiful scream receding into the sounds of the surf.

The two remaining women stood transfixed; unable to leave, yet unwilling to stay. Then they heard the long, loud, powerful crying of a newborn.

Rushing forward they spotted a small bundle nestled on an outcropping of dirt, rock, and roots. Held fast to one of the roots was the third woman.

“Don’t come closer,” she admonished. *“The cliff isn’t secure. My weight...”* She stopped as the root pulled partly free from its moorings. Several nearby rocks came loose and fell toward the dark water below.

The first spoke again. *“My sister, we will get a rope, just hang on.”*

“There is no time” said the third as she eyed the ledge with the baby upon it. Lifting her gaze, she looked directly at her sisters. *“We work together for the good of all. Either I die, or both of us do.”*

“I choose...” she said, her voice breaking for the first time. *“I choose to ensure she lives.”*

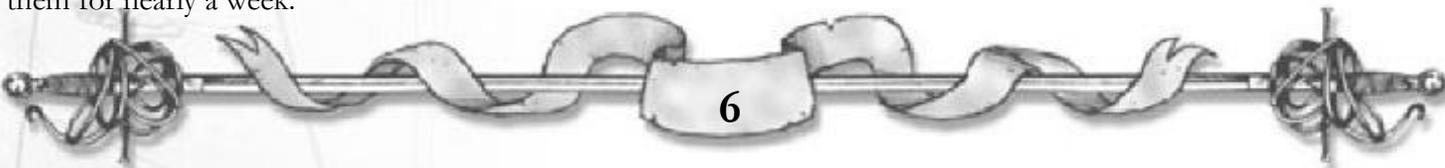
She let go.

A decorative scroll with a metallic rod and ornate clasps at both ends. The scroll is unrolled in the center, displaying the text "The First Tome" in a classic serif font.

The First Tome

A faint, detailed background illustration of a historical map or nautical chart. It features a grid of latitude and longitude lines, a prominent compass rose with directional markers, and various navigational symbols and lines.

History



Common Belief

Ask a random man about Sophia's Daughters and you will probably get a quizzical look. Most either assume you are mad or are looking for the female progeny of a woman named Sophia.

Asking some stodgy old university professor may get you some long-winded explanation involving the ancient Numan root of the term "Philosophy" ("*philo saphientia*" or "Love of Wisdom") and how, in 320 AUC, the Numan Philosopher Latum wrote a thesis entitled "*Filiae Saphientia*" (Daughters of Wisdom).

He will go on about how Latum overheard women discussing their *philo-saphientia*. How he was so impressed with their thinking, he returned to talk to them for nearly a week.

He will continue the discussion until long after you have lost interest. In the end, you will come out with no more information than you had at the start, probably believing—like most Theans—there is no such group as Sophia's Daughters.

Should you ask a woman about Sophia's Daughters, she may get very quiet. She and her friends might exchange knowing, worried, looks. One of them might shake her head ever so slightly. Finally, she will say, "*never heard of them*" in a flat, clipped manner which implies she has said all she is going to say.

But if you mention your father refused to fund your further education declaring, "*you're just going to be a wife anyway,*" or that you are afraid for your safety. Then, that very same woman may set her jaw and say, "*follow me.*"

That is the delicate balance Sophia's Daughters must maintain.

Private Truth

Wondering how Sophia's Daughters came to be? The simple truth is no one really knows for sure. Daughters throughout the ages have searched to find those answers. Very few, if any, records exist of their activity prior to just a few hundred years ago. Consequently, those questions have not yet been answered satisfactorily. So, the search continues... it always continues.

But a more important question is, "Why did Sophia's Daughters form?" That can be answered with one word, *Freedom*. Freedom from illness and death. Freedom from sorcery and superstition. Freedom from ignorance and oppression. Whether a Daughter watches the birds flying south in the fall and wonders, "Why?", brews elixirs designed to cure disease, risks her life helping other women escape dangerous or oppressive home lives, searches for long-forgotten Storehouses of ancient knowledge, or befriends a Sidhe to help free humanity from their yoke. Freedom is what every Daughter is fighting for: freedom for themselves, their sisters, and ultimately, everyone in Théah.

However, everyone loves a good story. To fill the void left by their lack of hard evidence, certain tales have been passed down from Daughter to Daughter throughout time. While their veracity cannot be proven, their importance to Sophia's Daughters cannot be overstated.

Stories and Legends

Little is still known about the Daughters prior to 1000 AV. However, they were curious about and had an extensive knowledge of the natural world. They had a communication system that extended throughout Théah and the Crescent Empire. They viewed all

Bargainers' gifts with suspicion. None more so than Sorcery which they likened to a disease with no cure.

As for a detailed history, there is little other than anecdotes and legends about the women of Sophia's Daughters and how they made a difference. However, regardless of their accuracy, their words continue to inspire future generations to secure the cause of freedom.

Sophia and the Truth of Sorcery

The Book of the Prophets tells the story of the First Prophet and his time on Théah. But what most do not realize is how instrumental the Daughters were in saving His words from oblivion.

The story begins with Sophia, one of The Nine Witnesses. It is implied she was the weakest among the witnesses as she was meek and unremarkable in both piety and cleverness. Yet repeatedly, the First Prophet insists she accompany Him everywhere. The question is, why?

For Daughters, the answer is simple. He chose her to preserve and spread His word once He was gone because He knew she was a Daughter. Moreover, He knew that meant she regularly shared information with a wide network of other women. Thus, His words would be shared far and wide. Even her death could not silence His message. That was why, just prior to His arrival on the senate floor, He told Sophia He did not want her to accompany Him. Instead, He wanted her to flee.

She balked at the idea, arguing with Him to rescind his edict. But in the end, she followed His command. For reasons never recorded—but hotly contested—Sophia consumed one of the special elixirs known at the time before leaving Numa.

On her way out of the city, she happened by the traitorous senators who would soon sentence the First Prophet to death. The elixir revealed a wrongness within them. It was like an illness or chronic injury and she knew the cause was their sorcery. Sophia realized why The First Prophet ordered her to flee. His teachings were simply too



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important, and everyone who stood at His side would die.

This same wrongness pervades every sorcerer from Avalon, Castille, Eisen, Montaigne, and Vodacce. Moreover, the wrongness seeps out once cast. Porté holes and the scorch marks from an El Fuego Adentro mage's fireball reveal sorcery is affecting Théah itself. Sophia's Daughters are dedicated to seeking a cure, and freeing Théah from the Bargainers' yoke.

The Lost Storehouses

There was a time when it could be argued that the Daughters' libraries possessed all the knowledge in Théah worth knowing. Though certainly exaggerated, there is a certain amount of truth to the claim. After all, the Daughters built and maintained the earliest libraries (colloquially called Storehouses by Daughters since time immemorial).

Throughout the years, a few collections went missing due to death or misadventure. But most were lost at the hands of the Inquisition, when they began eradicating Daughters. Many Storehouses were destroyed or absorbed into the Church for safekeeping, never to be seen again. Some surviving Daughters moved their collections or camouflaged their entrances hoping to avoid capture.

With so many Daughters taking their secrets to their graves, much was lost. The belief is some Storehouses survived. They are out there, just waiting to be re-discovered in the writings of an ancient tome, or by exploring long forgotten territory.

Magical Cures and Potions

By far the most "magical" aspect of the Daughters is their ability to create wondrous compounds. Despite layman's associations between "Witches" and "Magical Potions," Elixir Brewing is not magic.

Instead, it is the result of centuries of research, testing, observation, and refinement. It just seems like magic to the uneducated.

Novice Daughters always seem to want to know how their forebears learned how to make such potent creations. Unfortunately, the answer is frequently, "We have no idea." In fact, there are currently only three elixirs which have known origins.

It was Crescent Daughters who are generally credited with the first elixir, علاج الأطفال (Eilaj Al'atfal, or Children's Cure). It was distilled from *tejpat* leaves and was used to cure diarrhea (a major killer of children at the time).

The origin of the Elixir of Resistance is also known, at least partly. Avalon Daughters were the first to refine it from the much older Healing Elixir. The ancient manuscripts chronicling that have survived until now. However the origin of the base Healing Elixir has been lost to time.

Finally, the Breath of Life is among the most recent creations. In fact, it is one of only a handful of elixirs created after the Inquisition's purge of Daughter Storehouses.

Cures, however, are another story. The renaissance of naturalistic observation that took place in the mid to late 1000s created dozens of new cures for such varied ailments as headaches, fever, gout, foul breath, cramps, acne, etc., and just as many new uses for older cures.

Local Legends

Just as there are some stories all Daughters share, there are also those with more regional charm. Here are some of each nation's most popular tales.

The Gifts of the Sidhe (Avalon)

Æbbe and Hild grew up orphans in Canguine after their parents died. The two clung to one another as only family can. But while tough, their lives were filled with love as they always had one another. Being older, Æbbe rowed out every day to fish for their supper.

One fateful day fog enshrouded all of Avalon, guarding it from outsiders but keeping Æbbe from



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returning. She searched for weeks but could not make it back. Eventually a passing ship brought her to Montaigne.

There she waited. And waited. And waited. Fifty years later to the day, the fog lifted. An old woman now, Æbbe nevertheless made the harrowing journey back only to find Hild had not aged a day.

In anguish, Æbbe lamented, saying the Sidhe who had caused this reunited the sisters only to take them away from one another once again.

By chance a Sidhe overheard Æbbe's lament and promised to fix the problem for her. With that he turned Æbbe into a grand oak tree. Turning to Hild he said, *"Where is your thanks little one? Now your sister will live to see you grow old and die instead of the other way around."*

But Hild, who was hugging the tree that had been Æbbe, had nothing but curses for him and his "gift." Soon enough the Sidhe grew angry. How dare she not show proper deference? Thus, he cursed her, saying she would not move from her spot until she was ready to apologize. That is the reason for the entwined oak trees on the cliffs near Canguine.

When Avalon Daughters tell this story they always finish by saying, *"This is the way of the Sidhe. Their curses are heartless and cruel, and their gifts more so."*

Young Love (Castille)

Agáta and Ayesha were in love. Unfortunately, the Third Prophet preached that it was a sin, so they never told a soul. But the Inquisition found Ayesha anyway. She disappeared in the night, never to be seen again. Heartbroken, Agáta ran away.

Eventually she came to Vatacine City. There she earned a reputation as a fantastic cook. That caught the attention of the city's most powerful man.

At first he was a good master, attentive, if a bit demanding. But soon, his darker side was revealed. He imagined plots where none existed and on occasion even accused her of being involved.

Fortunately for her, he had no shortage of enemies. Eventually, he lost interest in Agáta's supposed treachery. Then, at fifty, he grew sick.

After a week of illness, he called her to his room. Feeling the end was near, he confessed how sorry he was for his cruel treatment, and told her how grateful he was for her comfort.

Agáta smiled sadly, for she had a confession of her own. She had been a good and faithful servant until he had finally started trusting her. It was then she began poisoning him.

When she first learned the Inquisition had killed her only love, she determined to find those responsible and kill them all. Her master—the Third Prophet—had created them.

The Third Prophet grew angry and tried to reach for her. But the poison had sapped his strength. Uselessly his arms fell to his sides as Agáta stood over him. She waited until he was dead. Then she went to her rooms, where she drank her own draught of poison.

When Castilian Daughters tell this story, they always finish by saying, *"Revenge is never the answer. But unjust leaders must be opposed even if it cost our lives."*

The Vizier (Crescent Empire)

The villagers of Kazeft always said Shadya would never find a husband given she preferred solitude. That changed when the Sultan passed through town.

In the market, the Sultan met her sisters, Hasna and Dima, both of whom were noted for their beauty. The Sultan desired beautiful things. Once he learned there were six sisters, he demanded all of them for his harem.

The first night Shadya was called to his bedchamber. He told her, *"You, like all my beautiful things, must please me. If you don't, your life is forfeit."* He motioned for her, but Shadya simply said, *"I will agree if you promise not to call for my sisters until I fail."*



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Intrigued, the Sultan agreed. Shadya then wove a tale of magic and dragons. At its crescendo, the dragon asked a riddle. At that point, Shadya fell silent. When the Sultan pressed her to continue, she told him he could solve the riddle now, or she would tell him the answer tomorrow. While he could not guess the answer, the Sultan was much pleased.

For weeks, the Sultan stuck to his agreement, calling only for Shadya. She continued her stories and riddles. Soon, she noticed the Sultan's younger brother. His smile said he was impressed by her. This time, she told a story about a woman forced to dance for a selfish man's pleasure and the young man who could do something about it.

It worked as she'd planned. The next day, the Sultan's brother dethroned him. The new Sultan's first act was to offer Shadya her freedom. But she refused, saying he needed someone clever and wise to act as his Vizier. Smiling, he agreed. But, he wondered if that hadn't been her plan all along.

When Crescent Daughters tell this story they always finish by saying, *"Protect your sisters, but always tell your own story."*

Hoarding Knowledge (Eisen)

Inga's forebears were Matriarchs tasked to keep Varnhaldt's Storehouse safe. But she wasn't interested in the knowledge therein. Instead, Inga wanted the wealth, power, and influence that knowledge could bring.

When the plague first arrived, her neighbors came to her seeking a cure. But not having one didn't stop her from providing it, in exchange for certain monetary compensation, of course. Desperation kept them from asking too many questions, even when the sick kept dying.

Nina was a Matriarch with an insatiable curiosity, who happened into town one day. Word of a cure soon piqued her interest, and she went to see Inga. But Inga rebuffed her, claiming Nina was desperate for wealth and power. Curious about Inga's reaction,

Nina went looking and soon found both Varnhaldt's Storehouse and the truth about her so-called, "cure."

Nina's investigation proved fruitful in other ways too, as the Storehouse revealed several secrets Inga had been trying to profit from. Nina began brewing, knowing what was to come.

When Inga finally sought Nina out, she was crawling. The plague was ravaging her body. Bottles of elixirs in hand, Nina asked Inga for help with the neighbors she had swindled. But Inga snatched a bottle away and gulped the concoction down.

Nina realized Inga cared only for herself so she waited for the elixir to take effect. It was over in minutes. Inga appeared as if a statue, and if the formula was correct, would be so forever. Then Nina got back to work. There were so many in need after all.

Weeks later Nina arranged to have Inga's body placed at the Storehouse's entrance. Even though she was unable to move, Nina made sure she still fulfilled her duty.

When Eisen Daughters tell this story they always finish by saying, *"Woe betide the Daughter who forgets our purpose."*

Love and Reckoning (Montaigne)

Orianne was a young noblewoman who had the great pleasure of marrying the man of her dreams and her very best friend. Their days were filled with happiness as they ruled his small kingdom in the north of Montaigne. They were even blessed with several children. Life could not have been better.

However, while their time was wonderful, it was not long. Soon it came to pass that the King of Montaigne, who coveted the lands of the north for himself, called Orianne's husband to court. While he was there, the King accused, tried, and executed him for treason.

Then the King's men besieged their castle, threatening everyone inside with torturous deaths



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should they refuse to open the gates. Orianne did the only thing she could, she ordered the gates opened and allowed the men inside. Then, when they were passing through the narrow drawbridge tower, she ordered her soldiers to kill every one of them.

When her soldiers were finished, she had the heads of the dead set on pikes, took her children, and left. But she was far from finished. She turned up in the court of the Avalon King and asked him for a boat to harry Montaigne ships. Impressed, he gave her three instead.

For the next 20 years, Montaigne ships lived in fear of Orianne the Pirate and her ship, The Reckoning. Then one day she simply stopped, disappearing into legend. It could be she thought they were finally even, or perhaps she found new love, or just had her fill of death. But one thing is certain. The only thing that stopped Orianne was Orianne.

When Montaigne Daughters tell this story they always finish by saying, *"You too are capable of great and terrible things. Remember that, always."*

The Long Game (Ussura)

Many years ago, a young Daughter named Zoya found herself turned around and lost in the woods. It had snowed recently and everything looked new and different. Eventually she met a woman named Olesya. She asked if Zoya had seen her children. They'd wandered off and she could not find them.

When Zoya replied she had not seen anyone before this, Olesya told her about a village nearby. Then she admonished Zoya to get there as quickly as possible. The woods, she said, were not a safe place, especially this night.

Zoya was about to ask what she meant when she realized Olesya was dressed in a shimmering nightgown, and left no trail in the snow. So once Olesya left, Zoya determined to follow her and see what happened.

Soon enough, Olesya came upon an old crone who quickly revealed herself to be Matushka. Upon seeing

Grandmother Winter, Olesya floated up above the ground and said in a voice made of ice, *"You have taken my children and I will have them back!"*

Matushka, her attention still elsewhere, responded, *"A thousand years or more you have sought your children. But I do not have them. Begone, spirit!"* With a dismissive wave of her hand, Olesya floated apart and was gone.

Zoya was terrified by what she saw and tried not to move. But as Matushka turned to walk away, Zoya heard her sigh, *"I grow tired of her game."*

When Ussuran Daughters tell this story they always finish by saying, *"Grandmother Winter may have all the power, but we will not yield. For even her resolve can break."*

Insatiable Curiosity (Vendel/Vestenmannjavnjar)

Jannike was just three the first time she ran away from home. She just followed her footsteps until she noticed she didn't know any of her surroundings. That marked the beginning of her adventures. Throughout the day, she spoke with elves, searched for giants, and climbed dangerous mountains. At no time did she consider how the folk of her village might react to her disappearance.

It took her parents and the rest of the villagers until the evening of the second day to finally find her. Sick with worry and grief, her father angrily dragged her back to the village. The whole way, she loudly pleaded with him to let her go because there were Jotunn yet to find.

By the time she was nine, she'd run away countless times. Because of that, she knew the location of every village, farm, cave, and álfstone on Thorshofn. Perhaps coincidentally, along the way she'd earned the enmity of nearly every Tillitsfolk not directly or indirectly related to her. To a one, they pointed to Jannike as the reason even other Vestenmannjavnjar were untrustworthy. They all said, one day, she would come to a bad end.

She thought about that while sitting on her favorite rocky beach the day after her 16th birthday. The fog was thick. Nearby, her small skiff rolled gently with



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the waves. She could no longer stay here. The Tillitsfolk were her people, but they weren't *her* people. The world was calling and none of them could hear it. She got in and started rowing. The fog swallowed her up and she was never heard from again.

When Vendel/Vestenmanjavnjar Daughters tell this story they always finish by asking, *"If you knew tomorrow you would die, would you shrink from your dreams?"*

The Lesson (Vodacce)

Carlotta was a handful. Not a day went by she didn't yell for help because, once again, she'd let her curiosity get the better of her. When that happened, it fell to her older sister Sarafina to rescue her. Frustrated and worried, Sarafina would often chide her little sister for her carelessness.

Now some might take that as reason to curtail their behavior. But for Carlotta, being able to rely on her older sister simply emboldened her curiosity. That was why, after Sarafina told her the legend of the Swamp Witch, Carlotta went to find her.

When Sarafina realized what had happened, she was angry. It was just a story, there was no Swamp Witch, and the swamp was not a place for children. Wordlessly she set out after her sister. By mid-afternoon she found a cottage. It wasn't exactly as described in the story. Still, the pitiful whimpers from inside assured her she'd found the right place.

As she approached, Sarafina could hear her sister, *"Mamme, please I will not tell anyone about you, I swear!"*

Looking in the window, Sarafina could see an old woman mixing something in a small cup. *"I am sorry, topolina, but I have survived by not taking risks. But do not worry, there will be no pain. Just a drop or two on your tongue and it will be all over."*

In an instant, Sarafina burst in the front door and sent the cup flying. It splashed the old woman in the face, drenching her. She quickly fell to the floor while the sisters fled.

When Vodacce Daughters tell this story they always finish by saying, *"In your life, you will be all these women, headstrong and frightened, frustrated and decisive, secretive and regretful. Remember, your best course of action depends on your perspective."*

The Daughters Organize

Until 1000 AV Sophia's Daughters was not a secret society in any sense. They did not have secret signs or codes, did not hide their allegiance, and were not involved with political events in any organized way. They were simply women who collected and shared information among like-minded individuals for the betterment of all.

Then, at the beginning of the 11th century, two major events began which not only changed the face of Théah forever, but also drove the Daughters to become the clandestine organization they are today.

Clouds on the Horizon

In early 1000 AV the Third Prophet revealed himself in San Cristobal. The news was initially met with celebration, prayer, and pilgrimages. But within Sophia's Daughters, there was only trepidation.

Sophia's tenure with the First Prophet had been amiable. But legend had it He warned her future Prophets would not be so helpful to her sisters' cause.

True enough, the Second Prophet preached about orthodoxy and a return to traditional values. He had no time for women who saw value in activities outside the traditional focus on home and motherhood.

The Third Prophet railed against the proliferation of sin and heresy both inside and outside the Church. Too many were not following the Word and had allowed sinners (i.e. Sorcerers) and non-believers (i.e. Crescents) to permeate every aspect of Vatacine life. It quickly became apparent His message had only one outcome, War.

Within two years the Third Prophet's words had enflamed his followers into open conflict with



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Crescents living in Castille and anyone else they saw as “non-believers.” Soon enough Castille, and then later Vodacce, went to war with the Crescent Empire, all but cutting off Crescent Daughters from their sisters. It lasted for eight bloody years, and it was only the beginning.

The White Plague Returns

Dormant since mid 4th Century, most Theans were unaware the white plague existed at all. Its return in 900 AV sent fear throughout Théah. There were conflicting reports about where it began first, but it cropped up only periodically for the next hundred or so years.

Then, in 1000 AV, death tolls increased from hundreds to thousands. It spread quickly and by 1003 AV had made its way to Varnhaldt, a small village north of Atemlos on Eisen’s eastern border. Finally, it arrived at the doorstep of an unassuming young woman named Dorothea Buchhalter.

Since the first outbreak, Dorothea’s matrilineal line had taken over *der Erdkeller* (the Earth Cellar) in Varnhaldt. Eventually it came into the hands of Dorothea’s mother, Mathilda. She was, by her own account, a poor choice. She did not count herself among Varnhaldt’ elite and thus had neither time nor resources to provide the best care for the Storehouse. In addition, Mathilda’s focus was on her family. It was unsurprising, then, that the collection suffered.

The Buchhalters were the first family in Varnhaldt to come down with the plague. It hit hard, infecting both Mr. Buchhalter and the youngest son, Heinz. Desperate to save their lives, Mathilda sent Dorothea to make the harrowing journey to The Earth Cellar in the foothills of *die Drachenbergs*. What she found there changed the course of the Daughters forever.

After nearly a week’s search and the agonizing realization dozens of texts were damaged beyond repair, Dorothea found the book now known as The First Tome. It was written in an ancient dialect of Théan. But Dorothea had a way with languages. She soon began reading.

The writers gave first-hand accounts of the plague’s effects. Then went on to give the formula for an elixir which had some success against the plague. While it was no cure, it could help alleviate symptoms. That, in turn, gave sufferers more strength to fight off the affliction.

Back home the formula worked and the women were able to save both family members. However, it was not without cost. In Heinz’s case, he went blind in the process. But their recovery was no secret. Soon all of Varnhaldt was asking for their help, despite the risks. Knowing their desperation, the women began brewing on a larger scale.

Unfortunately, it was not always successful. But with each setback they learned a bit more about combating the disease. Soon enough they had a plan. Sufferers needed to be given the concoction no more than once a day, and the earlier they started treatment, the better their chances.

Word of their success reached Mathilda’s cousin Ilsa Dreier. Desperate for her own loved ones, she traveled to Varnhaldt to beg for a copy. The three women spent all night talking. In the morning Ilsa left with the formula, and the Buchhalters had a new plan. While Mathilda made a list of every woman she knew who had the skill to make the formula, Dorothea copied the formula dozens of times.

Once they were finished, Dorothea headed south toward Practig. The plan was for her to distribute the copies to every woman on the list, and instruct them to do the same with anyone they might have missed. But there, Dorothea learned the awful truth. The women had assumed the plague had only hit their little corner of the world. But in reality, it had spread far beyond their borders. Eventually, she made a fateful decision, one which would take up nearly two years and see her to the Frothing Sea.

After writing her mother of her plans, she boarded the first ship headed downriver. The ship’s first stop was Stutzung. There she searched for other women capable of using the formula. Once she was satisfied



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with their progress, she moved to the next port, where she repeated her search.

Time and again she repeated the procedure and, by year's end, she had made it to Barcino. Seeing her job done, she returned to Varnhaldt, completely unaware of the events she had inadvertently set in motion.

Upon her return, Dorothea found several letters addressed to her. All were from women she had met in her travels. Over the next several years she received hundreds more. Most, simply expressed their gratitude.

But a precious few did more. Some wrote of adding their own local flourishes, ingredients which made the concoction more palatable, alleviated further symptoms, induced sleep, or the like. Others contained warnings against using certain additives or combining it with other formulae in too short a period of time.

Dorothea wrote back, sharing the information among the group. Within five years of correspondence she noticed a curious pattern. Independently, dozens of women reported a similar experience. Sorcerers who took the formula found it difficult to use their magic until sometime after they stopped taking it.

Over the next several years, Dorothea and these other women decided to study the formula's relationship to Sorcery more closely. Unfortunately, Dorothea and most of the others would never get the chance.

The Sacred Congregation

By 1011 the Third Prophet had plans well under way. The Second Crusade had gone well. His followers had successfully pushed Crescents out of Castille. It was time to focus on the matter of Sorcerers and other sinners.

About that time the White Plague again crossed the Dechane from both Montaigne and Eisen, and began re-infecting Castillians all along the northern border.

The Third Prophet was undeterred. He preached to the faithful of Castille, Theus would protect them.

That is, as long as they strictly adhered to the scriptures. To ensure that happened, he created the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith or, as it is more commonly known, the Inquisition. Its initial focus was on the priests and various orders within the Church. They wished to ensure only the true word of Theus was being taught.

When that was not the case—which was often—individuals and sometimes entire orders were excommunicated and replaced with those whose faith was uncontested. All came from within the ranks of those who had sided with the Third Prophet from early on. That meant nearly all were Castillian. It did not take long for the Cardinals in Numa to realize where this was headed. Meanwhile, Inquisitors heard more, via the priests they were investigating, about the outbreaks of the Plague along the Dechane. The priests claimed it had miraculously been stopped in its tracks.

But before the Inquisition could investigate further, in early 1012, tensions with the Numan Cardinals boiled over. The Inquisitors were recalled to help against the rebellious Vodacce.

Just over six years later, in mid 1018, the Third Prophet, with a great deal of help from Emperor Friedrich II, finally defeated Vodacce. His first act was to empower the next Hierophant, Innocent, in Castille.

Innocent, a master negotiator was soon in control of every aspect of the Church, including the Inquisition. From the outset he realized their methods, which had already become extreme in eight short years, had the potential to destroy the Church entirely. So, he re-focused them on more obvious sins such as sorcery.

While this was good for the general populace, it would turn out to have horrifying results for the Daughters. Without minor transgressions to investigate and their new mandate, they had more time to focus on anyone they considered sorcerers.

History records that the Inquisition did not officially sanction the use of torture until the Biancos of



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Vodacce in the late 1390s. However, the terrible truth is, they learned their craft in their first witch hunts 370 years earlier. Enrica Villanueva, a Castillian Inquisitor wrote of her experience in the book that became their instruction manual, the *Gladio Venefica*.

To make matters worse, the Third Prophet heard about the “miraculous cure” for the White Plague. He was concerned because “*these so called healing draughts and other potions are an affront to Theus. Moreover, they seek to subvert his will. Only through a compact with Legion is such a thing possible.*” He also implied those who brought the cure also brought the plague to sap the will of the faithful. With the words of the Third Prophet equating the cure with sorcery and Legion worship, the Inquisition focused on finding those responsible.

Initially people were reluctant to turn in someone who had saved them. After all, how could such a helpful elixir have been tainted by Legion? In response, the Inquisition resorted to harsher methods, in effect, honing their skills and hardening them to the tortures they inflicted. Soon enough, the pain loosened their tongues, and the Inquisition heard the tale. A young woman, no more than a teenager, mysteriously arrived just after the plague had arrived. She had with her a strange formula which, she said, could save many. Moreover, she asked for nothing in return. Ultimately when Inquisitors asked, they always heard the same name.

The First Martyr

Most didn't know where Dorothea Buchhalter hailed from. But everyone knew she came from upriver. So, with the full support of the Vodacce Princes and the Eisen Emperor, the Inquisition followed her route. The words of the willing (and not so willing) directed the Inquisition to Practig in just a few short months. Along the way, they had amassed a great deal of information about Dorothea and her motives. Or so they thought.

It is said that when they finally confronted her she was sitting by the fireplace in her home reading the Book of the Prophets, in Thean. Now in her late twenties, she could not hope for leniency due to her

age. Having honed the art of interrogation on others, the Inquisition set to work on Dorothea.

They already knew her story, they said. They just wanted to hear it from her. But she gave them nothing. Then, they threatened her family. Still, she gave them nothing. Next, they broke her bones. She screamed in agony, but she gave them nothing. For five days and nights she said nothing. It was all part of her plan. About the time the Inquisition arrived in Practig, she got word from Daughters who had been lucky enough to evade them.

Their warning had been opportune, but did little to protect other Daughters who might fall to their notice. What she needed was time. Her plan was simple; send Daughters out in every direction to warn others about the Inquisition. Then she waited, trading her life to give others a chance.

In the end, she was convicted of witchcraft and sentenced to be burned at the stake. At her sentencing, the High Inquisitor reportedly asked her what she would say to Theus when she met him. She replied simply, “*Judicia meas actiones*” (“Judge me by my actions”), the very words the First Prophet had used before Bargaining Senators pronounced sentence against him. Unfortunately, most Daughters did not hear about her words or her sacrifice until decades or even centuries later as most were too busy running for their lives.

Desperate Times

While Dorothea's sacrifice did frustrate the Inquisition's efforts, it did not have the effect she had hoped. Rather than considering the matter finished, it inflamed their desire to find out more. At that point, their efforts began in earnest.

Inquisitors started with those they had already questioned, seeking more information about secret cabals and promising a return to their lives once confession had been made. But as more information was revealed, penance became imprisonment and then death.



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For the next three hundred years the persecution continued. At the height of their investigations, ten women a day were killed. To this day the Daughters do not know how many they lost. But it very nearly destroyed them.

Soon enough, the Inquisition's investigations revealed the Daughters' Storehouses, thousands of treatises written on any number of subjects. Since part of the Daughters' mandate was to spread knowledge they had never tried to hide what they knew.

Most of their books and pamphlets were stored in plain sight. Either in their own homes or placed somewhere the community could access it readily, for example, at Universities, or if one was nearby, libraries.

The more esoteric books were only hidden because the subject matter was either difficult to understand or had been determined to be heresy after the fact. Even those locations (caves, nunneries, and the like) were always nearby for easy access. Soon after, the books became kindling for their fires. Untold scientific knowledge was destroyed, much of it still waiting to be rediscovered hundreds of years later.

Daughters tried to give one another warning, but they had never developed a communication system built for speed. Many were lost because they had not received warning, or it came too late. Those letters, tragically, often doomed the sender. Here and there, some Daughters fought back in their own way. But their efforts were hampered by their lack of organization.

Daughters—especially those who knew travel routes—tried to rescue other women from the flames. Some were fellow members who were in danger of being captured by the Inquisition. But most were just women who happened get the Inquisition's attention.

Daughters who had been tasked with protecting Storehouses began trying to preserve them. Some moved whole Storehouses, others buried them, and some just disappeared with their books. But often it did no good. After their actions during the Plague

they were well known to their neighbors. Those same neighbors now turned them in to the Inquisition lest it happen to them instead. As if problems of fear and ignorance from outside the organization were not enough, within the Daughters, more trouble was brewing.

Old Rivalries

In mid-1028 Henri du Montaigne—inspired by the Third Prophet's words about orthodoxy and sin—decided to invade Avalon. There was talk at the time; however, that greed and power were his true motivators. Daughters within L'Empereur's court reportedly did their best to intercede on the Avalonian's behalf. But it was all for naught.

Concerned Henri's forces would bring Inquisitors with them; Montaigne Daughters sent an urgent message warning Avalon's Daughters what was to come. But the message was never received.

Within the year, Avalon came under Montaigne control. But the horrific cost in lives was not without benefit. Henri's war drove the Sidhe from Avalon, and they took the Graal with them. As Glamour faded, the Daughters noticed the stain on Sorcerers did likewise.

Almost immediately, however, Avalon Daughters became convinced their Montaigne sisters secretly aided the invasion. They pointed to several Montaigne Daughters who were seen at the vanguard of the Montaigne army.

While they were relieved the Sidhe were gone, they were furious at the waste of lives. Worse, it further slowed down the organized response to both the Inquisition and the White Plague. It would take over three centuries of bad blood between the groups before cooler heads finally prevailed.

Meanwhile the Third Prophet, who had started the bloodshed and condemned nearly a quarter of Théah to torture, death, and worse, died peacefully in his sleep. If the Daughters thought it would stem the tide of bloodshed, they were sadly mistaken. His final sermon—The Fourth Vigil—condemned empiricism



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and sorcery and all who practiced it. It gave license to the Inquisition to continue their crusade to the present day.

The Great Theft

While the rest of Théah was occupied with the Inquisition, the Vodacce Princes returned to an old lucrative endeavor, war. Using the excuse of loyalty to the Church as a shield against their actions, they continued attacking the Crescent Empire even after driving the Crescents from Castille. For many years, with the Vodacce Cardinals' blessings, they sacked coastal towns. Ostensibly they were trying to drive the Crescents away from Vodacce. But in reality they were stealing the cities' wealth and securing the shipping lanes for their own benefit. They also managed to steal several precious pieces of art, not the least of which was the Khuzmar tapestry.

Then, in 1085 they attacked the city of Alexia and within three years completely overran it. As a gift to the Hierophant, the five Vodacce cardinals who had blessed the attack selected from the spoils a significant portion of the city's great library. But to help solidify their power in Vodacce, they insisted on keeping the books in Numa. Hundreds of the books taken were Daughters' works. Fortunately, seeing what had happened to their sisters gave Crescent Daughters time to prepare. Thus, they carefully hid their books within other works and then edited the works to remove any mention of the Daughters.

Unfortunately, all their works were considered heretical and eventually placed in the Apostolic Archives. In other words, they were for the eyes of the Hierophant only. How many and which works made it was unknown. Once the looting was finished,

the Cardinals ordered the library, and the scrolls that remained, burned to the ground.

Elsewhere

While the Inquisition was busy ravaging its way through most of mainland Théah, there were places not so afflicted. Many Daughters fled in search of safety. Most did not make it. But for those who did, there were a host of new problems.

Crescent Empire

Crescent Daughters were essentially cut off from their sisters during the Inquisition's assault. The only Daughters who came to the Crescent Empire were those who already understood at least one of the many languages spoken there. Some simply joined caravan followers already going that way. But the languages and customs barred any great influx.

Worse though, were the Crusades. War pushed Crescent Daughters away from the fighting in places like Rahajeel and Jesalute, which was where those fleeing the Inquisition were arriving and sent them to safer places like Razgrad and Urfa. It became nearly impossible for the two groups to find one another. It would take decades to make contact again.

Ussura

Of those who fled toward colder climes, a few of the desperate or foolhardy attempted to cross *Die Drachenbergen*. However, most took ships to Odyesse or what is now known as Ekaternava, or paddled their way to Somojez. In most cases they froze to death before they arrived.

Khuzmar Tapestry

Despite being commonly known as a tapestry, it is actually an embroidery (the adornments are sewn onto it, not weaved into the fabric) from the Crescent Empire. Its name comes from the Khuzmar district of Rahajeel where it was looted during the war with Vodacce in 1079. It is a detailed depiction of the Crescent Empire's coastline from Rahajeel to Iskandar. It is nearly 200' long and about 3' high decorated with several hundred pounds of precious metal, pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds in no discernable pattern. It currently adorns Giovanni Villanova's private library at his estate on Diona.



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Those who survived were met by Ussuran Daughters. They were welcomed and told they could stay with Matushka's blessing. However, they had to understand a few things.

First, they were only to enter Pavtlow at Grandmother Winter's request. Second, she knew and approved of their stance on sorcery and their desire to cure those so afflicted. However, they had to make an exception for Piryem.

Piryem, they explained, was not sorcery. Instead, it was more akin to sharing with nature. It was an exchange where the practitioner borrowed the ability of a *willing* animal in exchange for giving them insight.

If the Daughters wished to stay they had to vow to never take direct action against her will. Faced with death as the alternative, they agreed. Thus continues Daughters' uneasy, but occasionally beneficial, alliance with Matushka.

Vendel/Vestenmannjavnjar

Daughters who made it were quite surprised by what they found there. Regardless of where they landed, they found the rights of women held in higher esteem than nearly anywhere else in mainland Théah. Women were allowed to own property and make many decisions without consulting male family members.

Interestingly, while the Vendel were welcoming, they largely ignored those who did not produce desired commodities. It was often a challenge for foreign Daughters to prove what they could produce was something the Vendel needed.

In contrast, the Vestenmannjavnjar revered Wise Women, or at least those who clung to the old ways. This proved to be a challenge for some Daughters, many of whom shunned superstition in favor of scientific advancement. Those who were able to find a delicate balance were given positions of authority within the villages which adopted them.

From the Ashes

It took over a century, but eventually the Daughters learned how to hide themselves. Once they were relatively safe, the Daughters began to regroup. All over Théah, women gathered at the local well or market and eventually ideas were shared. Over time, they would reach out to a neighboring village. A recipe would be passed along, a secret shared, a method of sending information established. From there, their network grew to the point that leadership needed to emerge.

The women who were instrumental in developing the networks became the *de facto* leaders. Eventually, the leaders met with other leaders, and soon the first Councils were created. These women became known as *Matriarchs*.

The term had been around for several decades. It was originally used for those Daughters who could remember the time before the Inquisition. But as they died off, it developed into a reference to any Daughter who held a position of authority and respect amongst other Daughters.

The purpose of the Council varied depending on where it was located, but in general they dealt with problems among Daughters, issued warnings about potential problems, and developed codes of conduct for nearby Daughters. Most had only the force of the personalities in the Council to back up their edicts, but more often than not, it was sufficient. When it was not, loyal Daughters with the right skills would back them up.

As the years passed, individual Daughters focused on new tasks. Subgroups emerged, separated and re-coalesced into the Tapestry, the Loom, and when necessary, the Shears. The first two now form the bulk of Sophia's Daughters. The third has no official members, but all understand its importance.



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The Tapestry

“The threads of a tapestry reveal how it was assembled, but they won’t reveal what knowledge its creator intended to impart.” – Madame Abigail Snelling

Knowledge. If you could distill the purpose of the Tapestry down into one word, that it would be it. Members of the Tapestry are dedicated to finding old and forgotten knowledge, defending and disseminating current knowledge, and refining and creating new knowledge. Individually they are known as Historians and Naturalists.

Historians are the curators and seekers of ancient Daughters’ knowledge. Older historians tend toward more sedate pursuits as their collections have already been established. More than that, many have committed their entire collection to memory. In effect, they have become living repositories of the books they protect. In addition, they often spend a good deal of time creating and distributing copies of their rarer books, thus defending against the possibility of losing their knowledge in the future.

A word of warning, it would be a grave mistake to confuse them with stodgy old librarians. Many have spent their youth searching for lost Storehouses. The survival, stealth, and combat skills they picked up along the way serve them well in maintaining their collection’s secrecy and, should it become necessary, its defense.

Younger historians rarely have their own collections outside the few precious books they keep with them always. Often they are taken in by older historians who hope to nurture their love of books and the knowledge therein. Given they either wait until an older historian is ready to retire from her position to get a collection or go in search of their own, many choose the latter. Nothing excites a historian more than the search for forgotten knowledge. Well, that and the prospect of having a unique tome for their future collection as a tantalizing reward. Most are unsuccessful in that pursuit, but along the way they gain other invaluable skills, learning how to survive in the wild, avoid predators, and defend themselves.

Naturalists, on the other hand, are the most frequent visitors of historian collections. Initially they were inspired to complete the work started by Dorothea Buchalter. While they continue that work, over time they have also been at the forefront of a renaissance of research and discovery. Their goal is nothing less than to refine and expand the limits of scientific knowledge. In the past three centuries, in addition to becoming the preeminent scholars of the White Plague, they have perfected nearly a dozen new cures. These include eliminating the symptoms of scurvy, flu, typhoid, and other ailments. In addition, some older cures had harmful, potentially fatal side-effects, naturalists have refined older formula in an effort to reduce or eliminate such dangers.

Again it would be a mistake to assume naturalists lack the knowledge and ability to care for themselves. They are called naturalists because they observe nature. All their discoveries are based upon some observable natural occurrence. They have been known to go for years with no other human contact if that is what will get them the information they seek.

The Loom

“Once you properly warp a loom, you can anticipate where all the threads will go, even before you’ve begun to weave.” – Queen Cándida Salvador Aldana de Sandoval

In contrast to the Tapestry—which concerns itself with the past and the future—members of the Loom focus on the present. They want to make Théah a better place right now, in small ways if necessary, in larger ways when possible. Right now, they reason, there are women in need. Right now, they can make a difference. People—if they are aware of Sophia’s Daughters at all—are aware because of the Loom. Individually they are known as Liberators and Infiltrators.

Liberators are the swashbuckling feminists of legend. Fighting their way through hoards of slaving, evildoers to help women to freedom...or so the stories go. The reality has a lot more to do with advance knowledge and careful planning than duels to the death. Knowing who is ripe for bribery and who is for blackmail does a lot more to make an escape



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successful than any fancy moves. Not that liberators are lacking in that regard. Liberators count among their ranks several of the deadliest swordsmasters in Théah. But the simple truth is, luck and chance play a much smaller part in determining an outcome when you have already tipped the scales in your favor.

Rescuing women is the smallest part of liberator activities. In their hearts, liberators are educators. They are willing to rescue women, but more importantly, they want to give women the skills to ensure they will not need to be rescued. It is the reason they do weapons training during an escape, and why every Storehouse along the way has books. They may say they these are to pass the time, but that is all part of the plan. If nothing else, they will need someone to take their place when they fall.

Liberators' most important and most frequent duty, however, is as couriers. From their earliest days, liberators were women familiar with trade routes. They made contact with other women in many different locations and that, in turn, made it possible for them to make additional deliveries with none the wiser. It was liberators who brought the Breath of Life from the Crescent Empire. To this day, when Daughters need to ensure a vital item is not lost or taken by an enemy, they contact a liberator.

Infiltrators are Sophia's Daughters' spies. They quietly collect and disseminate important information which could prove useful to the Daughters. Over time, their information has helped countless women, and their warnings have saved countless lives. It was quite a change from their origin as educators.

They began with the laudable goal of teaching the next generations more progressive thinking. It had been, and still is, a delicate balance. To succeed, they must change the status quo, but the changes cannot be so radical they arouse suspicion, lest the infiltrators incur charges of heresy.

The change to spies began when infiltrators realized their employers—people of power and influence—were not circumspect when talking in front of their servants. At first, infiltrators just learned the local

The Breath of Life

Unaffected by outside events and reasonably safe from the Vodacce Princes, Crescent Daughters continued their efforts to preserve Daughters' knowledge. But owing to the Inquisition's predations in other nations, many of those Daughters sent their precious books east. This gave Crescent Daughters unprecedented access to nearly all Daughters' research.

In just shy of eighty years, they came up with a unique way to ensure their knowledge survived. They kept their Matriarchs alive longer. It all began when they discovered Avalon's Rejuvenation potion. It had certain properties their own healing potions did not. Over time they were able to refine the two recipes into a formula that could extend the life of the imbiber. It did not confer eternal life, more a stay of execution. Repeated doses had lessening effects. The first use might extend a user's life by fifty years. But they would be lucky to get half that the second time. Worse, repeated doses increased the likelihood of madness or death.

They called their new potion *نفس الحياة* (Pronounced: nifs alHAYAR tee) the Breath of Life. The formula was lengthy and exacting. Making it was difficult because of the precision of preparations and the time involved. Even worse, the recipient had to be present for the entire process. The formula used their own blood and taking it required building up tolerance to the more dangerous ingredients. They learned to their shame a full strength dose, taken without buildup, meant a lengthy, agonizing, death.



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gossip, who might be getting married, who would not be attending a local party, etc. But over time, infiltrators learned everything, old rivalries, grudges, affairs, no secrets were safe. This information proved invaluable as leverage other Daughters could use to devastating effect.

The Shears

“Sometimes there’s no saving it, then the errant thread must be cut out.” - Anne Duboise du Arrent

There are men and women in Théah whose principles are in direct opposition to Sophia’s Daughters. Some can be ignored, or re-educated. When that fails bribery or blackmail can force a change. But some have power and influence enough to make those efforts futile. These people can act with impunity and inflict their will on hundreds or even thousands of people. When all other methods have failed, Daughters look to the story of Agáta, and know what must be done.

There are no permanent members of the Shears. But every Daughter is prepared to become one if necessary, or barring that, ready to lend aid to any who seek their help. The Shears are not experts in stealth or swordplay, firearms or arson. Instead, they are most often the trusted servants of their target. When the order is given, the Shears simply poison a drink, or a good meal, ensuring the problem goes away. It is the most efficient and least likely to have repercussions. Such people are never short of enemies to blame, after all.

More Recently

The past three and a half centuries have been filled with events of historical significance. Sophia’s Daughters have been right in the thick of things. Here is a quick overview.

The White Plague

After White Plague’s re-emergence, followed closely by creation of the Inquisition, the Daughters’ plan to examine the White Plague looked bleak. But early in the 12th century, they were ready to begin again. Using

Dorothea Buchalter’s original letters as their basis, they finally began to examine the plague.

It was elusive but the Daughters were persistent. Just over fifty years later, they had a new working theory. The White Plague was drawn to those with sorcerous blood and their descendants. Though how many generations down were at risk, they were not sure.

But more important was the realization Dorothea’s formula worked by somehow suppressing whatever gave sorcerers their magic. They realized if they could find a way to make the cure permanent, without killing the patient, they would have a cure for sorcery.

At that point, Naturalists divided into two camps. The first continued to research the cure. But hampered by how much they still did not know their breakthroughs were frustratingly few and far between. The second, focused on containing outbreaks. Over the next century they traveled wherever the plague was. When they began, dozens succumbed to the very plague they were trying to study. But, by 1293 they had developed a comprehensive response. Several times over the next seven years Naturalists were able to stop it with minimal loss of life.

Then came the outbreaks in Castille and northern Vodacce which proved their research had been woefully inadequate. In both cases the outbreak took a few lives and then simply went away. No one else—even those who had been exposed—caught it. More eerily, several people who a day earlier had showed significant symptoms, woke up the next morning in perfect health. Several of the Naturalists commented the Plague was acting like something *aware*. Daughters have been looking for more information about this for over a century. Unfortunately, further information has been tantalizingly out of reach.

Agitäre

On Septimus 1, 1535, Sabina Lebeney, former member of the first High Council sat down at the kitchen table in her small cottage in the south of Ussura. As she raised her cup of tea, she hesitated. Something, it seemed, was wrong with it. Almost immediately, the assassin who had been watching

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events unfold appeared. Wordlessly, she approached Sabina to finish the job. But Ragine Koenig, Chair of the second High Council was ready and waiting.

Ragine had helped form this High Council because of a plot to kill their predecessors. It seemed someone was not happy with their decision and planned to kill one of their members on each anniversary of their pronouncement. They succeeded twice before Daughters realized the pattern. When questioned, the assassin would say only, “your troubles now begin.”

It did not seem to work out that way. In less than a year, Ragine and her sisters had captured all the conspirators. All were Avalon Daughters who were furious about the first High Council’s “lack of direct action” regarding the Montaigne Council. The Council had been accused of “using undue influence for the benefit of King François I.”

Specifically, it was alleged the Council tried to poison both Avalon’s King Henry IV and Richard Lovaine. When those were unsuccessful, they used Elixirs to influence a confrontation that led to a civil war. That situation helped Montaigne and King François I prosper.

Before each of the conspirators was put to death, they all renounced Sophia’s Daughters and claimed, “Agitäre will see me avenged!” Their declarations had frightening implications because the Daughters had never heard of this *Agitäre* before, and because it seemed there might be a larger conspiracy involved.

Change is Coming

The charges leveled by the members of Agitäre were inspired, in part, by long-simmering hostilities between Avalon and Montaigne. However, they were not wholly without merit. The Montaigne Council did have significant ties to the court of King François I. One of the members was vying for, and received, a military appointment, a second was famously having an affair with the King, and a third was one of the King’s most beloved cousins. Those were just the obvious connections.

Interestingly, the High Council’s ruling eventually led to a profound change. It took some time as there were little more than superficial changes over the next four decades. But eventually Flourette Dubois du Arrent convinced the Council to fundamentally change how its membership was chosen. Now membership is selected by a vote from any and all Montaigne Daughters.

Once all the sentences had been carried out, the second High Council began learning all they could about the mysterious Agitäre. Unfortunately, there was little to be found. Despite the threat, they could find no indication of a larger conspiracy. Over time, Daughters began to believe Agitäre had been dealt with. Eventually they became nothing more than a minor footnote. In that respect, the Daughters had made a mistake.

Just over ninety years later, Agitäre resurfaced. It began with the murder of Jóna Vollan, a vocal Daughter and firebrand member of the Vesten ruling council. Her husband was eventually found guilty of the crime, but over the next seven years four other high-profile Daughters were murdered. In each case, the murders had a simple explanation, or so it seemed until Daughters stumbled onto a manifesto.

Purportedly over 300 years old, it had been written by dozens of women who had heard the story

of Agáta and the Third Prophet. Frustrated by the glacial pace of the Daughters’ work toward equality, they wanted to take action. The bulk of the book described exactly how to do that. Examples included dozens of suspicious deaths since the group’s formation, several famous crimes, and numerous career-ending scandals. Daughters were not sure whether they had uncovered the truth of the Agitäre or just some hoax. But whatever the case, its existence was dangerous and had to be addressed.

In 1626 the third High Council convened in northern Avalon where the manifesto was found. After a thorough reading of the book, the High Council went



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The Siege of Mansión de Búho

The day after her youngest son's coronation, barely a month since the death of her beloved husband, and while her older son and his bride-to-be were still missing, Her Royal Highness, *Queen Cándida Salvador Aldana de Sandoval del Castillo* was ordered by Cardinal Verdugo to retire to *Mansión de Búho*, "to spare her any further heartache."

Less than a week later, agents of the Inquisition arrived to take one of her ladies in waiting in for questioning. They were quite surprised to find all of the gates barring them entry. They were even more surprised to find Queen Cándida there to greet them personally.

When they insisted their authority superseded hers, she reminded them she knew just the man who could settle the matter. In fact, she gave birth to him. She concluded by telling them she could give them an introduction if they would like. Realizing they could not bully her into submission, and unsure how to proceed, the Inquisitors quickly left. They have yet to return.

to determine once and for all the truth about Agitäre. It took them nearly twenty years, but finally, the Chair of the third High Council, Reune Vengasdottir announced the book was a hoax as they had not managed to find any hints about the group in all the time they searched. However, it was their opinion they should keep the matter active in case any new evidence came to light.

The Queen Mothers of Castille

In 1386 the White Plague appeared without warning in King Enrique III's home. Within just a few days, it killed the entire direct line of succession and two servants. Then, it simply disappeared.

What followed were several years of infighting as nobles with varying claims on the throne vied for position. Eventually, however, it was decided to call back Enrique's cousin, Tomas, his wife, and daughter from their diplomatic mission to Ussura. Once back, Tomas was immediately placed on the throne.

Suddenly, Sophia's Daughters had a great deal more power and influence in Castille, as both the newly crowned Queen Graciana and Princess Cristina were Daughters. Tomas proved an able and egalitarian leader, seeking out his wife and daughter for many

matters of policy. His reign was lauded for its peace and prosperity.

After reigning twenty years, Tomas died peacefully in his sleep. Without a male heir, Princess Cristina was crowned Queen. For the next forty-six years, Sophia's Daughters helped rule a kingdom. The Queen even built a new home for her mother, ostensibly "*for her health.*" Once finished, *Mansión de Búho* (Owl Manor) became the most visible and secure Storehouse in Théah by simply hiding in plain sight.

Their plans helped ensure a Daughter would sit on or next to the throne of Castille for the foreseeable future. But, their plans were not without problems.

The first came when Pedro II contracted the White Plague. Wanting to ensure his legacy, but knowing he would die, he insisted his wife Beatriz be given the throne until their son could take the throne himself.

Unfortunately, Beatriz died giving birth. For a while it seemed the infant king's advisors might cut Sophia's Daughters out. But then Beatriz's brother, Armando, became regent while his wife, Armida (also a Daughter), acted as a surrogate mother. When he attained his majority, Ramon V honored his aunt by



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giving Mansión de Búho to her, and like that, the Daughters had regained their position.

Recently, the Daughters' plans have again come under threat. The previous three Kings were able to spend much of their upbringing with their mothers. Unfortunately, due to the disappearance of Prince Javier, followed quickly by the death of King Salvador I, Javier's younger brother Salvador Bejarano de Sandoval was placed on the throne at just 13 years old.

Denied the title of *Rex Castillium* by the Church, his powers were severely hampered, essentially denying him his mother's counsel without the permission of his advisors, Don Andrés Bejarano del Aldana and Cardinal Esteban Verdugo, head of the Inquisition.

Don Andrés has ensured Good King Sandoval and his mother are able to visit one another. But, that only happens when he is at the palace. Unfortunately, he makes frequent trips to check on the welfare of the people of Castille. When he goes, Cardinal Verdugo has no opposition.

It is no secret the Queen Mother has nothing but icy disdain for Verdugo. After all, she is certain he gave the order to kidnap Prince Javier. But after his stinging loss of *The Siege of Mansión de Búho*, the Cardinal has engaged in clandestine attacks on her authority. For example, losing her letters and denying visits owing to "*matters of State.*"

The Jenny's Guild

In 1597, Jenny Malone was tried for the murder of a minor, yet well-known, noble in Luthon. It should have been an open and shut case. After all, he was a noble and she was a prostitute. But, unbeknownst to all, Jenny had an ally.

Audrea was the judge's wife and also a Daughter. But more importantly, she also had suffered at the noble's hands. Accordingly, she guided her husband to see true justice done and in the process changed the world's oldest profession forever.

After her acquittal, Jenny started organizing other prostitutes in Luthon. They amounted to little more than a street gang but, it made the women feel safer. However, that did not apply if they refused to pay dues to Jenny and her girls.

No one could prove anything but several girls went missing after they refused to join Jenny's Girls. The Daughters probably would not have had any more interaction with them (it still being an issue of morality and propriety for most Daughters), save for a chance encounter.

Near the end of her life, Audrea hit hard times. Her husband was long dead, and she was having trouble making ends meet. Walking home one day she happened past several of Jenny's Girls who recognized her from the trial.

They got to talking and it turned out they each had something to share with the other. Audrea needed an income to survive and Jenny's Girls needed a path to legitimacy. By the end of the meeting, Audrea was hired to organize their books and through Audrea's contacts within the Daughters, Jenny's Girls had an introduction to the Vendel League.

Soon, Audrea began hiring Daughters to work as support staff (bodyguards, doctors, bookkeepers, educators, and the like). The moral implications of her decision caused some ripples within Sophia's Daughters.

Over time, the Daughters realized that if even one woman was not free, none of them were. Currently, Daughters command some of the most powerful positions within the guild, including the current Guildmistress, Lorraine Weller.

The Waisen

When war came to Eisen in 1636, liberators saw an opportunity. It was dangerous certainly, but no more so to the women they were rescuing than staying with their tormentors. Rather than avoid going through Eisen, they decided to skirt the action as closely as possible. They thought either the pursuing families would assume they would not risk it or they would be



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unwilling to risk their own safety. Soon enough, liberators got into the business of knowing troop movements. What they did not expect was that the victims would prove far more dangerous.

Daughters first encountered Waisen while passing through the ruins of the Stein about three years into the war. While delivering medicine to Seigsburg, they found casualties wandering in a haze. Over time, Daughters tried to render aid when possible, but there were so many others in need at the time.

Within six years, Wische had become primary route for smuggling Fate Witches out of Vodacce. Iron Guards there were overworked and stretched too thin to worry about foreign travelers. Plus, they had more important problems to deal with, given their Eisenfurst was catatonic.

Wische also played host to the largest congregation of Waisen. After hearing their pitiful story, a Fate Witch named Eloisa Baglio, stopped for a closer look. As she moved closer, it is believed she began looking at their fate strands, but found none.

Despite the danger of being caught, she became obsessed with trying to help them. She even demanded the group leave her behind so she could continue her work. But with each attempt, and each failure, she moved closer to madness.

Weeks later, Daughters returned to check on Eloisa. She was found amongst the Waisen, having become one of them. To this day liberators pay careful attention to the Waisen movements to ensure there are no further disasters.

The Threat from Avalon

Sophia's Daughter's antipathy toward the Sidhe is longstanding. But how did it begin? Like much of their origin, there are many theories but few facts. Some say it began with the first Avalon Daughter who looked at a Glamour Sorcerer while under the influence of the Flying Elixir. Others say it was not a sorcerer she encountered, but a Sidhe. Whatever the case, the Daughters view them as amongst the greatest threats to human life and want them gone

from Théah. These theories were all but forgotten until the Sidhe returned twelve years ago.

After Henri du Montaigne's campaign against Avalon, the Sidhe fled the emerald shores and took the Graal with them. For 628 years, Daughters breathed a sigh of relief as Avalon, and the rest of Théah, were mercifully free from the Sidhe and the stain of Glamour magic.

It all came crashing down when Margaret's half-sister Elaine reappeared with the Graal and the support of the Sidhe. When they returned, the power of Glamour was restored. The people, tired of war and bloodshed, rejoiced, not realizing they had simply exchanged a mundane threat to their existence for a supernatural one. Avalon Daughters were horrified. The most dangerous Syrnych had returned. It seemed Avalonians had no heart for more fighting. Some Daughters advocated for war. After all, they knew the secret to Cold Iron. Now, they argued, it was just a matter of making enough to win a war.

Other, cooler heads likened the Sidhe to the Inquisition. A few weapons, they argued, would not be enough to win the day against so powerful and insidious an enemy. Nevertheless, this was a fight they could not lose. But, the only way they could win was by being smarter than their enemies. They were already getting information from Daughters placed in the new court, but they needed more. That meant getting to know the new Ruler, Queen Elaine.

Daughters are certain she has been tainted by Glamour, but she has also brought peace. How much of that is her doing and how much is the Sidhe's remains to be seen. At this point, the Avalon Council has decided—against many vocal objections—to take a wait and see attitude. Some of the more radical thinkers have suggested revealing themselves to Elaine in order to get a better look at their inner workings. It is a very dangerous plan, with the chance of the greatest success, or failure.



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The Ends of the World

Sophia's Daughters want to make the world a better place. But, there are places where their efforts will only bring pain to those already living there. In those cases, the Daughters know they must limit their influence. Then there are places where a Daughter's mere presence puts her safety at risk. For the good of their members, they must stay away...at least for now.

Cathay

In the fall of 1283, Lyuba Markov was frightened when a hooded monstrosity lurched its way into her hovel. A veritable hermit for nearly two decades, Lyuba was known throughout the village of Ob as *Odinokaya Starukha* (The Lonely Old Woman). Her daughter Polina had died in the blizzard of 1265. It had snowed for nearly ten days straight, and even though the neighbors all tried to help find the poor girl, the unrelenting snow was simply too much and they were forced to abandon their search.

The stress of losing his only child put Lyuba's husband in an early grave. She had no other family, so when her neighbors stopped checking in on her, she gradually stopped interacting with everyone. There were whispers that she was accursed and so the rest of the villagers were quite happy to leave her be. Most forgot that Lyuba had formerly been the village's wise woman, the creator of a great many salves and elixirs she used to keep the villagers safe from illness and disease, not to mention the unknown horrors all around them.

Lyuba thought the beast was a bear given the fur and shambling gait, but then the creature reached up and began pulling its hood back. The hands looked almost human, though they were twisted and deformed and the fingers looked as though they had been smashed repeatedly before being inexpertly reset. When Lyuba finally saw the face underneath, she nearly screamed aloud. It looked human, or partly human, but was completely covered by highly detailed and extensive tattooing. Only the eyes betrayed its humanity. They were the same shade of brown as her daughter, Polina. She did not dare hope, but when the creature hobbled forward, Lyuba could see that one of its feet

was missing. Then it spoke. With tears in its eyes, Lyuba heard it say, "mama?"

It had taken nearly 18 years, but Polina Markov was finally home. After the tears and the joy and the grief, Polina told her mother how, in the midst of the blizzard, she had stumbled into a cave for safety. At first, she had just thought to go to the back of the cave to get out of the wind. But, the farther in she went, the farther back the cave seemed to go. Soon, her curiosity got the better of her and she had to see where it ended. Eventually, she realized, she had found the legendary path under the Firewall, she found the way to fabled Cathay. She would not speak of the horrors inflicted on her, but her tattoos, crushed fingers, and missing foot—not to mention numerous other brands, scars, and wounds (only some of which were visible)—stood as stark testament to their brutality. She vowed to never reveal the location of the cave and said "death and worse" awaited any woman foolish enough to make it to the other side.

News of her survival spread and Daughters soon sent help to the Markovs. They quickly came to understand that Daughters would find no friends in those accursed lands. Fortunately, that was to be the last of the Markov's great tragedies. Lyuba died peacefully in her sleep a decade later and Polina a few days afterward. Daughters there caring for the women said they knew Polina had died because it was the first night in a decade they had not woken to Polina's screaming in a language none could understand.

Given Polina's dire warnings, the Ussuran Council issued an edict in 1289. It instructed all Daughters to stay away from the Firewall. Further, it directed all Ussuran Daughters to actively interfere with any efforts to try and find Cathay. To this day, no Daughter has been foolish enough to tempt fate.

The Midnight Archipelago

In 1429, so the story goes, Castillian explorer Captain Ésteban Guzman discovered the island of Marcina. As it so happened, the native Erego were in the midst of repelling an invading Urub tribe. The captain famously figured out who was who and, with the use



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of his ship's cannon, drove the Urub off. Thus began nearly 240 years of peaceful cooperation between Castille and the Erego.

The truth is, as always, a bit more complex. Upon seeing the battle, the good Captain Guzman was all for leaving the natives to deal with their own problems. Then his navigator, a Daughter named Nuria Peláez, pointed to the shore where women and children were fleeing the fighting. When the captain stared at her uncomprehendingly, Nuria explained how the tribes with the canoes (the Urub) were the aggressors and were obviously attacking innocents. Reluctantly, the captain agreed to fire a couple of shots to “warn them off.”

Again, it might have ended there had Nuria not suggested making contact with the natives (the Erego) given their actions. In the end, Nuria was able to gather several volunteers—all of whom were Daughters—to leave behind to set up trade. That began the peaceful cooperation between Castille and the Erego.

Over the next ten years, Castillian Daughters built up quite the rapport with the Erego. They were so comfortable; in fact, they began inducting Erego women. All seemed to be going well until they realized the Erego never experienced the oppression of women which had been the catalyst for Daughters to become secret. Soon, the new inductees talked at length with their spouses and children about their new membership. Within a few months, all the Erego on the Marcina became aware of Sophia's Daughters.

It was a disaster in the making. Rather, it would have been had the Daughters not been the primary translators between the Erego and the Castillians. That meant, if the Erego wanted to ask questions about Sophia's Daughters, they needed to ask the Daughters themselves. It took several months but eventually the Daughters were able to help the Erego understand their plight and their need for secrecy. Over the past two hundred or so years it seems to have worked just fine.

It has, however, shaped the Daughters' interactions with the native peoples of the Midnight Archipelago. Knowing women here do not have the same experience as those from the mainland means Daughters are far more circumspect about revealing themselves.

But recent developments could make everything much worse. Bishop Pablo Guzman de Gallegos, the so called Black Bishop of the Inquisition, has arrived in Marcina with a mandate to, “*Investigate claims of heresy and Marcina's tolerance for the local religious beliefs.*” The Daughters know, better than anyone, how the Black Bishop will investigate these claims. No Erego on Marcina is safe. They have tried to explain the danger, but the Erego do not seem concerned. The Daughters are terrified, and not just for the Erego. Once he begins asking, all it will take is for one word of the Daughters existence to reach his ears, and all of Sophia's Daughters could be in danger.

Secret Signs

Since going underground, Daughters have come up with many different ways to get information to one another. Some of the earliest, like cipher codes, were obvious and too easy to solve, often leading to fatal consequences. Over time Daughters have realized the key is to continuously revise communication methods to ensure their secrecy. Here are a few of their current codes.

Body Language

Throughout Théah, women are raised to be aware of, read, and interpret Body Language. Sophia's Daughters simply took those skills and refined them into something more. Variance in manner, posture, or facial expressions added new meanings for a more nuanced system of communication. In addition, the Body Language code allows back and forth conversation.

Unfortunately, it has limitations. First, while it can convey most ideas, it is only possible when both participants are within speaking—not shouting—range of one another. After all, it is difficult to pick up subtle physical cues when you can barely see someone's face. Further, full conversations can only occur when all parties are trained in its use. If not, they can only convey the most basic messages (see the *Acquaintance* level of language familiarity, **Pirate Nations**, p. 98). Finally, since the whole system is based on things most Thean women are taught, any woman paying attention can “overhear” the basics of the conversation. The same holds true for anyone with Cold Read.

The Plant Code

Designed to be more difficult to decipher and subtle, the Plant Code relies on the Daughters' extensive knowledge of plants to convey its information. A Daughter wishing to pass a message or get help wears an adornment (which can be a brooch, necklace, bracelet, or anything currently in fashion) with a bit of plant matter affixed to it. The adornment, type(s) of plant, configuration, freshness, location, and whether or not it is real all convey part of the message.

The type of adornment indicates whether she is seeking help or looking to help someone else. A brooch or necklace indicates the Daughter is looking to get those things from whoever sees her. A bracelet or anklet would mean she has those things and is seeking to give them to another.

The plant's primary use indicates what the Daughter is looking for (see **Plant Meanings**). It might just be that she is looking for a friendly face, but she might also need something specific.

Plant Meanings

Plant Use	Examples	Of, or Related to...
Food	Oats, Rice, Wheat, Olives	Other Daughters
Clothing	Cotton, Flax, Ramie	Supplies, Items, etc.
Medicine	Feverfew, St. John's Wart	Elixirs, Aid, etc.
Poison	Ricin, Hemlock	Danger
Beauty	Lilies, Tulips	Safehouse
White Plague Cure	Lichen	The White Plague

Configuration explains how many are involved. A single sprig or leaf indicates she is the only one who is in need but she can indicate there are more, either a few or many.

Freshness indicates how immediate the need is. A dried leaf indicates there is no rush. A fresh sprig, however, requires immediate attention.

A fake adornment with a plant design is an indication the Daughter wearing it is compromised in some way. Other Daughters know to make minimal contact (if at all) but should keep an eye on her should she need help.

Should a Daughter adorn herself with lichen, it will get every other Daughter's attention. Lichen is one of

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the primary ingredients in the White Plague cure. Wearing lichen ensures the wearer gets top priority.

Finally, wearing adornments which mix plants allows for more complicated messages. For example, wearing a necklace adorned with several patches of lichen and fresh olives could suggest the need for other Daughters to help with making white plague elixirs.

The Sign of the Owl

Owl symbolism is less a secret code and more a beacon for Sophia's Daughters. Legend says owl symbolism began with Latum's *Filiae Saphientia* in which he posited washer women—the women he overheard discussing weighty matters while doing laundry—were like unto the wise owl who watched over the field in search of mice.

Initially Daughters adorned books, artwork, and the like with owls as artistic expression. However, the sign of the owl became a signal for hope and safety to other Daughters when the Inquisition began preying on them. For years owl adornments have guided Daughters to Storehouses. The owl's eyes indicate the direction they should follow. When the owl looks back at them, they have found the place.

Recently, Daughters have added meaning by varying type of owl depicted. Different owls indicate what kind of help is available (see **Owl Meanings**). In addition, the owl may grasp different plants in its talons. The type corresponds to the Plant Code.

The Birdsong Code

This is the oldest continuously used communication system Sophia's Daughters has. Created sometime around 1030 AV, the birdsong code can deliver messages up to 350 miles in one day. Unlike using conventional bird messaging, it can only be understood by other Daughters.

The idea for it came from the use of carrier pigeons, but rather than tying a message to their feet, Daughters taught birds to “sing” several different songs which are often nothing more than screeching verbalizations and tapping. The songs mean, respectively,

- We need to meet/I have information for you.
- I need your help!
- Hide anything incriminating you might have.
- Flee NOW!

With the basic messages, no roll is needed. But in dire circumstances, Daughters may need to send more. It cannot be much, just a few words. Subject to GM approval, a Hard (TN 20) Animal Handling roll adds no more than one short sentence to the meaning.

The birds tend not to remember such alterations for long, so permanently adding new sentences is a matter for GMs to decide.

Each Daughter in any given area has one type of bird. That way all the other Daughters in the area know who is sending the message. The bird is trained to fly a certain flight path which takes them to nearby Daughters where it “sings” its song. To ensure its message is delivered, it will not leave until the receiver gives it a treat.

Daughters may pick raptors (Gyrfalcon, Snowy Owl, Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, etc.) because they tend to be faster and because they are less likely to be taken down by other birds. But, if camouflage is called for, they could also choose swallows or sparrows

One of the downsides to this code is the amount of training that goes into it. Daughters can spend literally years getting the code just right. Then, once a bird has been trained, the Daughter cannot travel far and still have the bird perform as expected. A move of as little as a few miles could mean starting training from scratch.

Owl Meanings	
Owl	Safehouse...
Barn Owl	Is large and well-stocked
Snowy Owl	Has Elixirs available
Eagle Owl	Has armed guards
Little Owl	Has a Library

Philosophy

Sophia's Daughters encourages disagreement. Given it consists of a disparate group of women who question the nature of the world around them, it is to be expected. Every question is fair game. How do illnesses determine which person to infect next? Which, if any, Prophet had the right idea about Theus? What are the fundamental principles upon which a truly enlightened society is founded?

But why do they argue and disagree and question their existence? The answer is simple, Freedom. But in order to truly be free you must know what you are being freed from. For that, Daughters have but to point to the Three Precepts.

The First Precept: Freedom from Suffering

From the very beginning, curious women looked around them and asked themselves, "why?" They learned patterns they could see and experience. For example, birds migrating back home signaled warmer times on the way. All life, it seemed, was cyclical. The patterns differed; some were longer, others shorter. Some were very obvious, others not so much. But at its core, all patterns were the same. All living things came into being, existed for some time, and finally ceased.

Then, these women saw suffering. It took many forms; illness, deformity, subjugation, and cruelty to name but a few. They asked themselves if suffering was part of the pattern. Perhaps the mere act of living came with suffering. But not everyone suffered, neither from illness nor cruelty. Some did not suffer at all. It seemed there were no exceptions to the rule, exceptions *were* the rule.

Then they asked themselves if, instead, suffering was necessary for further growth? Again, not everyone

suffered, some never suffered, and some never stopped. None of these people grew in any way which showed their suffering had aided their growth.

The women came to a realization. If suffering served no function, no greater goal, then it must not be part of the pattern. If it was not part of the pattern, they would find a way to remove or limit its effects. But, what about the people affected by the changes? If the goal was to eliminate suffering and the resolution caused more suffering than it removed, it was not successful. Thus, all Daughters were duty bound to aid those who are suffering, to eradicate it when possible, and limit its effects when not, and to do so in a way that does the least harm to those affected by the changes.

The Second Precept: Freedom from Sorcery

When Sophia looked upon the traitorous senators who bargained for power, she saw in them "wrongness" akin to disease or illness. It gnawed away at them, changed who they were, and robbed them of a better life. Over time other Daughters realized sorcery was hurting more than just the sorcerers, it was harming Théah and enslaving it and her people to the Bargainers

In the early years, Daughters argued about Sorcery. Was it truly suffering if the sufferer was unaware of it? Or if they welcomed it? What if they actively resisted having it taken away? In the end, sorcerers' motivations made little difference. Daughters could see their suffering. It became even more urgent when the Daughters discovered the effect was not limited to sorcerers. Fortunately, the First Precept was clear; Daughters were duty bound to end it. But the First Precept also said they had to end it in a way that did the least harm to those affected. In effect, they had to end the suffering not the sufferer. Radical solutions like killing sorcerers wholesale, or jailing them permanently would not do. The only solution remaining was to find a cure for sorcery.

The Third Precept: Freedom from Ignorance

The focus on the preservation of and dissemination of knowledge has always been at the forefront of Daughters' thinking. It is part of the reason why they



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have they have hundreds (and in some cases thousands) of treatises on the same subject written over many different decades. No knowledge, even when incorrect, is ever a waste.

Discussion of the Third Precept truly began in when the Church got into the business of education. Daughters who infiltrated the Church and began teaching the masses also began questioning education and the nature of ignorance. It was, in a sense, another form of suffering. However, rather than simply making the sufferer miserable, it also made those under the sufferer's sway miserable.

Now this might be a slight problem for those without power. A farmer, for example, who was unaware of the invention of refined iron, would continue to use pig iron tools. Because of this, he would be forced to spend more time cleaning and honing them. But for those with power, kings and queens, the nobility, wealthy merchants, and the like, their ignorance could spread suffering for hundreds, even thousands of miles. It was imperative for Daughters to begin educating and moreover, educate about the value of education.

Organization

Sophia's Daughters has little formalized organization. Individuals and small groups can choose their own levels of involvement and organization with as much or little input from others as suits them.

Those who choose to focus on one area of interest may find they know and interact with only a few other Daughters. For example members of the Tapestry who never leave their collection may only know (and then maybe only in passing) the Daughters who make use of their knowledge.

Whereas those who delve deeply into all Daughter activity may find they know dozens of other Daughters from hundreds of miles away. Thus, a member of the Loom who is interested in lost Storehouses might know many of the women she has helped rescue along with the women who lend aid and shelter to her and her charges along the way. She might also know several members of the Tapestry who indulge her curiosity about old Storehouses and maybe a few others who share similar interests and have some theories about where to start looking in the future.

The same holds true for small gatherings of Daughters. There are no rules outlining how they should gather. Groups can gather due to proximity. For example, the Daughters from one town could gather with some, all, or just a few of their close neighbors. These meetings could be in private places, Storehouses, or right out in the town square. Alternately, they could just as easily come together because of similar goals, mutual protection, shared areas of interest, or whatever way best serves their needs.

Groups are not mutually exclusive. One Daughter could belong to a local gathering, a group of likeminded Tapestry members, and a smaller group focused on researching a particular phenomenon.

That said, while members and groups can act with autonomy, they cannot act with impunity. The deliberate destruction of knowledge, the punishment of transgressors, and the deliberate taking of another person's life all require approval. For example, refusing a Daughter access to certain books might be approved by a local Matriarch. Murder, on the other hand, requires a good deal more oversight.

The First Precept is clear. The murder must solve more problems than it creates. Thus, assassination is the solution of last resort. But, not all murders are the same. If the situation is time sensitive or the target has very little or no importance politically, approving or rejecting such a killing could be done by local Matriarchs. However, they always have the option of referring the matter to a regional authority. While only



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informally recognized, regional Matriarchs are important because they have made themselves aware of the larger scheme of things. They know who is related to whom and can theorize how such killings may affect the power balance in the area. Again they may approve, reject, or refer the matter to the National Council.

The National Council usually only hears matters of great import. The target must be someone of great importance, someone who is highly visible and known throughout the nation. This would be someone who holds significant political sway and whose death would likely spark political machinations if not outright civil war. Their death would also give rise to a nationwide investigation which could bring a lot of undue attention and possibly death upon all the Daughters of the nation. This is usually where the matter is decided once and for all.

However, determined Daughters may invoke an *Ask*. If, at any point in the process, they do not get the answer they are seeking (most often when their proposal has been rejected) they may ask for the matter to be moved up to the next higher authority. They can ask a total of three times. This does mean they can have their matter heard by the High Council. But Daughters thinking to go this route should *seriously* consider why they are invoking the High Council and why they have been rejected up to this point.

While it has never happened, the High Council will only adjudicate the murder of the most powerful and important people in Théah, for example, heads of state, hierophants, sole heirs to the throne of a nation, and the heads of other secret societies. The subsequent investigation could mean the end of Sophia's Daughters and the death of every member of their organization. Such deaths would cause international incidents, alter or eradicate nations, and perhaps cause worldwide war.

The National Councils

Above local and regional Matriarchs in authority are those who deal with matters of more import. Collectively, they are known as The Councils. The area they serve is roughly equivalent to the nations of Théah, but there are exceptions. For example, Crescent Daughters in the extreme northeast of the empire find it easier to travel to Soudal in Ussura to meet the Council rather than traveling three times the distance to Alexia. Also each of the Triple Kingdoms has its own Council.

The Council's authority carries the weight of its members and those who enforce its will. Therefore, most Councils are comprised of the most learned and wise Matriarchs amongst the Daughters.

The process for becoming a member of The Council is determined by each nation. Some govern for the span of one issue, others for life.

The High Council

When different Councils are at odds and cannot resolve matters, there is one other governing body, the High Council. Each Council—apart from those who have brought the issue—is expected to send one of their representatives to hear the matter.

Distance and travel serve good stead as the time to gather can sooth tempers, allowing the complainants extra time to resolve the matter. For example, the matter before the most recent High Council was resolved before some of the Councilors had even been picked.

The High Council is really a body to deal with matters only when all other avenues have been tried. As a result, Daughters are reluctant to call a High Council unless the matters are very grave indeed.



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In fact, since Sophia's Daughters became organized, they have only had four High Councils, the first to deal with the Montaigne Council's involvement in the Avalon Civil War in 1528, the second to deal with the murders of members of the first High Council in 1535, the third for the murders of five high profile Daughters allegedly at the hands of *Agitāre* in 1627, and the fourth regarding the possibility of war against the Sidhe in 1656. Each of the National Councils defines what matters they will adjudicate and how to go about it in their own way. Some are quite orderly, others not so much.

Avalon

The Avalon Council officially has 39 members, there to represent each of the counties in Avalon. But over time, distance and hardship have meant dwindling numbers of actual attendants. The bulk of the members send specially trained birds to deliver their votes on any pre-determined matters.

Their choice of Arroy as meeting place was in part because it's central location, but mostly because the mining operations there are shunned by the Sidhe. Because of this, the Avalon Council can expect to see at least nine members in person (representing the counties surrounding Arroy).

Council members serve for life, retirement, or forced removal. In the former two cases, before a member leaves, they are expected to choose their own replacement.

There are few rules about whom they may choose. For example, their successor cannot be a relative (either by blood or marriage). They may, however, put forth the relative of one of the other council members. This change was put in place in 1529 to avoid the problem which befell the Montaigne Council.

The replacement is then voted on by the rest of the members. If the Council rejects the applicant, the member must seek another. If a member is removed for misbehavior, the replacement is chosen by vote among the Council.

Castille

The Castillian Council has the distinction of having the most educated and highest number of members. Each rancho sets its own rules for deciding who to send as representatives (which are always a mix of nobles and commoners). It is not uncommon for ranchos to send five or more representatives. However, regardless of the number, each Rancho gets only one vote (with the Queen Mother breaking any ties should they occur).

The Councils are held at Mansión de Búho annually, but additional meetings can be requested for special circumstances. To cover such a huge gathering, the annual Council meeting coincides with the Queen Mother's birthday and take place between celebrations.

Since they are held during the celebration, rancho delegates always bring gifts (which are often new discoveries, rare books, or the like) to be placed in the Storehouse. They also use their gatherings as a chance to share as information about recent developments.

Crescent Empire

There is no set number of members for the Crescent Council. But despite that, there always seems to be the right number to deal with whatever matter is before them. Currently, they meet when called upon in Alexia. The location can be changed by the group, and has moved four times since they began.

No one—especially Crescent Daughters—can succinctly describe how members are chosen. Having the most ancient and thorough libraries makes their answers accurate but overwhelming to check. The best anyone can gather is, they have a convoluted system of lineage which goes back thousands of years and takes into account not only the deeds of the applicant, but also their parents up to seven generations back.

Despite its complexity, the system seems to work for them. In all the time they have been choosing councils, there have only been three disputes over membership. The most interesting of which occurred in 1107, when Hanifa Al-Naaji declared she was



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unworthy of inclusion on the Council but was forced to serve.

Eisen

The Eisen Council has never convened. Most assume were it to convene, it would meet at *der Erdkeller* outside Varnhalt. But, there are no records to back this assertion.

Eisen Daughters have not needed the Council since their organization, a fact they are fiercely proud of. When asked about it, they simply say Eisen traditions have always made their path clear. But, most believe they are simply more comfortable handling things independently.

The actual methods of choosing Council members are lost to time, assuming they ever existed in the first place. That said, if they needed to send a representative for the High Council currently, they most likely would recommend Wilma Probst. She is the most organized and her youth gives her the advantage over Berta Koenig.

Highland Marches

Because clans are so integral to life in the Highland Marches, it is no surprise Highland Daughters have incorporated it too. Long ago, Daughters made a list of all the clans in the Marches. Each clan is responsible for hearing and dealing with one issue. Once they have done their duty, it is the next clan on the list's turn. When rival clans are the petitioner and adjudicator, they simply choose neutral clans to represent them and carry on as normal. This has been particularly interesting when both clans chose the same neutral third clan to represent them. Currently the MacCodrums are next on the list.

They meet wherever the adjudicating clan determines. Councils have gone to the site of the problem, dealt with it from their own lands, and chosen a neutral meeting place.

Inismore

Being a practical people, the Inismore Council takes place whenever and wherever the problem has arisen.

Then, once judgment has been rendered, the council disbands.

When someone calls for a Council, Daughters in the area ask for volunteers (who must be neutral on the issue to be addressed). Once the call has been sent out, they wait a certain amount of time before taking whoever shows up. The length of time they wait depends on several factors, including how pressing the need for resolution is, what the population of the area is, how difficult it is to get there, and how serious the issue is.

Montaigne

Until 1530 the Montaigne Council was exclusively in the hands of the country's most powerful nobles. In addition, many Council members had direct ties to the King, and benefited from his edicts. Then in 1527 Avalon Daughters accused the Council of using "improper influence" on King Henry IV. Their actions, according to the Avalon Daughters, aided King François I by destabilizing Avalon which fell into civil war. The matter escalated until the first High Council was called.

The Montaigne Council was ultimately found not guilty. However, they were admonished by the High Council who found their "*consolidation of power had eroded trust in their objectivity and led them on a course in which outside observers could reasonably conclude their actions appeared improper.*" While the High Council did not come right out and say it, they did imply the Montaigne Council should consider restructuring in a way without as much obvious bias.

The Council made some superficial changes adding in one or two commoners over the course of the next 40 years. But in 1570, Flourette Dubois du Arrent, using nothing more than the force of her personality, changed the system from the ground up.

Currently, Montaigne Council members serve for life, retirement, or their forced removal. When a council member is replaced, the Council calls for Montaigne Daughters to make nominations. There are no requirements for volunteering candidates, and they may be self-appointed. Voting is carried out by



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regional Matriarchs (who are, themselves, voted in by local Daughters) who report their findings to the Council.

For hundreds of years the Council met in Charouse. However, five years ago, they moved to Paix. Despite its inconvenient location, moving about unseen is easier there. Given the unrest in Charouse, the Council is also beginning to worry about its safety.

Ussura

The Matriarch of Soudal is the chair of the Ussuran Council. So meetings take place there. There are no formal meetings; rather any Daughter can call for one when she has need. Finally, any Daughter who can make it to Soudal can be on the Council as all are welcome.

Vendel/Vestenmannjavjar

Most of the islands are small enough that matters can be dealt with informally. However, twice a year the Vendel/Vestenmannjavjar Council meeting (called a Samling) happens in Kirk. These gatherings are most often a chance to share information and occasionally discuss international matters. One of the meetings happens before the spring planting begins and the other just before the snow begins to fall.

Traditionally different islands nominate one Daughter to go to each Samling. A Daughter who has gone to one, is excused from attending the other (though she may volunteer to attend). While there is no formalized method for choosing each island's representative, most islands are insular enough that Daughters have little difficulty deciding who to send.

Finally, as regards the Schism, both Vendel and Vestenmannjavjar Daughters have an understanding. Vendel Daughters may see the Vestenmannjavjar as stuck in the old ways. However, they respect and honor the fact that those old ways formed the path for the Vendel to move into the future. Likewise Vestenmannjavjar Daughters may see the Vendel as rushing headlong into an uncertain and dangerous future. However, they honor and respect the bravery such actions represent. In that spirit, the Schism is the

only subject which is *never* discussed during the Samling.

Vodacce

Because it is Church territory (rather than controlled by any single merchant prince), the Vodacce Council generally meets in Numa. However, given many Daughters are not free to travel, the Council will meet wherever is most appropriate for the petitioner.

Like the Avalon and Montaigne Councils, Vodacce Council members serve for life, retirement, or forced removal. However, they are not eligible to serve until their husbands or oldest male relatives are dead. In Vodacce society, the elderly are outside The Game. In addition, women gain their most freedom when they do not have male relatives telling them what to do and where to go all the time.



Relations

Die Kreuzritter

Made it their mission to rid Théah of sorcery? Healthy distrust of the all-too-corruptible members of the Church? Willing to do whatever is necessary to see a better world for all? Obsessed with secrecy? The Daughters and die Kreuzritter would have a lot to talk about if they were only aware of one another's presence. Ironic, given how closely some of their members work with one another.

Crescent Daughters work side by side with the Hospitalers in Zafara caring for the sick and injured, providing security on the streets, and generally trying to make life better for everyone.

Knights of die Kreuzritter see intelligent well-educated women, but are unaware how organized these women are. While they have seen the result of some of their amazing native healing ointments, they



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assume these are just Crescent folk medicine rather than a concerted effort by hundreds of women from all over Théah.

For their part, Crescent Daughters have seen Hospitalers who guard some of the ancient (and extremely dangerous) Surneth sites out in the desert. But, they believe it simply goes along with the Hospitalers' goal to protect the innocent. They have no reason to associate the Hospitalers with the goals of the current *die Kreuzritter*.

Explorer's Society

Naïve, foolish, headstrong. That is how Sophia's Daughters views the Explorer's Society of today. But it was not always that way.

When Cameron MacCormick first proposed his vision—a group dedicated to discovery and exploration of all Theus' mysteries—Sophia's Daughters were beyond excited. They seemed to be a group that had the Daughters' goals but who were able to act publically. Some Daughters went so far as joining the Explorers, both for the joy of discovery and to keep tabs on them. They were hoping the Explorers might just be the boost they needed to step into the light.

Seventy years later, that vision has been perverted. Gone are the new discoveries and mysteries to be solved. They only go to new lands, explore ancient sites, in a mad quest to acquire more Surneth artifacts. Unfortunately, it seems no amount will satisfy their need.

The avarice is bad enough. But, handling their search with a devil-may-care disregard for the serious, potentially life-threatening consequences is terrifying. If they are not careful, the Daughters fear the Explorers will unleash something that will end all life on Théah.

Daughters have tried, for decades now, to turn them away from this path. Some precious few have listened, but most have not. In desperation, Daughters have turned to sabotage. If that does not work, The Shears may be called for.

Signore e Signora Rossi

Dante Rossi is a flower merchant who is seen frequently around Porto Spatia. He's known to be very friendly, especially to women hailing from out of town. His long-suffering wife, Andriena, tends their extensive gardens which supply the flowers. She is forever searching for new and interesting plants to add to her collection. It is rumored she has even dabbled in illegal trade with the Crescents to get more exotic specimens.

But looks can be deceiving. Dante is no philanderer. Instead, he is Porto Spatia's Town Guardian. The foreign women (and men, though most ignore that) he meets with are other members of *die Kreuzritter* checking to see if he has any missions for them. As for Andriena, she is a member of *the Loom*. Hidden within her extensive gardens is a Storehouse where she secrets escaping women until she can secure their passage to the Crescent Empire. Interestingly, neither of the Rossi's knows what the other is up to. But, their spouse's lack of curiosity makes them feel safe about their own activities.

Invisible College

Sophia's Daughters have been keeping track of scientific progress via Thean colleges for several centuries now. It is no surprise Daughters were at the first meeting of the Royal Fraternity of Scientific Minds.

In that sense, the Daughters have known about the Invisible College since its inception. What they have learned continues to impress them to this day.

The Explorers never considered the moral and ethical implications of new discovery; however, it is at the



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very heart of the Invisible College. While they never suppress scientific inquiry, they are very cognizant of the implications and uses of their discoveries.

Further, one of the Invisible College's foremost members, Alvara Arciniega has been working on isolating the bloodlines of different sorcerers. That could have far-reaching implications to the Daughter's plan to cure Théah of sorcery.

There has even been debate among the Daughters about revealing themselves to him. Thus far, they have held back at the behest of his assistant, Roberta Ventura. However, that has not stopped them from subtly guiding the College. From time to time Daughters release certain cures or advancements in mathematics which should never have been lost. Occasionally they must sabotage an experiment to keep certain discoveries hidden, for now.

In addition, the Invisible College has endeared themselves to Daughters as their continued advancement has made them the enemies of the Inquisition. "*The enemy of my enemy...*" and all that.

In fact, the only point of contention between the two is Synchronic artifacts. While most of the Invisible College views the Explorers as reckless, there are those who have privately advocated for studying the science behind the artifacts in order to get a jump on their own work.

That fact—and the Daughters' bitter remembrance of what the Explorers could have been—are the main reasons they have not revealed themselves to the Invisible College.

Knights of the Rose and Cross

They stand up for the rights of all Theans, men and women alike, all in the name of justice. They embody the belief that Sorcery and the Synchronic are unnecessary crutches, hobbling those who rely on them. They espouse the belief that everyone should be free to choose who and what they want to be in this world. What is not to like?

It turns out, quite a few things. First and foremost, the Knights stand as examples. It is not enough for them to *do* the right thing; they must be *seen* doing the right thing. While it is admirable to make so public a lesson, there is a time and a place for such matters.

But, that is not to say they are not useful. While on missions, Daughters are always on the lookout for Knights in order to make use of the shadows while Knights gain the public's eye.

Second, the heart of the order is Justice. They will not kill if they can help it. They offer their opponents a chance to surrender. They wait for the courts to handle matters. Again, the chivalry of old is a laudable goal, but sometimes it is best to strike first, when it is least expected, knowing consciences can be bought.

Third, there are things about the Knights that call their trustworthiness into question. They are a bit too good to be believed. They say murder is not justice, but then some of their enemies conveniently disappear never to be heard from again. In addition, taking someone's money, especially evil men like *L'Empereur* makes you beholden to them.

Finally, there is the matter of *Louis-Claude du Sinjin*, or whatever he is calling himself these days. He is lying about being five hundred years old. Daughters' best guess is ninety-six given that he was around twenty-two when he took the potion in 1570. They do keep meticulous records after all.

But the worst part of it is, thanks to his *recollections*, the Knights believe Daughters tried to murder him, and are still trying. That is patently untrue.

His brush with death began when he stole the Breath of Life while visiting with Babette Traversé, a woman he had been wooing for some time. Her back was turned or she would have warned him of the consequences.

Given that the Breath of Life is almost certainly lethal for anyone other than the one it was made for, Babette rightfully believed he would die. Thus, she ran to find the nearest Matriarch (who was an expert



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in elixirs) to help him. By the time they returned, he was gone.

Since then Daughters have been desperate to find him. Not because they want him dead, but because they want to know how he is still alive. Thus far all they have is theories.

All Daughters can say for certain is Louis-Claude does not want a peaceful resolution. Daughters have tried, over the past several decades, to explain their position to the Knights. However, at each turn, Louis-Claude has intervened—hiring agents and even outright lying to his fellows when necessary—to make their overtures seem to be something sinister.

Los Vagos

Despite the general belief that the Vagabond is just one man, the Daughters know otherwise. They have run the numbers. El Vago simply does not have the time necessary to be in all the places he has been seen. In addition, their actions are too coordinated to be the work of several isolated individuals.

Moreover, several Daughters have encountered the mysterious masked man up close. Several of those Daughters reported *him* to be softer and curvier than one might expect.

Regardless of who or how many, Daughters owe the Vagabond more than they can ever repay. Not only have they rescued Daughters from the flames of Perdition, but they have also stopped an assassination attempt against Good King Sandoval, and earned the Queen Mother's undying gratitude in the process. While Castilian Daughters have not revealed themselves to Los Vagos, they are under standing orders from the Queen Mother to aid the organization in every way possible.

Unfortunately, that is where their cooperation ends. Daughters have their eyes firmly set on the entire world and Los Vagos seem content to deal with matters in Castille alone. Should Los Vagos refocus themselves on helping all the oppressed peoples of Théah, they could well find themselves with hundreds of new allies.

Rilasciare

How do Daughters feel about them? Are they trusted allies or implacable enemies? The answer is both, and neither. That is because, like most Théans, the Daughters do not see them as one organization, rather a collection of independent groups.

Many groups within the Rilasciare are subtle enough to fall beneath notice. The Daughters remain completely unaware of the Liberation Guild and the Couriers. When members of these groups have been caught, they have been able to keep the secret purpose behind their activities quiet. Rather than seeing someone from the Liberation Guild as helping fund the larger organization, Daughters see a thief who has been caught and punished. Couriers are simply smugglers, or other common criminals.

Of the groups Daughters are aware of, they tend to dismiss both the Freeman League and the Freethought Society as ineffectual. The antics of the Freeman League might bring a smile to Daughters' faces since they can appreciate a good joke. But momentary amusement does not equate to lasting change. The League seems content to mock poor leadership without delving any further than that. As for the Freethought Society, they have all the right ideas and discuss them endlessly. But, they are simply old men who like to hear themselves talk and who shy away from actually involving themselves in the plight of those they express concern for.

That is not to say Daughters do not appreciate both groups' thinking. Both express a disdain for sorcery, have a passion for freedom, a belief in the immutable rights of all Théans, and a firm commitment to advancing knowledge. All of these fall right in line with Daughters' thinking. But thinking the right way is nothing without the will to see it happen. Unfortunately, the Daughters believe neither of these groups can be relied upon.

The Guerilla Alliance and the Oppositionists, on the other hand, are simply evil. Similar to the beliefs of Agitare, these groups view murder, arson, and terror as acceptable if it gets them what they want. They may tout beliefs about opposing evil rulers or



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protecting the common man from the evils of sorcery. But the truth is, no amount of moral loopholes can justify the indiscriminate murder of innocents and the use of terror to enforce compliance. They are the most abhorrent of criminals and must be opposed with the most direct methods available to the Daughters.

But the Daughters are not experts in fighting a war. Until recently, their solution had been to get the experts involved and avoid direct confrontation. While difficult, Daughters were able to learn the location of several cells of the Guerilla Alliance and point local authorities toward them. Thus far, it seems the Guerilla Alliance has focused their ire on more direct enemies and not the Daughters who supplied information to their enemies. As for the Oppositionists, rapidly changing routes for escaping fate witches kept Daughters ahead of the strega murderers.

But around fifteen years ago, the Oppositionists began upping the ante. Daughters first noticed the change when several experienced liberators and their Vodacce charges failed to arrive at their designated safe-houses. It had happened from time to time. Fate Witches' husbands often got other family members to reveal their locations through Sorté. But after half a dozen such attacks, a liberator finally survived to tell her tale. She reported it was not her charge's family who were responsible, rather skilled assassins bent on killing everyone. Worse, the assassins came trained to fight against precisely the liberators they faced. It was as if someone had tipped them off. She believed them to be Oppositionists.

The Daughters are not sure what caused this escalation. But, there is one thing they know for certain; the Oppositionists' intelligence keeps them a step ahead. Until Daughters can figure out where the Oppositionists are getting their information, any response could cost more lives.

The Child

Hildr sat near the meadhall's roaring fire, the perfect protection from the storm outside. In her lap was the book she had been trying to master. Around her, the men of Ingøy boasted about their latest hunt. Their stories grew larger with each telling, reinforced by the mead they had been consuming since they'd returned. Even Hildr's cousin, Olvir—normally a reserved and thoughtful man—joined in.

Just then, the front door burst open. Standing there, the snow billowing in around her was a frightened and disheveled woman. Hildr heard her gasp out, "*My husband! He's been taken!*" The men crowded around as she recounted how she and her husband got lost in the storm. They stopped to get their bearings and that's when they saw Egil... There were hundreds of tales of the rapacious giant and his unending hunger. But Hildr, who spent much time with the skalds, knew more of them than most.

The men—full of mead and false courage—began collecting their gear. But before they got more than a few steps, a quiet cough interrupted them. Hildr stepped forward. This caused some to chuckle as she was a small, slight girl of just over a fifteen winters. She did not wish them well nor offer to pray to the Gods. Instead, she said she would deal with the giant herself. There was a moment of silence before Tore, their self-appointed leader, roared with laughter. He chided her about her inexperience and size, especially where Egil was concerned.

In response, Hildr met Tore's gaze flatly. "*You will beg for your life while I dispatch Egil with this.*" She held up a small knife she used to debone fish and whittle. The warriors' laughter mocked her as they turned and left. Only Olvir offered as much as a half-hearted apology.

After they left, she bundled up carefully and followed. On the way, she stopped by her mother's house for

her satchel. She looked through it, ensuring it had everything she'd need. Once out of the village, the storm abated, making the men's tracks easy to find. She snorted derisively. They were as foolish as they were reckless.

The skalds' stories revealed much about Egil the men did not know. Often, he would promise to spare a loved one in exchange for more victims. In addition, while he had swallowed some victims whole, he preferred to cook them, usually while taunting them with what was to come. Hildr was certain the woman was trying to save her husband from a grisly death. That meant Egil was waiting for the men of Ingøy.

Soon enough she spotted the cook fire and left the trail to sneak closer. Behind a large rock, she was able to spot the men. They had been tied up and hung from several trees. Nearby, tending a pot containing suspicious items was Egil. One by one he approached each man. Sizing him up and pinching him as if selecting which piece of meat he might add next. The drunken men's wails were pitiful. But the worst was Tore, who begged and pleaded with Egil to eat the others and not him.

It was the perfect cover for Hildr. She withdrew a small pouch from her pack and snuck down to the cook pot. Dropping it in, she made her way back to the safety of the nearby rocks.

Once back, she sat down and waited, hoping Egil would not kill too many before her infusion did its work. Soon enough, Hildr heard a resounding thud as Egil hit the ground like a stone. She waited a few seconds, then removed a small bit of cloth from her satchel to cover her mouth and nose.

Holding her head high, she emerged from behind the boulder and made her way to the now unconscious giant. There, she dispatched Egil with her boning knife and freed Olvir. Then she turned and headed home, never once looking back, even when Olvir and the others he'd freed drew their blades and approached Tore.



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People and Places

Daughters

Avalon

Madame Abigail Snelling

Council Member

The longest standing member of the Avalon Council, Madame Snelling is now approaching 72-years old. Despite her age, she still shows the intelligence and sharp wit which made the Snelling Academy world famous, and not simply because of its exclusivity to women.

Abigail's mother died in childbirth and her father had little use for a girl. She was left to the care of servants, several of whom were members of Sophia's Daughters. They found a child filled with wonder and curiosity with a knack for showmanship. All of which displeased her father greatly. After all, how could he find her a suitable man if she were not a suitable woman?

She learned quickly to indulge her curiosity about the world quietly during the day. Then, when her father arrived home, she would act the part of the dutiful noble's daughter.

She had to put her foot down on several suitors, none of whom were even minimally acceptable. Though she did assume she would eventually have to give in. But she was wrong. When she was a mere 17 years old, her father died quietly in his sleep.

Only after she got a look at the ledgers did Abigail learn the awful truth. He had nothing to leave her but a fine home and grand estate; piled with debt enough to last several lifetimes. Seeing no future in more of the same, she leveraged her name, reputation, and lavish estate, to market The Snelling Academy to noblemen who also "had little use for a girl." With their financial backing, it worked perfectly.

The first year, the Snelling Academy was filled to capacity with young women eager to learn more about the world around them. By the second year, they were forced to expand the grounds to accommodate more students, among them a young noblewoman named Elaine.

Despite the years, Queen Elaine still seeks out Abigail's council. Not for matters of state of course, but matters more of a personal nature. Because of her special position, the Queen has seen fit to send a detachment of her personal guard to ensure Abigail's every need is taken care of.

Holly Styles

Holly is a young liberator who hails from the north of Avalon, but where exactly is a matter of conjecture. Her accent is Avalonian but the locals have difficulty placing it. She is aware people are asking, and so plays off the mystery to enhance her reputation for flouting the law.

She found her way to Canguine about six years ago. According to the stories, her husband Simon had recently died in Luthon and she came down to care for his ailing mother.

In gratitude, Mrs. Styles willed Styles Mercantile to her. Unfortunately, Holly had no interest in the business. The mercantile side of things quickly went belly up, leaving her with nothing but the buildings, coaches, wagons, horses, and dozens of workers needing jobs.

She began offering other businesses the use of her equipment, for a fee of course. Soon enough businesses in Canguine began using her infrastructure rather than buying their own.

Holly has made it a point to say Styles Mercantile would deliver anything you can put in a crate—They would deliver a bright, sunny day to Canguine if someone could pack it correctly. As a bonus for the less-than-reputable, they do not ask many questions about what they are transporting, as long as it will not hurt the workers.



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Deservedly or not, Holly's business has also gained a reputation for being able to avoid the authorities (should one be interested in that kind of thing). While she appears busy hauling transport all over the island, Holly uses that as a cover for her transport of women needing to disappear into the wilds of Avalon.

Castille

Her Royal Highness, Queen Cándida Salvador Aldana de Sandoval del Castillo

Chair of the Castillian Council

Doña Cándida Salvador de Aldana was just 16 years old when she met Salvador I, who was 10 years her senior. He had already been King for five years and his advisors were pushing him to get married.

None of that was relevant of course, as the previous Queen Mother had already determined Cándida would be next in line. She would not have said it was a match made by Theus but few political marriages were. However, it was a good match. They worked well together and had a great deal of respect and admiration for one another.

As has been the situation since the mid 1300s, Queen Cándida is in charge of the Castillian Council. In fact, she is the tenth such Queen Mother to do so. Currently she has been at *Mansión de Búbo* for just over two years, quietly organizing the Castillian Daughters to aid against the Montaigne invaders, the Inquisition and anyone else who is a threat to their freedom. She does all this while also running the largest Daughters' Storehouse in all Théah.

When her husband got sick, she had planned for an orderly transition of power to Crown Prince Javier. He was, quite simply, born to be King. After that it would have been a leisurely move from the palace to *Mansión de Búbo* over the next couple of years. In the meantime, she would position several Daughters to stay behind to care for Javier's new wife, and the next cycle would have begun.

But the Inquisition's interference made a shambles of everything. Nearly all her handmaids were sent with her, leaving but a precious few behind. None of them are high-ranking enough to attend to the King personally. Now, the Queen Mother knows almost nothing of what is going on in the Palace, or what is happening to her beloved son.

She thought her job finding the next Queen already finished as Javier had fallen in love with the perfect Daughter, Doña Lorena Rios de Aldana, when they were children. It had been a simple matter to ensure they were available to each other. The day the Inquisition grabbed Javier, Lorena disappeared from her rancho in San Cristobal and has yet to be heard from.

While she mourns the loss of so much promise, she must still find a suitable candidate for her youngest. She must do so without even being able to see those he might be interested in.

Sofía Rodrigues Aldana de Ramirez

Sofía is a young Daughter living with her older husband and son in Altamira. Her husband runs a local apothecary shop so he is gone much of the day. On the surface, she seems like any other young mother; busy taking care of the household and minding her child.

Interestingly, women in town have begun seeking her out for advice or with help dealing with difficult matters their husbands are better off not knowing about or—as is often the case—that they are the cause of. On three separate occasions, after learning the details of these women's problems, she shared some of her husband's more powerful elixirs. But only after she extracted a promise not mention it to anyone else.

Thus far, all have kept to their promise...thus far. All three women detected a hint of fear behind her request. But what that fear might be, none know.

Crescent Empire

Ranya Ihsan Samara

Council Member

Ranya has been a member of the Crescent Council for five years. In all that time, she has yet to speak at any of the meetings. Other Daughters attribute it to her waiting until she has something valuable to add. Thus, she has gained a reputation for her wisdom.

Though Ranya would dispute the comparison as frivolous, she could well be the smartest person currently in the Crescent Empire. She completed her studies at Alexia University in half the time it took average students. For the last two decades she has been lecturing at the University, maintaining and expanding its famed library, and researching dozens new areas of inquiry.

While her research continues to consume more and more of her time, some of her lesser activities have gone unnoticed. The expansion of the library, for example, allowed her to increase its collection to include much of the Crescent Daughters current work and a good portion of its surviving historical texts.

But her main focus has always been the understanding of disease, specifically the medicinal uses of plants. It is the reason she keeps the equivalent of a small forest in a building near her office. Inside are plant specimens from all over Théah including, if the rumors are true, several from Cathay. Her most recent obsession is a strange bluish-colored mold. She has noticed that several harmful plants will not grow in its presence and she wonders if it may have healing or protective properties in addition to that. While it is far too early to make bold assertions, she hopes her research will have far-reaching applications in the future.

Bayana Meryam bint Saliha

Bayana is member of the Tapestry, who was raised by her historian mother. She had expected to take charge her mother's storehouse in the fullness of time. In the meantime, she went searching for ancient knowledge. That all changed when her mother got sick. Other

Daughters in Razgrad could not figure out what ailment afflicted her. It was not until Bayana returned home they finally got a name. She knew her mother's collection well and, within a short time, found it in one of the oldest books in her collection. They called it مصافحة (Musafaha, or "The Shaking Hands"). Unfortunately the book only mentioned its existence and the fact there was a cure, not how to combat it. But, it also mentioned it was invariably fatal.

Bayana searched for the cure for nearly a year and was still searching when she received the news that her mother had died. After that, she had no heart for running her mother's Storehouse. Being there was simply too painful. But, she could not give up her search. The cure had to be written somewhere, and if she did not find it others would die. She has been all over the northern Crescent Empire. Now, her search has led her to Zafara. After all, some of the greatest healers in the Crescent Empire are there. Quickly, she has become known as a talented caregiver. In addition, her knowledge of folk remedies from the north has brought her interest from both the Hospitaliers and from Daughters in Zafara.

Working in such close proximity with the Hospitaliers has revealed quite a bit about them. For example, she knows they are sending soldiers out into the desert to guard a Syrneth site there. As for the site, she has learned some interesting things about that too. The place looks similar to a tomb, one entrance sealed from the shifting sands outside. But more interesting are the strange markings on the entrance. There are similarities between it and an ancient Daughters' code she once saw in her mother's Storehouse when she was a child. She believes this might not be a Syrneth site at all. Unfortunately, she cannot find references to it in any Daughters' writings in Zafara, and she has been unable to contact any Daughters up in Razgrad. She would love to be able to explore the site more thoroughly, but she does not want to attempt it without fully deciphering the text.



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Eisen

Berta Keonig

(Would be) Council Member

If Sophia's Daughters were to have royalty, Berta would surely be it. She is the last direct descendent of Ilsa Dreier, whose niece, Dorothea Buchalter saved countless thousands of people and for her bravery became the Daughters' first martyr. Ask any Eisen Daughter and they will tell you, Berta is a national treasure. Born in 1534, in the first year after Berta's birth, her mother received letters from every Eisen Matriarch, along with Daughters from Vodacce, Ussura, and the Crescent Empire. Even the Queen Mother of Castille sent a gift.

Given her legendary status, there is no doubt she would be the chair of the Eisen Council if one were ever convened. During her lifetime, she has done just about every job Sophia's Daughters has. She has helped women in need, found ancient Storehouses, joined the Inquisition, eliminated a High Inquisitor, researched the White Plague, and the list goes on and on. Even she cannot remember all the things she has done.

But, that is not really surprising given she is midway through her 13th decade. Quietly, some Daughters have expressed worry about how little time she has left since the Breath of Life has diminishing effects the more times it is taken. She has already taken it twice now.

For the past twenty years, she has been *der Erdkeller's* historian, a job she does entirely by herself. She has jokingly said the only way another Daughter will get the job is when it is pried from her cold, dead hands. Within the last seven years or so, she has become a bit of a recluse. She spends nearly all of her time in the Storehouse pouring through tomes and writing copious notes.

Those Daughters who have spoken with her recently believe she is working on a book. However, she is unusually tight-lipped about the whole matter. The speculation is, it is either a treatise on her history or

the culmination of her wisdom written down for future generations.

But, no matter what it turns out to be, there is a sense of hushed anticipation for all Eisen Daughters. Given how long she has been researching it, and her refusal to speak about it, it is no wonder.

Tanja Guessler

As a child, Tanja was always curious about the world around her. She was forever asking questions about why birds migrated or how dead trees decayed. Both of her parents had high hopes for her progress. Unfortunately, her small village was far off the beaten path. There were no nearby Daughters to watch her progress and steer her in the right direction.

That is, until Berta Keonig herself met young Tanja while trekking across Eisen. Realizing Tanja was a Daughter in the making Berta posed as a Professor to speak with Tanja's parents about her.

Her parents could not have been prouder, and all seemed right with the world. But, just three months later, Eisen began tearing itself apart. At 14 years old, Tanja went to war, serving first as a standard bearer but quickly rising through the ranks because of her absolute lack of fear.

Within two years, she came to the attention of General Stauss himself. He affectionately referred to her as *der Graue Falke* (the Grey Hawk) because she already had streaks of grey in her hair and had a habit of noticing even the smallest details on the battlefield. It was that attention to detail which—more often than not—turned the outcome back in their favor. In the course of the war, she was decorated for valor seven times. She has the scars to prove it.

After General Stauss died, Tanja rounded up her ruken Emmerich and her closest comrades. Together they created their own mercenary company *die Grauen Falken* (the Grey Hawks).

Almost immediately, she was approached by Sophia's Daughters to protect fate witches fleeing Vodacce.



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The Daughters had been keeping an eye on her, and hoped the job might spark her old interests.

It did, and for the next few years, die Grauen Falken took nothing but escort jobs. She never told her comrades about the Daughters, and they never asked. It seemed the money was good and that was enough.

There were problems of course, almost from the beginning, die Grauen Falken had to deal with a Vodacce “retrieval specialist” known as *L’Incubo delle Strega* (the Witches’ Nightmare). They have not been able to learn his name, but he has killed four of their company.

However, the worst problem began when they escorted Eloisa Baglio—the first Fate Witch to look at a waisen’s threads—into Wische. When Tanja found Eloisa among the waisen, she felt she had failed the young Fate Witch. Soon, she lost interest in the job. Now she runs a small duelling school in Prachtig. But, mostly she just drinks at the various bars in town.

Highland Marches

Kenna MacCodrum

Council Member

Not a MacCodrum by birth, Kenna MacKindric married into the clan after accepting Fingall MacCodrum’s proposal. Fingall is the clan chief’s youngest son. Not particularly handsome or smart, he is never-the-less, a courageous and kind man who treats her well.

As a condition of her acceptance, she insisted on picking the site of their future house as “*Fingall has no head for it.*” That caused quite the scandal as it took her nearly half a year to pick out the right spot. But, once it was settled, the couple was wed. In the two years since, they seem to have settled into a happy relationship. At least, that is what it appears to the rest of the clan. Secretly, Kenna is in love with a selkie named Tossel. Her site choice had everything to do with carrying on her secret affair and nothing to do with her husband.

Given the MacCodrum’s relationship to selkies, it is not surprising there are precious few Sophia’s Daughters in the clan. In fact, there are currently just five, Kenna, Aileen, and Saundra married into the clan, while Fenella and her little sister, Ùna (currently nine and seven years old respectively), were born into it. Their mother, Elsbeth MacCodrum was the sixth, and oldest. But she died after a nasty fall eight months after Kenna and Fingall’s marriage.

The MacCodrum’s are next in line to host the Highland Council. That means, at just 19 years old, Kenna has stepped into the role of Council Chair next time one is called for. Elsbeth’s death also means Kenna has become historian for the MacCodrum clan and must guard their Storehouse with her life. As if that was not enough responsibility, there is Fenella and Ùna’s education to consider. They have had some Daughters’ training but they will need a lot more if they are to become competent Daughters. It is a position the remaining MacCodrum Daughters look to Kenna to fill.

When she realized she would be expected to lead a council of children, she tried to find some way out of it. Being a bright, well-educated young lady with complete access to the MacCodrum Storehouse, she began her research. Her thinking was there had to be a ruling which would allow the MacCodrum’s to skip their turn. Unfortunately, what she found gave her no relief. Given their small numbers and their close relationship to the sidhe, MacCodrum Daughters had been forced to create Councils consisting of nothing but young women and children on at least three separate occasions. Each time, the Council managed to muddle their way through to some of the best, wisest decisions in the history of the Highland Daughters. It is a hard precedent to live up to.

Fiona MacClellan

Fiona joined Sophia’s Daughters eight years ago. Two years prior she was sent to an orphanage in Connickmoor run by the Daughters. Her family had been killed and they had no close relations. Because of her slight stature and forgettable nature, she has earned a reputation for gathering information and eliminating problems quietly and efficiently.



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Both are valuable to her latest job. Sophia's Daughters have been keeping an eye on Connie MacDonald and her ancestors for over a hundred and fifty years. Ever since her great, great grandmother Edna MacEachern wrote a treatise on the secret of cold iron and gave it to them for safe-keeping. If the Sidhe ever realize humans can still create cold iron they will kill everyone who knows, starting with Connie. It is Fiona's job to stop them or, barring that, warn Sophia's Daughters the Sidhe are hunting.

To get close, she infiltrated the MacDonald clan, cut her hair and now wears loose fitting clothes. She now goes by the name "Finn MacDonald" an orphan looking to make his way in the world. This was the first time Fiona had a long-term job. To keep others from discovering Finn's true identity, she simply steered clear of personal relationships.

However, the boys in town soon tried to get her to join them. When "Finn" declined, she became the target of one of the bullies in the group. It came to a head and she was forced to defend herself. Being a far more capable fighter, she made quick work of the bully and instantly became one of the group's new leaders. Many boys (especially the smaller ones) now ask Finn to help them learn to fight.

To keep them at bay, Finn got a job delivering stuff to the witch out in the high moors. She hopes it will keep her busy enough to avoid becoming the boys' leader; because if not, there are going to be an awful lot of young duelists running the streets.

Inismore

Ríona O'Harrah

Council Member

Ríona grew up in a home that was never without song. Her father played several instruments, though the harp was always his favorite. After a hard day working the fields for the local lord, he would often pick up an instrument as a way to relax. Once the notes rose out into the house, her mother would sing accompaniment. She had the voice of an angel. It was

so serene Ríona could swear she heard Theus weeping at the sound.

Her parents lived a hard life, but joyous. When her mother passed, and her voice was finally silenced, Ríona took up the mantle, accompanying her father and ensuring he continued to play. Then, he too, passed. To honor them both, she learned to play and sing. Since then, she has wandered throughout Inismore sharing her voice and her song with anyone who needs a little beauty in their lives, paying for her supper and making new friends along the way.

By coincidence, the last few times the call has gone out for Daughters to attend a Council, she has been nearby. Not being from the areas, she has never been directly involved with whatever matter the Council presided over, so she has always been chosen for a spot. It is getting to the point other Daughters now expect to see her at Council meetings. If she does not show up, they simply wait, saying, "*We cannot convene the Council 'till Ríona gets here.*"

Her presence has created an unexpected and interesting new situation for Inish Daughters. Because she travels around so often, and she has been on the Council so many times, she has first-hand knowledge of the state of Sophia's Daughters in Inismore. She has become the unofficial historian for them.

Most Inish Daughters have started to refer to her as "Inismore's Matriarch." Though there are those who—jokingly—wonder if her ability to be in the right place all the time, and to be so instrumental to Daughters' activity, might be supernatural in nature. Ríona downplays such suggestions, but always with a knowing wink and a smile. Best to keep them guessing.

Norah O'Connell

Norah was born in a small village far from anywhere interesting. That began her life-long love affair with books. But, reading about so many places and people who saw interesting things and met interesting people made her yearn to do so herself. Two years ago, she decided to start her journey. She packed up her small



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kit (complete with her favorite books) and walked to Tara, where things do happen.

Currently, she is working as a barmaid at The Bottomless Well, a small, out-of-the-way pub. There she spends most days keeping the hands of some of her more persistent regulars to themselves. Fortunately the owners, Eileen and Devon O'Sheedy, make sure they do not get too persistent.

In Norah's off hours, she often gets together with some of the other young women in town to discuss her favorite books. This acts as a cover for her true purpose, the organization of Daughters' activity in Tara. A lifetime of reading has given her the ability to arrange many different (and often conflicting) activities into a coherent whole. Tara is the launching point by which all Inish move out into greater Théah, and the place most visitors to Inismore see first. Norah makes sure Daughters are not bumping into one another and no one falls through the cracks.

Montaigne

Anne Duboise du Arrent Council Member

Ask most nobles about Anne and the first thing they will tell you is she is *the* social maven of Montaigne. She has standing invitations to every party and formal get-together throughout the nation. Those hosting the parties will frequently change dates if it means ensuring Anne will be able to attend. When she hosts the parties? Courtiers, established and new, prize nothing more than invitation to one of her galas. Those left without an invitation frequently find themselves discarded by the social circles that rule Montaigne. Much like the Yule season, they are certain to be on their best behavior for the month leading up to the party. That way "Aunt Anne" will not leave them off the list.

Ask any other Duboise du Arrents and they will tell you she is the force behind Duke Samuel's famous generosity to the peasants. They will mention forever hearing her chiding each of them to "*share what Theus has so graciously provided.*" She is the reason that it is *de*

rigueur for all Duboise du Arrents. After all, they will say, no one wants to disappoint Aunt Anne.

Ask any of her servants and they will tell you about the time she sent the entire staff home for the day to be with their families when she learned nearly every one of them had someone at home who was being sent to the Castillian front the next morning. Alternately, they will tell you about the extra money that somehow always finds its way into the pocket of the servant who is just about to welcome a new member of the family. Or how she always knows the given names of every single one her staff and never fails to greet each one of them. The stories just keep coming.

In a society that lives and dies by its gossip, Anne knows everything. But, where others help spread the gossip, Anne tells no one. Regardless of who you are talking to, it is safe to say everyone knows and loves "Aunt Anne." More than that, they trust her.

Unbeknownst to most, while Anne's kindness *is* a genuine desire to make Montaigne a better place, it is tempered with the knowledge that change will not come by simply asking nicely. She has watched her fellow nobles increasingly lose their empathy for those who rely on them and it breaks her heart. She will not allow it to continue.

Toward this end, Anne has developed one of the best spy networks in Montaigne. She employs every Daughter who lives on her land and all report everything going on around her. More than that, they speak with the servants of every noble that comes to visit. Almost no secret, no matter how deeply buried, is safe from her. Once so armed, she befriends those she believes she can help change and has her network blackmail those who cannot. If the nobles cannot think of benefitting others, at least they will act to benefit others.

Margot Babineaux

Margot is the current rising star of the stage at *Le Grande Jeu* in Charouse. However, while she has a prodigious talent for the theater, her fame—or more



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rightly, infamy—only begins with her acting skills. There is still the matter of her behavior *after* the play.

Celebrated for her portrayals of some notoriously difficult figures, Margot is lavished with praise and invited to all the best after-parties. Not wishing to disappoint her fans, she frequently and gratefully attends. That is when the fun really begins; at least for those who come to spectate. During numerous high-profile parties, she has successfully seduced several prominent noblewomen. Notably, she has done so while their husbands are within earshot.

Her success rate is so high, it has gotten to be something of a game to the others in attendance; trying to guess who will be the next notch in her bedpost. However, her dalliances are not without risk. Several of the husbands have discovered the infidelity (and on one particularly notable occasion caught them *in flagrante delicto*). On those occasions, the crowd gets a special treat.

Reeling from the public emasculation by a woman, the cuckolded husbands challenge Margot to a duel. As if to bolster their flagging masculinity, they handle the matter personally. That ill-thought-out decision is frequently a fatal mistake. Margot is no wilting flower. Instead she is a talented and deadly swordswoman. To date, she has killed six men and left three more with life-altering injuries. Because of her amazing record, rumors are beginning circulate that she must have some kind of poisonous (or supernatural) edge.

Ussura

Ustinya Numinova

Council Member

Ustinya is the Daughters' official bird trainer, which is something she has a great deal of experience with. One might even say she was born into the business. Ustinya's father worked as Giaus Nikolai's official falconer. His father had done the same job previously, and his father before that.

Ustinya's mother had quite a storied history also. For example, she could trace her ancestry in Sophia's

Daughters back to their first meeting with Matushka. It was even said her mother had the audacity to tell Grandmother Winter she was wrong.

Given her history, it was no surprise Ustinya grew up fearless and curious about everything, especially birds. Fascinated by her father's job, she asked him to teach her. He quickly discovered she had a talent for the work. She was, it seemed, better than him. She even started training her mom's Gyr Falcon who was notoriously hard to deal with. Her mother was suitably impressed and happened to mention it among her fellow Daughters. That was why at age 12, she began training some of her mother's "friend's" birds.

Within three short years, the Ussuran Council created the position of *Khozyayka Ptits* (Mistress of Birds) just for her. She began getting visitors from as far away as Montaigne asking for her help. Eventually, it became apparent she would need to reach a greater audience so she wrote her first treatise *Na Pravil'nyyu Dressirovku Ptits* (On the Proper Training of Birds).

It seemed—despite the typically difficult life of the average Ussuran—things were going well. Ustinya moved to Soudal to be closer to the Council while her parents stayed in Pavtlow. Then Gaius Nikolai died. The bogatyrs who took over and deposed Ilya dismissed her father from service. He actually thought of it as good luck as some of the servants were killed and he fully expected to be among them. He and Ustinya's mother moved into the countryside to await Ilya's return. In 1663, he died still waiting.

Ustinya had planned to follow in her father's footsteps, offer her services to Gaius Ilya once he gained power. But, then she heard about Markov v'Novgorov's fate. That was enough to keep her in Soudal where she has been working for Sophia's Daughters for the last 44 years.

Recently she has taken her little show on the road; putting all her equipment and birds into a carriage she calls *Lezbbishche* (The Rookery). She says she wants to make it easier to train more Daughters. Although privately she admits it is getting tougher every year to keep up the pace.



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Vendel/Vestenmannjavnjar

Kjersti Admundsdotter

Council Member

Despite being a Vestenmannjavnjar who lives in Vendel-dominated Isafjordhur, Kjersti is respected on both sides of the schism, though having a daughter on each side might have something to do with that. The other option is the sense of fear which seems to come over all who fall under her gaze.

Now mostly retired from public life, she refuses most who seek out her help. But on those rare occasions where she acquiesces, women can rest assured she will bring that fear to bear in solving their problem. Being known and feared throughout Sorøya ensures her daughter, Aledia sees no disdain on the streets of the city and her adopted daughter, Solfrid, encounters no resistance when she wanders the wilds of the island.

The one job she still does consistently is representing Sorøya at both Samlings in Kirk. Given that she is retired and both her husbands are dead, she has more than enough time to go. At the Council, she is largely silent, allowing the younger members to make most decisions. But, they do so with one eye out for Kjersti. After all, displeasing a woman who killed her husband is never a wise idea.

Seventeen years ago, she was just a Daughter in Malaram. There, she married Jørgen Sorenson, one of the leading Jarls. The marriage was happy, and soon they welcomed young Aledia. But, problems began when Kjersti found Jørgen had been unfaithful. He denied it, but the woman he was with bore witness against him. As was customary, the marriage was dissolved. Jørgen was unhappy with that outcome. He tried to kill Kjersti in front of their daughter and she was forced to defend herself.

Despite Aledia's steadfast defense of her mother, Kjersti feared reprisals (because of Jørgen's standing in Malaram) she asked the Daughters to help her relocate. But, when they arrived at Isafjordhur, Aledia found her best friend, a Vendel girl named Solfrid. Not wishing to disappoint her only remaining family,

Kjersti relented and set down roots there instead. Three years later, the best friends became sisters when Kjersti married Solfrid's father, Jan Steffans. Alas, their marriage lasted only a few years before Jan, a fisherman, went out one morning and never returned. Feeling cursed, she has foregone further marriages to focus on her daughters and her Daughters.

Aledia and Solfrid Steffans

Aledia is a tall blond whose bookishness is readily apparent. Solfrid is a small brunette who looks like she could stare down a hurricane. As one might surmise by their physical differences, they are not blood relations. However, implying that fact to either is certain to get the speaker on their bad side. As far as they are concerned their bond is unbreakable. Interestingly, each began life on the other side of the schism. But growing up together kindled their interest in the precepts of the other side.

Since becoming sisters, they have had their share of tragedy, watching helplessly as loved ones died, or disappeared. They are determined to teach other women how to care for themselves. Their mother would expect no less.

Women arriving in Isafjordhur have suffered untold hardship and shown great fortitude. The Vendel/Vestenmannjavnjar isles are not an easy place to live even when one was raised here, but the sisters do their best to get them ready. Many of the escapees are unused to doing for themselves, and the ones from Vodacce have no education at all. Therefore, training begins at the Steffans' Salon with the basics, reading, writing, self-care, etc. In addition, Aledia teaches them the basics of self-defense.

Afterwards, it is Solfrid's turn. They leave the safety of the salon to march into the wilds of Sorøya where they must make their own shelter, find food, and water, all before they die. A fact Solfrid reminds them of every time they want to give up.

The women who have finished training with the sisters often feel a great sense of gratitude toward them. Over the years, they have begun making



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donations to the salon. That has ensured the sisters can continue to train other women in the future.

Aledia and Solfrid have been so busy training others that they have had no time to tend to matters common to most people like relationships, marriage, or raising families. Five years ago, however, a priest named Lauge Holgersen showed up unannounced, claiming he and Jan agreed to a marriage between the sisters and Lauge's two sons. The sisters listened politely and then escorted him from the premises. On the way, they told them to take the matter up with their father. That is, if he could find him. Needless to say, he was furious at their rejection.

Being cautious, they asked other Daughters to keep an eye on the priest. For over five years his fury has continued unabated. Recently a student, Henriette, disappeared soon after leaving the Salon. They are not certain the priest is behind it, but it makes sense. Discretely, they have been trying to find her, one way or another.

Vodacce

Patricia Cassandra Vestini

Council Member

Patricia is the great aunt of Marco Eduardo Vestini. She is one of the very few Vestinis to have Sorté. While she was the most powerful Vestini Strega for many years, a recent daughter-in-law from the Lucanis has taken her place and allowed her to retire.

Her husband is long gone and her children are all adults now. She comes and goes from the Vestini compound whenever she wants and is generally ignored by everyone around her (though Vestini guards still accompany her when she requests them). That leaves her with plenty of free time and freedom of movement. Given that she is a member of the Vodacce Council, she needs both.

Despite her limited Sorté abilities, she is responsible for Marco's revelation as a child. Or more accurately, she is responsible for nudging fate enough to cause him to go into the room where his father was.

The Feast of St. Columba, Numa, Tertius 30, 1650

The Feast of St. Columba, the patron saint of Strega, has been celebrated throughout Vodacce for hundreds of years. As part of the celebration, Fate Witches are allowed (on a limited basis) to move about in public and attend mass amongst their peers.

As one might expect, Strega look forward to this event every the year. They are even known to travel to the larger cities to mingle with their "sisters-in-arms." While there are several cities which are considered more desirable than others, there are simply none that can compete with Numa. Those with the means (and permission from their husbands, sons, or Princes) travel to Numa. There they see and are seen at the grandest Vatacine church in Vodacce, the Cathedral of Saint Mattheus.

In that respect, Tertius 30, 1650 was no different than any of the hundreds of other years that had preceded it; at least at the outset. But, that year was different. That year Sophia's Daughters had organized the exodus of no less than one hundred Fate Witches and other women in need. And Numa was the staging point.

Owing to the potential for fate lashes with so many Strega using Sorté so close to one another, all the escapees were admonished to use Sorté only in a life or death situation. Unfortunately "Life or Death" was interpreted quite liberally by most and thus Sorté use became rampant throughout the city. For most of the day Strega tried to ensure the best outcome for themselves and their loved ones.

The Feast of St. Columba, Numa, Tertius 30, 1650

Cont...

Unfortunately, they completely disregarded the fact other Strega were doing the same thing. Their efforts eventually created what was dubbed a *Fate Knot*. It lashed the liberators and Strega trying to fight it, and twisted fate in wild and unpredictable ways for miles around the city.

Several inexperienced Strega went mad because of it and more than a handful threw themselves into the Tigris. Even non-mages were caught in the Knot's web. A dizzying number of bizarre occurrences were reported throughout the city in the space of an hour including, three spontaneous pregnancies, thirty-seven marriage annulments, fourteen unexplained (but apparently natural) deaths, and a complete realignment of the city's political structure.

In the end, all the liberators died and the Strega were never found. But, the Knot was dissipated. Unfortunately, those left behind were unable to change any of the effects seen in the city proper.

He did the rest all by himself.

She had been trying to right the wrongs of his upbringing ever since the early death of her niece, Marco's mother. In this particular case, it worked far better than expected. Marco turns a blind eye to her activities, though whether this is because he is unaware or tacitly supporting her, she does not know.

She suspects he would feel differently if she were to help his wife to leave. But as long as he remains a good and loyal husband, Patricia does not foresee any

problems. However, she has been blindsided by such things in the past.

For almost two decades, when she is not dealing with Council matters, she is busy with her main job, organizing the quiet escape of hundreds of women a year out of Vodacce. She oversees all of it, determines which liberator will help which woman, what route they will take, everything. She has made it her personal duty to find, and eventually eliminate, the greatest threat to her operation, the man known as *L'Incubo delle Strega*.

She is also responsible for the edict forbidding Strega from using their powers to help their escape. She was the first to realize what had happened in the aftermath of the disastrous Feast of St. Columba in 1650.

Giada Bencivenni

Giada is an unassuming woman who owns and operates *Il Piccolo Fiore* (The Little Flower), the Storehouse containing The First Tome. Giada has been the Tome's caretaker for almost five years now, ever since her mother passed. She is an amazingly talented elixir maker and naturalist, but what draws most fellow Daughters to her inn is the Tome. Thus, she informs newly arriving Daughters of the Tome's Rules and then gets on about her day. When not directly dealing with the book, she quietly performs experiments, makes her fantastic elixirs, and deals with the mundane guests.

Daughters who seek her out usually do so in an effort to gather more insight about the Tome. They can often find her in the grand entry of the inn, staring wistfully at a curved sword over the mantelpiece. While she is congenial, they often leave frustrated as she is strangely tight-lipped about its contents.

Her distracted demeanor stems from a deeper pain. Giada feels trapped here. Raised by a single mother to believe the Tome was her duty and her only value, everything she ever learned was in service of that book. At age twelve, she discovered she had a father who was unaware of her existence. She ran off to be with him. When she found him, she learned he was



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everything her mother was not, jovial, carefree, doting, and a criminal. Specifically, he captained one of the most notorious smuggling ships on the River...and she loved being with him.

Then six years ago, she got a letter from her mother asking her to come home. Her mother, it seemed, had gotten sick and wanted to see her one last time. While her father was concerned for Giada, he could not tell her to ignore the letter. It took some time to return home, but within a week, her mother wore her down. Finally, she agreed to return to her duty to the Tome. Now she sits, chained to the Tome and forced to dream of the life she might have had, and the dawning realization that she may have to inflict this destiny on some future child of her own.

Enemies and Allies

Eileen and Devon O'Sheedy

Eileen and Devon are the current owners and proprietors of the Bottomless Well, an out of the way pub in Tara. It has been in the family for so long no one can rightly say when an O'Sheedy first took over.

Oddly, though, not even the oldest patrons can remember seeing Devon's father working here. But the common story is Devon and Eileen took over after the pub nearly burned to the ground around twenty years ago. Some people claim to still be able smell the smoke from time to time, like it seeped into the fabric of the inn. But, that is not possible; the whole inn was rebuilt afterwards. It is just a quaint story.

That is the Bottomless Well, a quaint little inn with a reputation as a quiet, friendly place for a drink and a good story or two. It can be rightly said—with nary a concern about stretching the truth—that nothing interesting ever happens there. Oh there has been, on the odd occasion maybe, an overeager patron who might have gotten a bit too friendly with one of the

servers. But, a stern look from Eileen is certain to bring things back in order. In short, if you want a bawdyhouse or a good old fashioned donnybrook, you should look elsewhere.

Because of the inn's popularity, the O'Sheedy's found themselves in need of a little help around the inn. Recently they decided to hire Norah. It could not have worked out better for everyone. The O'Sheedys needed the help and Norah needed a job and a place to stay. Very quickly, people could see how they doted on her. She is rapidly becoming the daughter they never had.

Eileen and Devon want nothing more than to run their little tavern and enjoy the stories of their customers, even if they have heard them all a thousand times before. After all, *"It's the little things that matter,"* Devon often says. That is why only the old brews and vintages are served. No one seems to know where they get some of the more rare brews, but then no one has really asked.

It is interesting to note, while the O'Sheedy's know just about every story their regulars have, the opposite is not true. As far as the patrons are concerned, even the regulars who have been drinking there for years, the O'Sheedys are a mystery. But given how much most folks like to talk about themselves, it is probably for the best anyway.

Emmerich Beringer

While the War orphaned many in Eisen, Emmerich was already an orphan. Fortunately, the Academy near his orphanage made allowances for "promising" candidates. He found the life tolerable. It had order when he needed it and told him the rules for everything so there would be no guesswork.

But, two years into the war, he found reason to enjoy life. Her name was Tanja Guessler but everyone called her The Gray Hawk. She was the smartest, bravest, most resourceful, and funniest person Emmerich had ever met. In quiet moments he liked to imagine she was the sister he had never known. Privately, he always called her *große kleine Schwester* (Big little sister)



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because she looked him in the eye even though she was five years his junior.

Time and again they threw themselves into battle, and time and again they ended up back to back defending each other. After the war, she sat him down and, over breakfast, told him of her plans to help women fleeing from Vodacce. She explained he was no longer obligated to follow her orders. He thought about it for a moment and then asked if he could have the last sausage. When she said yes, he replied, “Well, if I don’t have to follow you, then I guess I’ll choose to.”

Francine St. Martin

Convicted of numerous unsavory crimes the disgraced former Mother Superior of *L’Orphelinat de St. Denis* now languishes in *L’Baston du Remords*, a day’s ride from Paix. A defeated woman, she only avoided execution with a few well-placed bribes. She realized she would die in prison, so all she could hope for was to parlay her ill-gotten goods into something approximating a comfortable life on the inside.

It took little effort. She had considered the possibility years prior and had stashed away coins and other valuables in various bolt holes throughout Paix and the surrounding countryside. She even swallowed a couple of her most valuable gems to ensure she started things off on the right foot with whichever guards were most amenable to bribery.

Her plan worked...for about a week. Then one night, two guards stopped at her cell. After a short conversation in which they were alternately obsequious and threatening, they referred to her as *Mère Sol*. Not publicized during her trial, it was the code name the children used when they had coin to give her. She did not know them by sight, but when they introduced themselves, she recognized their names, Donat and Florian. Before age forced them to leave the orphanage, they had been among her enforcers, ensuring the other children were not holding out on her.

Now all grown up, they were brutes who made money stealing from prisoners, taking bribes, and smuggling goods in and out of the prison. Given their

feral grins, she expected trouble. But they did not want her life; they wanted to move up in the world. Unfortunately, thus far, their efforts saw little return. However, in Francine, they saw a new opportunity. Terrified of what might happen to her if she said no, she agreed to help them. The last two years have been a long process, but her boys are just about ready to make a name for themselves in Paix’s underworld.

Lauge Holgersen

Lauge was raised by strict Objectionist parents who dutifully brought him to church every Soldi. The family prayed for hours, read the Book of the Prophets extensively, and drilled its words—and its beliefs—into his head. From the time he could speak, Lauge would tell anyone who cared to listen about the strength of his belief in Theus and the Word. “New rules,” his parents used to say, “new rules to a new world that would wash away the years of Vestenmannjavnjár ignorance and Vatacine corruption.” In this new world—Lauge’s parents made him believe—he would hold a special place. That was because he was special, better, anointed, important. His whole life was filled with that message.

At a mere nine years old he gave his first sermon. Standing in the pulpit, behind the lectern that barely allowed his shock of blond hair to peek out atop it, his parents could not have been prouder. Soon enough he was behind the lectern every week. Then, in the fullness of time, he found the love of a woman who shared his beliefs, and they had two boys. It seemed nothing could stop him from living out Theus’ plan.

When he arrived on the Steffans’ doorstep, he was firm in his belief this was all part of the plan. That was why, after he told the Steffans sisters of his deal with their recently-departed father, their reaction shocked him. Over the next several days, he silently fumed about their rejection of his progeny, because their rejection was his rejection. He had never before been denied what he felt he was rightfully owed; so he sought solace in the Book.

The answer was right there in black and white. The words of both the Second and Third Prophets spoke



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about the proper roles assigned to men and women by Theus. It was not for the daughters to reject his sons. They were women after all; theirs was to submit, not to lead.

Over the next several days he railed against the sisters and their parents who had obviously raised them to think they could speak back to men. He would have what he—what his *sons*—were owed. He would see their debt paid in full, if not by duty, then by blood. His hatred for the sisters consumed him and his sermons took on a decidedly hostile air. Eventually his congregants asked him to step down. But, it did not stop him. Instead, he began preaching on the street. Then, his wife quietly suggested he might be taking it too personally. In response, his street sermons focused on the wickedness of women.

Finally, he came home to find his house empty. He ran out his door to get the guard but was confronted by his former congregation. Leading them and dressed in his former priestly robes, was his wife. She spoke to him about how he had failed the church, their sons, her, and most importantly himself. She begged him to get help and finished by saying he would not see any of his family again until he did so.

As he walked away, he realized the truth. The sisters must have gotten to her too. Perhaps, he thought, they had been in league together this whole time. For five years now, he has planned his revenge. Meanwhile, he has continued his crusade against the sisters and any women who refuse to accept the truth of the Word. He has vowed never to stop.

L'Incubo delle Strega

Daughters have been unable to learn very much about this man. All that they can say for certain is, he has been in the business of abducting and forcibly returning runaway Fate Witches for many years. Amongst those who know, he is considered to be the best, a fact born out by his success rate. He is motivated almost entirely by greed, so he has been known to walk away in exchange for a bribe. But bribing him is, at best, a temporary reprieve as he will invariably return once the other side has met his price.

Strega who have seen him in person report that he is Unbound.

In addition to the facts, Daughters have heard rumors about him. Whether these are true or not remain to be seen. He has displayed training associated with at least two sword schools, Villanova and Aldana. In addition, he has shown familiarity with several others, including Scapare. Some Strega wonder if he has a Fate Witch of his own to help him locate runaways. Others have suggested he *is* the Fate Witch and either is the only man with Sorté or is actually a woman. However, no Strega has ever been Unbound.

Maurice Beaumont du Verre, Le Compte du Charneau

In days gone by, Le Compte du Charneau was quite the ladies man. “Handsome, rich, and powerful,” is how he was described. The only time he failed to capture a lady’s attention was when he captured two. It was a shame, then that he could not count “Wise or Kind” among his assets. Thus, his successes were frequent, but they were never meaningful.

During the course of several decades, his lifetime of excesses threatened to take his looks away, leaving him with nothing but a wife and money. In his opinion he could not be blamed for taking out his frustrations on the only convenient target. After all, if she had simply supported him more, he certainly would have listened to her advice.

But then, a simple night’s diversion at the Theater ended up taking away what he thought he could never lose. At the play’s end, he had planned for an evening rubbing shoulders with distant relations and other nobles. But, it all turned to disaster when he caught his wife with Margot Babineaux, the ingénue of the play they had just enjoyed. The laughter of other patrons ringing in his ears mocked him. To salve his dwindling masculinity, he challenged Margot to a duel.

After all, he had studied Valroux extensively. No mere actress—no commoner—could possibly hope to best him. Unfortunately for Le Compte, she was a



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formidable opponent and her style was entirely unknown to him. Meanwhile, she seemed to know everything he would do, almost before he did it. In the end, Margot let him live but only because he humiliated himself. Even then, she did not let him go until she gave him numerous ugly scars, ensuring he would never walk right again.

By the time he recovered enough to return home, his wife was long gone. Where, he did not know. But, he suspected it was straight to the actress' bed. Day by day, he sits on the veranda of his still-ample property watching it decay in front of his eyes. He has no interest in it anymore. Instead, he feeds on his hatred like a starving man eating a rotten meal, dreaming of a revenge that never comes.

Raúl Ramirez de Araujo

Raúl and his wife moved to Altamira about five years ago because he has distant relatives there who told him about the good job prospects. Currently, he runs a small apothecary shop in a quiet area of Altamira known as "The Catwalk" because its narrow streets and quiet, shaded alleys seem to attract mice and cats in equal measures.

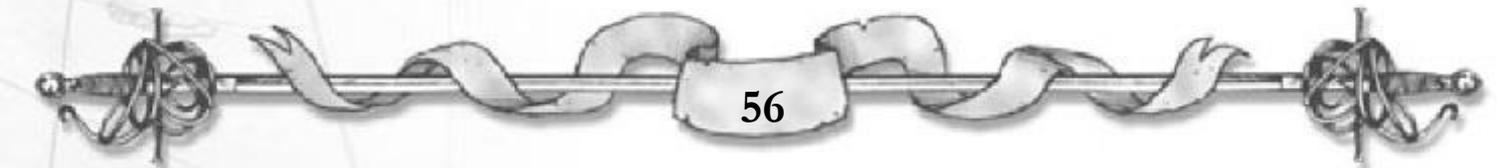
His shop is located at the end of a back alley which only gets sunlight when the sun is highest in the sky. Even then, it is only recognizable for the sign on the front door announcing "Elixirs for Sale." Despite his lack of advertising, he does a steady business which requires him to spend long hours at the shop. Those who have been in his shop find him to be generally competent, if bland and tightlipped about his wife and son. However, no one would ever say he has anything less than perfect manners.

Interestingly, despite the steady business, there is no evidence his shop has been visited by any of the criminal elements in Altamira. That has given rise to rumors that he runs his own criminal enterprise. Of course it is patently absurd; the man has become flustered when calling people by their given name.

Tossell

Tossell is a selkie who is almost entirely forgettable. He is not brilliant or clever. He is not brave or resourceful. He really is not anything other than a spectator. Thus, he tries to stay out of the way of those who make a difference. But, he is always available to lend them his support should they need it. He has been wrong on occasion, both about the people and about the kind of support they need. Truthfully, that has happened more than he is entirely comfortable with. But he can say with some pride, when he is wrong, he will be the first to try to rectify his mistake. Even if his attempts to fix things make things worse.

Take, for example, his latest problem. He had intended to honor her but somehow he ended up insulting the Queen of the S... Well, it does not really matter. He will find some way to make it right. He always has before. Now that he has Kenna MacKindric's—sorry, MacCodrum's—love to spur him on he is even more determined to do better. After all, she has sacrificed so much to prove her love; it would be an almost unthinkable betrayal to let her down.



Storehouses

The Snelling Academy

For the past fifty-two years, the Academy has been the only institution of higher learning for women in Avalon. It is located on the site of the Snelling Estate (from which the academy derives its name). Nestled in the northlands, a day's ride from Luthon, its location ensures the students focus on their studies and manners rather than other, less lofty, pursuits.

The Snelling Estate is four hundred acres which have been meticulously groomed for the enjoyment of the students. The Academy itself consists of four buildings of various sizes, including the former manor



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house and servant's quarters along with the grounds and the gardens

As would be typical of such storied edifices, rumors abound that the former servants' quarters (home to most of the first-year students and also the location of the dining facilities) are haunted. Descriptions of the ghosts have varied over time. But, the most frequently told story is the Wanderer in White. According to the legend, years after she graduated, she died alone. The sadness drove her to wander, searching for comfort and companionship. When she found the lights on at the academy she somehow remembered better days. Now, she remains here, reveling in the camaraderie of graduates long passed.

Most teachers—and the Headmistress for that matter—dismiss such talk as silly nonsense. But if the story is real, the Wanderer speaks well for the academy's reputation. After all, she has impeccable manners and has refrained from doing much more than accidentally frightening a few newcomers.

Mansión de Búho (Owl Manor)

Since 1418, soon after a new King assumes the throne of Castille, his Mother graciously asks to retire from court life. A year and a day after his coronation, a grand processional moves her out, ensuring the new Queen feels no rivalry for the King's time and attention. The Queen Mother retires to *Mansión de Búho*, a beautiful and extensive manor house located in Castille's rolling countryside about half way between San Cristobal and Vatacine City.

A retinue of Sandoval's Guards and as many of her ladies-in-waiting as she deems necessary accompany the Queen Mother to attend her until her death or their dismissal. During her retirement, the King is expected to make any renovations she might need or desire for her comfort. This has led to the expansion of the manor from a mere seventy-five rooms when it was first completed to well over a hundred now. This has proven necessary since celebrations, such as the Queen Mother's birthday, may see up to fifty guests and their retinue, which have been known to fill the castle to overflowing.

The manor itself consists of a sprawling three-story building on a small hill near the center of the grounds. It overlooks a small lake on several hundred acres of land. There is a small forest on the property, and only the Queen Mother or her servants have permission to hunt in it. Even the new King must ask his mother's permission before entering.

کتابخانه دانشگاه الکسیا

(The University of Alexia Library)

For centuries the University of Alexia's library has fallen under the shadow of the famed Library of Alexia. During the latter's destruction (along with the rest of the city) nearly six centuries ago, few outside the academic community were even aware of it. However, given its smaller size and exclusive focus on academic studies it was little wonder. Fortunately, that worked to its benefit as the Crusaders did little more than set the building on fire as they left with their *greater* treasures. Volunteers and academics were able to put the blaze out, though much of the library's works were ruined or damaged severely.

Soon enough repairs got under way and continued for over a century. Seizing the opportunity, the first few head librarians quietly went about making renovation and expansion their top priority. Looking on it today there is no evidence of the previous destruction, save one; the university's library houses only books. Gone are the scrolls and pamphlets of eons past.

While the influx of new books and knowledge has been a boon, the fact remains that the knowledge stolen during the sacking of Alexia will, most likely, never be replaced. Unfortunately, as other matters came to the fore, subsequent head librarians found themselves having less and less concern with the words of the past. Eventually, they became complacent. Then, about twenty years ago, the library hired its most ambitious curator, Ranya Ihsan Samara.

In her time, Ranya has assembled an exhaustive list of books which she had good reason to believe had been part of the university's library prior to the sacking. Then, she wrote to scholars all over the Empire with an intriguing offer. An exchange of copies of missing



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tomes for material she did have in the library's collection. Once an agreement had been reached, scribes were sent to make a copy of the book in as much detail as possible, so that it could be added back into the library's collection. Since she first wrote to the scholars, she has managed to return over a dozen books. But more than that, she has created an exchange program throughout the Empire. Other scholars have copied her ideas, reaching out to some of the more prominent private collectors with similar offers. A few have even contacted Ranya with items they think she might be interested in.

Der Erdkeller (The Earth Cellar)

The Earth Cellar is where Sophia's Daughters became more than just women sharing folk wisdom. If there is site they would call sacred, this is it. The White Plague cure came from here, hidden safely in The First Tome (even if it has been residing elsewhere for over six hundred years). It has one of the most extensive collections of Daughters' knowledge in Théah. There are currently over 2500 books here in every language from all over Théah. The collection grows steadily as Daughters make copies of their rarest books and send them on to *der Erdkeller*.

Der Erdkeller really is an old earth cellar, built in a cave in the foothills of *die Drachenbergs*. At one time, so the story goes, the Buchhalters owned a home very near the cave. They used to store food for the winter there. But an avalanche destroyed the house and buried the cave. Or so it seemed from the outside. Nowadays it just looks like a scree-covered hillside. While the rockslide did destroy the house, the cave was unaffected. Hidden in the rockslide covering the cave is a door about 50' up. Oddly, those who have been there once say after you have found the door the first time, you can easily see it thereafter, even from a distance.

L'Orphelinat de St. Denis

(St. Dennis' Orphanage)

The Orphanage is one of the newest Storehouses. Anne Dubois du Arrent purchased it three years ago after learning about the frequent and repeated abuses perpetrated on the children there by the facility's

Mother Superior, *Francine St. Martin*. She used the children to commit various criminal schemes throughout Paix. This had apparently been going on since she had taken over the orphanage some thirty-eight years previous. Entire generations of children had grown up committing crimes only because they had not been taught any other way. Over half were already dead or locked up in various gaols around Montaigne.

To rectify matters, Anne hired nearly a dozen graduates of the Snelling Academy in Avalon to teach the children properly. The project has had some rough moments. The children, used to a life of crime have had difficulty adjusting. But, all those involved are hopeful for a better outcome in the future.

The secular education of such young children so close to the bosom of the Vatacine Church caused quite a stir. Religious leaders across the Dechane in Castille, including Cardinal Verdugo, have railed against it. Saying the experiment will have no less an outcome than inviting Legion into the children's souls.

Lezhibische (The Rookery)

Ustinya Numinova is almost always on the move; coming from or going to wherever. Regardless of her direction, she brings everything she needs with her. That is because the Rookery is on wheels (or skis in the wintertime). It is a cozy little carriage painted with bright colors and etched with all manner of colorful birds. For fellow Daughters, there are several Owls, their eyes leading toward the back door of the Carriage.

Hidden in the back of the carriage is a safe room, no bigger than a tiny closet. It is just large enough for one person or two small children. It does not see much use but, as Ustinya often says, "*Всё хорошо в своё время*" ("Everything is good in its time.")

Inside is everything Ustinya needs to spend several weeks in Ussura's wilds and enough cages to put all her birds inside along with all her training gear. She likes to bring her birds up to certain high, frigid peaks in the Gora Bolshoi Mountains. The cold air and natural surroundings help the birds perform better in



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training. As she says, “*В гостях хорошо, а дома лучше.*” (“A guest’s house is nice but it is better at home.”). There, the birds are home.

Steffans’ Parlor

This slightly run down pistol academy has seen better days. Here and there the plaster is cracked, revealing the brickwork underneath. The front gate has three conspicuous bullet holes in a triangle shape at or just above head height and the roof of the main building resembles the belly of a longboat that is ready to sink. The whole thing is in desperate need of a thorough cleaning. Because of this, those who pass by often do not look twice. It is almost invisible in the side streets of Isafjordhur and hosts no more than three or four sessions per week. That is hardly enough to support one teacher let alone the two teachers and an aid who actually work there. Ostensibly, the parlor trains students in the Rassmussen School. However, given the more famous Earling Parlor is a mere three blocks away; it sees almost no walk-in business.

Despite that, the parlor is still quite ambitious. It has a good training ground in the back which has thick stone walls to blunt the impact of the projectiles and wood covering to slow down the ricochets. It also boasts a small but curious library which contains very few books about dueling or trajectory and quite a few books one might use to help children learn to read. The library itself is a good sized room set up to be a classroom. There are also living quarters for both the staff and up to six or so students.

Il Piccolo Fiore (The Little Flower)

This mountain resort lies in the shadow of *Monti Lepini*, a dormant volcano about a day’s ride from Numa. A small, but steady, stream of Vodacce follow the ancient Numan roads which lead up to the inn and the ancient Numan baths here. The waters are said to have healing, restorative, and other properties depending on which you bathe in.

The grounds are extensive, consisting of several buildings and over a dozen baths and pools of various temperatures from warm to painfully hot. The main inn is a two-story structure with a communal bath.

Outside, just behind the inn is the largest, hottest, pool. Nearby is the site of the former servant’s house. It has been empty now for as long as anyone can remember, the last remnant of the inn’s heydays. Situated around the main structure are about half a dozen cottages in various directions, each with their own bath. However, the farthest cottage, located about half way up the mountainside, now has a steam room. Unfortunately, the spring supplying it has been going dry for several decades now.

The presence of guests here acts as a nice cover for the Daughters who come from all over Théah to read the First Tome. It is safely hidden in a small room accessible only through the maintenance tunnels underneath the main inn’s communal bath. Getting there requires walking in and around the pipes which supply both the communal bath and the pool behind the inn. Many of the pipes are hot enough to cause damage to the unwary, which has served as an effective deterrent for hundreds of years.

The Maiden

Paulette discretely closed the door to the dining hall. Within, Lord and Lady Cheverny du Verre were getting into another disagreement and it would be better if there were no bystanders. Especially after the most recent *incident*.

Several other servants approached, bringing the second course. Paulette waved them off, indicating they should go back to the kitchen to wait. While she waited, she brushed lint off her skirt and adjusted her apron to hide the pouch underneath. After all, Lady du Verre's house rules were very specific.

Within, the voices became heated. It was hard not to overhear. But the subject was old and familiar. Lord du Verre had a wandering eye and couldn't keep his hands to himself, especially where the youngest and comeliest of the staff was concerned.

Since Paulette first arrived, Lady du Verre had sent three staff—all of whom were *in the family way* thanks to Lord du Verre's attentions—to seek employment elsewhere. One of whom, if the rumors were true, was the child of a previous dalliance. Paulette didn't doubt the story; the man was a contemptible pig.

In the midst of Lady du Verre cursing at him impotently, Paulette heard a loud thud followed by metal clattering to the floor. There was a slight pause followed by shrieking. Soon, the doors flew open and Lady du Verre started to yell for help, her face pallid and sweaty. The screaming died in her throat as she saw Paulette standing there calmly. Seeing no witnesses, the Lady's demeanor changed. "Paulette my dear, did you poison my husband?"

"Yes."

"Why? He was my assignment. You're only to intervene at my command and I gave you no such

order. Why would you... Oh. You appealed to the Council behind my back, didn't you?"

"I did."

"Why? Certainly he's unfaithful, and he has no concern for the welfare of the women he's been with once he's done with them, and his edicts regularly harm women. But the same could be said for dozens of other nobles."

"You've obviously lost your objectivity if you're making my case for me. But that's not why I contacted them. He murdered Cosette. He'd been with her. Claimed to love her. She was even pregnant with his child. And he beat her to death for the crime of slapping him. Why did she slap him? Because he dismissed her from her position here when he discovered she was carrying another one of his "little bastards" as he put it. She knew what it meant to be dismissed. No one would hire her if they found out. And they would find out. She'd be destitute. Her only option would be to head to the city and hope she could make enough money as an unlicensed Jenny. I, for one, know how long she'd survive doing that. I can tell you the exact number of graves I've mourned over this year alone."

"They ordered you to kill him because of her?" Lady du Verre's voice held a note of derision, like she was genuinely offended Cosette's death had interrupted her plans for the week.

"No. I also told them you witnessed the incident and did nothing. Once it was all over, you ordered some of the other staff to take her body and bury it, ensuring neither I, nor her family, would learn what happened to her. When the council heard this, they gave me permission to kill you both. Unfortunately, you are far more resistant to the hemlock than he was. Rather than kill you, it's only made you weak. I'm afraid this next part will be both messy and painful. But it won't be long. I'll have the servants bury you both next to Cosette." As she finished speaking, Paulette drew a razor-sharp dagger from the pouch under her apron.



Resources

Joining Sophia's Daughters

Unlike the more formal secret societies, Sophia's Daughters has no prescribed method of joining. Most became members after they were noticed by a Daughter. Frequently, it is a mother or other relative. But, there are times when it was just a chance encounter with an established member. It has often been said, "No one looks to join the Daughters, the Daughters look for you."

It is not the greatest system, to be sure. Some women—too many as far as the Daughters are concerned—are overlooked by simply not being in the right place at the right time.

Thus, it is the sworn duty of all Daughters to seek out new members and any other issues of interest to Daughters. They go to places where women congregate and they listen. Are there women in need? Was there mention of a young girl who is inordinately curious about the world around them? Did that young lady really stare down a group of ruffians armed with nothing but a rock?

Regardless of how the potential candidate came to their attention, Daughters begin to watch her. If they like what they see, one Daughter will make contact, talk with the candidate to see where their interests lie and if they have the right mindset. From there, depending on their location, they could be mentored by the Daughter who made contact or arrangements could be made to have them sent somewhere for more training. Once they are determined to be a good fit, they start getting to do the work, but without mention of the Daughters. Eventually they are offered membership. If they want to join, they are allowed to do so. If not, the only Daughters in potential danger are the few the candidate had contact

with. Their sisters watch for anything suspicious and the process begins again.

Character Creation

During Character Creation, Players can spend 5HP to have their female character be a member of Sophia's Daughters. They may, with GM approval, become a member of the national council for +1HP. In that case, their character will be responsible for helping make rulings or setting policy for the Daughters in her nation.

All Sophia's Daughters have access to the following:

- A complete understanding of all the Daughters' secret codes and communication methods including Body Language, The Plant Code, The Sign of the Owl, and The Birdsong Code.
- The names and locations of the group of Daughters they initially joined and least one other group of Daughters near their current location they can rely on for support.
- The coloring and type of the birds owned by all of the above women in the event one of them shows up.
- The location and contents of at least one nearby Storehouse and the ability to locate a Storehouse in a strange town should there be one in the area.

All members of Sophia's Daughters have a basic understanding of the natural phenomena around them. Any character may purchase Natural Philosophy as a basic knack when they buy any skill which has it.

Finally, it should be noted, Sophia's Daughters does not recruit men and does not have male members. Their safety—and the safety of their sisters—are paramount.

Special Training

Certain Daughters have dedicated themselves to one pursuit above all others. As such they have gained a “6” in one skill. Player Character Daughters may learn at the foot of the master and increase their own abilities. Provided, of course, the Daughters are willing to teach them.

In order to reach a 6, Players must first purchase the relevant skill up to 5. After that, they must seek out a teacher. Finally, once they have learned, Players must pay 25XP to raise their skill.

Sophia’s Daughters has three such experts (listed below along with their location and area of expertise).

Compounds: *Giada Bencivenni*, near Monti Lepini
Natural Philosophy: *Ranya Ihsan Samara*, Alexia
Socializing: *Anne Duboise du Arrent*, Muguet

New Rules

New Advantages

Elixir Brewing (10 or 20 Points, Daughters Only)

Characters with the *Compounds* or *Poisons* Knacks understand the basics of medicinal and poisonous plants, topical ointments, and cures for most minor illnesses. But Daughters can go beyond that, learning the secrets to brewing fabulous elixirs with nearly miraculous effects including healing injuries quicker and even delaying death itself. How much characters

know depends on the points they spend. As mentioned previously, Elixir Brewing is not magic and does not interfere with the purchase of either Sorcery or Shamanism.

For 10 Hero Points, Characters gain the Herbalism Skill and a free Rank in both Compounds and Poisons Knacks. They can make all the Basic Elixirs, know the formula to one Advanced Elixir of GM’s choice and may brew both Special Elixirs if they are close to a Storehouse with those formulas.

For 20 Hero Points, Characters get the 10 point advantage, plus they know the formulas for four additional Advanced Elixirs (for a total of five). Players may choose three of the formulas with GMs choice for the fourth.

Players may acquire additional formulas for 3HP (9XP) each (though GMs may require role-playing to gain access to them). There is no limit to the number of formulas a player may have.

Brewing

Making Elixirs is a lengthy process (even the easiest take over an hour). There are some that require days or months to make along with exacting measurements and supplies. To simulate this, players must make a Wits + Compounds roll (if the Elixir adds dice or has beneficial effects) or Wits + Poisons roll (if the Elixir removes dice or has harmful effects).

Elixirs shelf life depends on a number of factors. In general, Basic Elixirs are resilient and last several months, whereas Advanced Elixirs last about a week. Elixirs marked “*” last a few days.

Activating

Once the roll has been made, Basic Elixirs perform as described. Advanced Elixirs, however, require an additional step. Despite careful preparations, many things can go wrong (like contaminating the formula or allergic reactions). Thus, activating an Advanced Elixir also requires a Drama Die (which can be paid by brewer or the consumer) to ensure it works as expected.

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A Warning

Elixir Brewing is not an exact science. Mixing elixirs can have harmful, potentially lethal, effects. To avoid this, characters should consume no more than one elixir a day. If they do so anyway (regardless of whether they pay the second Drama Die), such characters are at the mercy of the GM who can enact whatever consequences they desire. GMs without any ideas can consult **Mixed Results**.

Basic Elixirs

Brewing any Basic Elixir requires the same Target Number (TN 15). Success means the Elixir works as described below. At the end of each entry the effects are written as *(Effect/Interval/Duration)*. Effect refers to what the Elixir does to anyone using it. Interval refers to how often users can roll to stop the effects. Duration indicates how long the Elixir's effects last. For more information, see Poisons in the Game Master's Guide (GMG, p. 184),

At GMs discretion, Raises can be taken for any of the following:

- +1k0 additional effect (1 Raise)
- +1k1 additional effect (2 Raises)
- Automatic Dramatic Wound replaces Kept Dice of Effect Roll (+1 Additional Raise)
- Down one level on the Interval Chart (1 Raise)
- Up one level on the Duration Chart (1 Raise)

Antidote (poisons) – Gives the afflicted a better chance to fight off a poison. *(1k0 to roll to resist poison/1 Roll/Permanent)*

Cures (Various Diseases) – Lessens the symptoms of various diseases. *(1k0 to roll to overcome disease/Every Hour/6 Hours)*

Salves (Various Injuries) – Pain relief for various injuries (burns, muscle strain, bruises, allergic reactions). *(Removes all Flesh Wounds/1 Roll/1 Hour)*

Poison (Various) – User suffers various effects from incapacitation to death depending on type of poison and strength. *(Varies according to type)*

Advanced Elixirs

Creating any Advanced Elixir requires the same Target Number (TN 20) Success means the Elixir works as described below. In addition, while they are not required to, some users may wish to resist the effects. If so, they must roll a Contested Roll, of their Resolve vs. the Elixir's Compounds Roll.

Awareness – Heightens senses making a person more aware of their surroundings *(Confers Keen Senses or +1k0 if the user already has it/1 Roll/5 Minutes)*

Calm – This elixir makes the user calm, inattentive and happy. *(-2k2 to Wits checks and Social Rolls to resist compliance/Every Hour/3 Hours)*

Coloring – Causes a rapid change in the color of the user's skin, hair, or eyes. Hair can become white, yellow, blond, black, or red. Skin can be made pale, yellowish, ruddy, or dark. Eye color can be lighted, darkened, or changed to a variety of colors. *(Effects as above/1 Roll/ Several Days)*

Mixed Results

- ❖ *Nothing.* You got away with it, *this time.*
- ❖ *Nothing.* The second potion does not work.
- ❖ *Cancelled Out.* Both potions stop working.
- ❖ *Colors.* Potions may work, or not. But the imbiber's skin, hair, teeth, or eyes become bright red, bluish, grey, yellowed, or GM's choice.
- ❖ *Sick!* Imbiber becomes violently ill.
- ❖ *Surprise!* Potions have an unintended effect. Ex: all social rolls must include singing and dancing.
- ❖ *Poisoned!* The combination acts as poison of the GM's choosing.
- ❖ *Partial Paralysis.* Some body part stops working. Hope it's not the liver, lungs, heart, or brain.
- ❖ *Total Paralysis.* Imbiber cannot move. Lasts one day or longer, maybe until someone finds a cure.
- ❖ *Death.* You knew it was dangerous and you did it anyway...

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Dopplegänger – This elixir duplicates some of the features of one person on another. To do so, a sample of the target’s breath must be collected.

Interval

One time only
Every hour
Twice an hour
Four times an hour
Every 5 minutes
Every minute
Twice a minute
Four times a minute
Every 5 seconds
Every second

Duration

Permanent
Several Months
Several Weeks
Several Days
One Day
12 Hours
6 Hours
3 Hours
1 Hour
30 Minutes
1 Scene
Several Rounds
1 Round
1 Roll

Upon consumption, the user begins to resemble the target. The base roll duplicates the target’s face, but Daughters may take raises to affect additional features. This duplication always follows the same order; after the face comes hair, skin, eyes, musculature, and voice¹. Unfortunately, the more features duplicated, the more the imbiber takes on the target’s personality². These changes last for about an hour. Those who know the target will treat the dopplegänger as if they are the target unless some action calls that belief into question (speaking in the wrong voice, calling someone by the wrong name, etc.). At that point, they may roll to realize the deception³.

It should be noted; only the skin and soft features can be molded.

The user’s bones and internal organs do not change. So their height remains similar. (*See above/1 Roll/1 Hour*).

Flying* – This Elixir’s name is a misnomer as there is no flying involved. Instead, legend has it one of the first users likened the experience to, “flying like a bird.” This is one of the few Elixirs which is not consumed. Instead, it is applied like lotion and absorbed through the skin. This can be quite problematic if the user touches others.

Once under the influence, users get a sense about others nearby; they call it *seeing their auras*. Note, users report a sense of unreality while under its influence⁴. It is often best to have someone else do the talking. While, it usually lasts for around an hour, it has been known to last for quite a bit longer (*-2k0 to All Social Rolls, Wits + Keen Senses, TN 20 reveals the correct answer to various Yes/No questions, See Sample Questions/1 Roll/1 Hour*)

Sample Questions

Was that person knowingly lying?
Are they afraid/angry/joyous/worried?
Are they a Sorcerer or affected by it?
Are they healthy/injured/poisoned?
Are they in love?

Forgetfulness – Users remain alert and active for the duration of the Elixir’s effect but have extreme difficulty remembering anything witnessed or experienced subsequent to taking the potion. This is an important distinction, as they will remember everything right up until the Elixir takes effect. Unfortunately, a common reaction for users is a reluctance to interact with others. They realize something is wrong, but do not know exactly what. (*-4k4 to remember events which occurred while under its influence/Every Hour/12 Hours*)

¹ So Daughters wishing to affect the eye color must take 3 raises, which will affect hair and skin also.

² Once per Scene, Players make a Resolve + Strong Will (TN 15) to avoid performing one GM-controlled action or statement. The TN increases by 5 for each raise taken during the elixir’s creation. Players who fail the roll can pay a Drama Die to remain in control. They may listen to the action before deciding.

³ Wits + Keen Senses with TN equal to the Compounds roll.

⁴ That sense of unreality makes interactions difficult as users giggle inappropriately, stare too long, and commit other social *faux pas* (*-1k1 to all Social Rolls while under the influence*)

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Healing – Speeds the healing process but users become ravenously hungry and sleep for at least half a day afterward. This Elixir should be used sparingly as more than one dose a week can cause significant weakness⁵. (+1 *Dramatic Wound recovery in addition to other care*/1 Roll/12 Hours)

Love/Hate – This Elixir increases or decreases (at Brewer's discretion) good feelings the user has for some other person. Which person that ends up being depends on who the user is near while under the influence. For best results, the user and target should be together throughout the duration of the Elixir. Interestingly, once this has worn off, users remain unaware that they have been under its influence. The gain/loss in relationship strength will return to normal over time unless something is done to maintain the change. (*Relationship strength +/- 1-3, (See Tugging Strands, PG, p. 222.)*/1 Roll/3 Hours)

Luck – This Elixir does not actually confer or remove luck, merely instills or blocks the sense of confidence and infallibility. Brewers can make either variant but must choose which before making the roll. Unfortunately, both Elixirs look and smell the same. So brewers should label things carefully. In addition, both formulas are very similar, leading to ironic outcomes.

The Bad Luck Elixir makes users worse at activities they are good at and reluctant to try new activities (-1k0 to all known skill rolls, Will Roll, (TN 15) to do anything unskilled/1 Roll/1 Hour).

⁵ -1 Resolve for each additional use per week, returns at a rate of 1/week.

Creating New Elixirs

There are no formal rules for creating new elixirs. It could be as simple as talking to your GM, making your case, and paying 3 HP (or 9 XP).

Alternately, GMs could make entire storyarcs from Researching new Elixirs or finding "Forgotten" ones in ancient Storehouses.

The Good Luck Elixir makes users better at activities they are already good at, worse at those they cannot do, and a tendency to try either. (+1k0 to all skills with 3+ Ranks, -1k0 to Unskilled Rolls. Will Roll (TN 15) to not make one unskilled roll per round/1 Roll/1 Hour).

Lust – rather than affecting the relationship (as **Love/Hate** does) this potion just gets the user ready (both mentally and physically) for amorous activity. Users find it difficult to resist requests they judge likely to lead to amorous activity. (-1k1 to resist Social and Seduction Rolls/1 Roll/2 Hours).

Memory Boost – Helps user recall more accurately events that occurred in their past. Size of the boost depends on when the events happened (+4k4 for the last day, +3k3 for the last month, +2k2 for the past year, +1k1 for before that/1 Roll/3 Hours).

Pain Relief – Allows users to ignore the body's warning signs. (User is immune to being Crippled, or Knocked Out (see **GMG, p.183**)/1 Roll/1 Scene).

Success Chart

- 1 – Failure, take another dose and try again
- 2-9 – Success.
- 10 – Success! You learned something new, +1 Free Raise to the Compounds Roll

Paralysis – Users are unable to make any volitional movements (breathing, heartbeat, eye movements, etc. are unaffected). However, all their other senses are normal. Unfortunately, this Elixir's duration varies widely by individual. (Users cannot move but are completely aware/Every Minute/1 Hour)

Resistance – Users find pain and extreme environments less concerning, allowing the user to better tolerate discomfort (*Confers Cold/Warm Climate Conditioning and +1k1 to resist torture*/1 Roll/One Day).

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Sleep – Interferes with circadian rhythms, fooling the user into thinking they need to sleep. It can be resisted, but getting up before it runs its course is difficult. *(-2k2 to resist going to sleep, or getting up before the duration ends/Every Hour/6 Hours)*

Special Elixirs

Because of these formulas' complexities and value to their cause, Sophia's Daughters have ensured all major Storehouses in Theah have a copy. Individual Daughters do not need to carry copies on themselves, they can find them most places.

Mechanically the Special Elixirs are nearly identical to the Advanced Elixirs. But creating them requires an Elixir Lab (see below). Other differences are mentioned under individual descriptions.

The Breath of Life* – Though not completely understood, this Elixir extends a user's life-span. How long depends on how many times they have taken it previously. The first, adds about 50 years, then 35, 20, 12, 8, and 5. No Daughter has taken the Breath of Life more than six times (the oldest known Daughter lived to be 186).

The process is lengthy, requiring the recipient to take several successive approximations of the final formula (which must be individually tailored). After the initial dose, it can be lethal to anyone other than its intended user. But that does not mean it is entirely safe. Daughters have died or been driven mad before even taking the final formula.

Characters must take four successful doses (one a week) plus one additional for each previous time they have used the Breath of Life. After each dose, Players roll 1d and consult the **Success Chart**. Once they have the requisite successes, they make their Compound Roll, TN equals 5x the total number of doses they took (Successful and not).

Success indicates the Elixir worked. Once the process is finished, Daughters can expect noticeable change in skin elasticity and tone in a couple of days. They will also probably need a haircut and a manicure. Some of the internal changes can take longer (up to a year).

The exact number of years an individual character gains is up to GM discretion, but the numbers mentioned previously can serve as a guide.

The White Plague Elixir* – Lessens the symptoms of the white plague. In addition, adversely affects Sorcery (it has no effect on Shamanism). *(+1k1 to resist the White Plague, -1k0 to all Sorcerous Skill Rolls⁶/1 time only/One Day)*

Diseases

The White Plague *(1k1/1 Day/Permanent)*

Spoken of only in hushed terms (as though it might hear and seek out the speaker), the White Plague has been killing its way across Theah since the mid 4th century. Its symptoms include: fever, chills, extreme weakness, nausea, bleeding, and most recognizably, large, bulbous whitish, swellings in the groin, armpits or neck.

To be rid of it, those afflicted need to make a successful resistance (Resolve) check every day for a week. They will still take damage daily and the flesh wounds accumulate normally.

Matriarch (5 Points, Daughters Only)

Regardless of your age or social station, other Daughters call you a Matriarch. It is both an honor and obligation. You begin with a 1pt. Background as another Daughter needs your help. When you resolve it, you gain another Background (see *Foul Weather Jack*. **PG, p. 161**). In addition, once per adventure you may call on a Daughter or ally who has just the skill you need. *(You may make one skill check for a skill you do not have, or add +1k0 to a skill you already have).*

The Pilgrimage (5 Points, Daughters Only)

At some point in your life, you made a pilgrimage to *Il Piccolo Fiore* a small inn half a day's trek from Numa. There you spent a good deal of time studying The First Tome. After a while some of its words had a

⁶ Note: Any Sorcerous Knacks with 1 pip are inaccessible during the Cure's duration.

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profound effect, changing you both mentally and physically. It was too deep and personal to put into words. You may raise one trait (your choice) to 6 by spending experience. (*This can be bought in addition to the Legendary Trait Advantage but the two Advantages must affect Different Traits.*)

Storehouse (Varies, Daughters Only)

Originally the term referred to places where Daughters' knowledge was stored. It could have been a cave, basement, secure building, or abandoned ruin. Though often, it was simply a convenient well in the town square where Daughters gathered.

Since their reorganization, it has come to refer to any Daughters' safe place, be it for their knowledge, their camaraderie, or their persons. Heroes who wish to have a Storehouse of their own may use up to 10 Hero Points during character creation to create one. If more wish to contribute, they can combine their Hero Points to create an even more elaborate Storehouse. The size of the Storehouse determines how many other Advantages can be placed with it. (*For Example, a Tiny Safehouse could hold a Resident Daughter, and a Closet Sized Safe Place, but not an Elixir Lab.*)

Size (Varies)

Tiny (0 Points) – Essentially a drop-off point. It could be a place to leave coded messages, a stash of money, food, healing elixirs, etc. If they were desperate one average-sized person could fit in it. It can hold up to 2 points worth of advantages.

Small (2 Points) – No more than a room (possibly in some other, larger, structure). It comes with one Resident Daughter for free and can hold up to 5 Points of Advantages.

Medium (4 Points) – Space of approximately one single-story building. It can be freestanding or part of a larger structure. It comes with one Resident Daughter for free and can hold up to 10 Points of Advantages.

Large (8 Points) – Can be multiple buildings or a multi-story structure. It comes with one Resident Daughter for free and can hold unlimited Points of Advantages (subject to GM approval).

Resident Daughter (1 Point Each)

The Storehouse has permanent residents who are skilled in some area. Anyone can call on them as needed. Almost any resident can be created, for example:

"Storehouse"

Despite being in continuous use for hundreds of years, no Daughter will say "Storehouse" unless there are only Daughters present. The term is known to the Inquisition and could arouse suspicion. Instead a more innocuous term is used. It varies by nation, but is always something that fits easily into conversation. For example Avalon currently uses the term "Top Shelf" as in, "Can you get me the recipe book from the top shelf?"

Brewer – She knows Compounds and Poisons and can help make potions (+1k0 to rolls using either of those skills).

Guide – She knows the area well and can give detailed information for those in need (+1k0 to Navigation/Street Navigation rolls in the area).

Healer – She knows herbalism and can treat most injuries and local diseases.

(can perform any skill from Herbalism, and has elixirs available).

Librarian – She knows all the books at the Storehouse and can make suggestions for further study (+1k0 to Research rolls).

Swordswoman – She can teach fighting skills (which vary according to her location) and she will defend the Storehouse with her life. (50 Point loyal Henchman with a Sword school and Teaching expertise.)

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Elixir Lab (3 Points)

The most powerful Elixirs cannot be made without the proper ingredients, time, materials, and formula. This Storehouse has all of that.

Safe Place (Varies)

Within the Storehouse, there is a place to hide. It has enough food, water, and basic necessities to last a week.

Closet (1 Point) – Room for one person.

Room (2 Points) – Room for five people

Building (3 Points) – Room for twenty people

1-Way Door (+1 Point) – Door can be opened from both sides, but once inside, the outer mechanism can be disabled/removed, preventing ingress.

Extra Supplies (+1 Point) – There is enough food, water, and basic necessities to last an extra week. (*May be purchased multiple times*).

Strategic Value (Varies)

The Safehouse has a number of other accoutrements that make the occupants safer.

Front (1 Point) – Looks like an innocent business, +1 lead for those being chased in a Chase Scene.

Real Business (2 Points) – Same advantage as *Front* above. In addition, it makes 20G/month income.

Vantage (1 Point) – Location allows for advanced notice of impending attack. Those within have a free round to act before any Chases begin, -10 to Stealth to approach it unseen.

Defensible (3 Points) – Walls and doors are strong and reinforced -10 to all Climbing and Lockpicking attempts.

Defenders (1-4 Points) – In addition to the staff, there are an equal number of capable fighters who will delay any interlopers. The Storehouse has a

Brute Squad (six people). Cost is equal to their Threat Rating.

Secret Entrance (2 Points) – At least one entrance does not look like what it is supposed to. +1 lead for the Pursued for a Chase Scene.

Maze (3 Points) – Somewhere in the storehouse or on the property is a maze. It can be made out of any substance (hedgerow, stonework, tunnels, etc.) Using it gains +2 lead for the Pursued for a Chase Scene.

Mobile (1 Point) – It is a conveyance of some kind, wagon, ship, tamale cart, etc. GM has final say over what else will fit, can be secured within.

Library (Varies)

Small (1 Point) – It has an armload of books and would fit inside a modest chest or fill one shelf. It has the formulas to all of the Basic Elixirs (Antidotes, Cures, Salves, Poisons) related to local illnesses. If Heroes are looking for a specific Advanced Elixir, and the GM does not already have a plan, Roll 1d. On a 3 or less, it is there.

Medium (2 Points) – It has a couple of dozen books and would fill a regular bookshelf. It has the formulas to all of the Basic Elixirs (Antidotes, Cures, Salves, Poisons) related to local illnesses and several nationwide afflictions. If Heroes are looking for a specific Advanced Elixir, and the GM does not already have a plan, Roll 1d. On a 5 or less, it is there.

Large (3 Points) – It has scores of books or more and would fill a room. It has the formulas to all of the Basic Elixirs (Antidotes, Cures, Salves, Poisons) related to local illnesses and nationwide afflictions. If Heroes are looking for a specific Advanced Elixir, and the GM does not already have a plan, Roll 1d. On a 7 or less, it is there.

Legendary (+1 Point) – Regardless of its size, your library contains a book with something unique It could be bit of knowledge, special formula, secret text, etc. It also confers a bonus +1 to any search



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for an Advanced Elixir (*For Example, the roll to find a specific Advanced Elixir in a Large Legendary Library would be 8 or less*). Further details are up to player and the GM.

Trained Bird (1 Point, Daughters Only)

You have one of the following birds. Each is capable of transmitting **The Birdsong Code** 200 miles in a day. The bird is both loyal and well-trained. Some might even say too well-trained as, at times, it almost seems to understand and respond you. It can be ordered to attack enemies.

Trained Bird (*Brute*)

TN: 25 (*Flying*) 10 (*Ground*)

Skills: Footwork (*Flying*) 4 (*Ground*) 1

Attack: 3k1 Damage: 1k1

Owl – It is awake at night and will let you know if something untoward happens. (+1k0 to Perception Checks at night)

Raptor – It is better at fighting (Attack: 3k2 Damage: 2k2)

Crow/Raven – It can take and receive small items along with its message.

Swallow/Swift – It can travel faster with messages (Range: 350 miles/day)

Songbird – can send more complex messages. (Can convey any message capable of being stated in a short sentence).

New Backgrounds

Liberated

Some time ago you or a loved one made contact with Sophia's Daughters to escape a terrible life. They helped you do it. Your flight was fraught with hardships and fear, but eventually you made it to a safe place. You owe the Daughters your life.

For Female Characters - That is why, when Daughters ask you for help, you do so. Even if your conscience makes you question some of the things you have done for them.

The more points you put into the background, the more frequently they will ask for help and the more morally questionable will be things they ask you to do.

For Male Characters – While the Daughters are a distant memory, their actions had a lasting impact on you. When you see a woman in need, you help. Even if your conscience makes you question some of the things you have done for them.

The more points you put into the background, the more frequently you will find women in need and the more morally questionable will be things they need you to do.

Prophetic Dreams

Occasionally, your dreams foretell the future. It does not happen frequently and not in any predictable way. But once one happens you know it and have a vague sense of how long before it will occur.

The dreams are difficult to interpret. They may show the scene but not the outcome or the outcome but not the circumstances. Often, it is not until the dream has played out in real life that you know what the dream was trying to say.

The more points you put into the background, the more frequently you have these dreams, and the more dire the circumstances of the dreams will be.

New Items

The First Tome

Both covers of this ancient book are made from some kind of highly polished, ashen hardwood. A highly detailed owl has been carved into its face. The covers are separate, allowing for the easy addition of more pages. Several sections have curled and blackened edges as though they withstood a fire. Whole chapters are dog-eared and some appear too big to have been



The First Tome

meant for the Tome. Nearly every page is browned at the edges from age and use.

The Tome is 987 pages of hand written ancient script that is difficult to read even if one knows the language. Newer pages have been carefully stitched into the book while torn pages have been lovingly patched. Near the back is a section of illuminated script. All the pages are vellum with generous details in the margins. However, the pages' color variations could indicate they are made from different animals, or are from vastly different time periods.

The Tome's known history is as interesting as its subject matter. It begins at The Earth Cellar where it was discovered by Daughters' legend, Dorothea Buchhalter. Within its pages, she found contemporary stories of the previous plague attack in Atemlos (some 600 years prior). She also found the formula she would later distribute up and down the Dechane.

Twenty years later, Dorothea sent The Tome to the library at Alexia just ahead of the Inquisition. There it was studied for nearly sixty years. That ended when Crusaders took it, and an untold number of other books, as spoils of war for the new Heirophant. Fortunately, the Daughters were prepared for them. While the caravan guards were distracted, Daughters snuck in and stole it back along with several other books.

Those who have read it find the Tome's contents difficult to describe precisely. Over time, dozens of topics have been mentioned, as though readers gravitate toward whatever they find personally relevant. But despite the different descriptions, all report some sense of finding deeper understanding of old methods and their applications or learning of the inevitability of repeated mistakes in society.

New Skills

(NOTE: Both Archaeologist and Herbalist were described previously in 7th Sea 1st Ed. These have been updated with different Knacks to reflect the new Sophia's Daughters).

Archæologist

While other scholars dabble with the knowledge left behind by ancient cultures/races, Archæologists are scholars specialized in their study. This Skill can only be learned by members of the Explorer's Society or Sophia's Daughters. It is not available to Vaticine scholars.

Basic Knacks

Occult: With the occult, there is precious little hard knowledge to be learned. You have acquired some of it and know how to use it, be it a trivial fact about a certain brand of sorcery or the solution to an ancient puzzle.

Research: What is unknown can prove to be the most valuable part of any endeavor, and you know how to ferret out vital information. You have studied the ways that knowledge is gained – where to look and who to ask.

Society Lore: This Knack represents your knowledge of the Society, its members, activities and secrets. The higher the Knack, the more secrets will be made available to you.

Advanced Knacks

As the Explorers and Daughters focus on vastly different aspects of Archæology, the Advanced Knacks are different for each Society. Buying Archæologist only allows access to the advanced knacks of your Society.

Explorer's Society

Archæologist Advanced Knacks remain unchanged (see **Arrow of Heaven, p. 60**). They are, *Artifact Evaluation, Syrneith Lore, (Syrneith) Trap Lore*

Sophia's Daughters

Cartography: You can make reasonably accurate maps using a set of cartographer's tools. Reliable maps can fetch a high price if sold to the right buyer. Success with this Knack yields legible, accurate maps. Failure might send the ship using them hurtling mercilessly into the Seventh Sea...



The First Tome

Cryptography: When messages must be sent in the most discreet manner possible, ciphers are often used to prevent them from being read by those who are not in the know. This Knack puts you “in the know.”

Directon Sense: You are able to keep yourself mentally oriented with respect to true north, provided you have had an opportunity to use the stars or sun to determine it and have not since been spun around in the dark. This can also allow you to retrace your steps through an unfamiliar city or forest, although identical or darkened passages are much harder to remain oriented in.

(Historian) *Trap Lore:* The places you intend to explore were built to protect their valuables. This Knack is used to spot and avoid traps by adding unkept dice to the Perception Check to spot a trap. Thus, if the Hero's Wits are 2 and his Trap Lore is a 3, her Perception Check is 5k2 to spot traps.

Herbalist

You have a strong knowledge of various kinds of flora, where they grow, what they thrive upon, and which ones have beneficial (or harmful) effects. Many herbalists also specializing in healing, acting as “practical physicians” in areas where formal doctors cannot be found.

Basic Knacks

Cooking: No servant is as beloved as a fine chef. Employers will bend over backwards to avoid losing such a person, while others will try to steal one away if he is truly skilled. In short, a skilled cook is guaranteed a steady income.

Diagnosis: Feeling for broken bones and listening for punctured lungs is a doctor's most elementary Knack. Without making a diagnosis, how can you possibly hope to treat your patients? The TN for using Diagnosis is 5+5 times the number of Dramatic Wounds the patient has suffered. Success with this Knack will reduce the TN for Surgery. Diagnosis requires one Action to use, and can only be used once per patient, per Act.

First Aid: Even without formal training, you can

administer simple treatment if the ailment allows for it. The TN for First Aid is the number of Flesh Wounds the patient has suffered. Success eliminates all current Flesh Wounds. First Aid requires one Action to use and may not be used more than once per patient, per Scene. Heroes with First Aid may use it on themselves, with the same restrictions, but they will need to make one Raise because of the difficulty of bandaging themselves.

Flora: You can identify different types of plants and determine whether they have any potentially beneficial (or harmful) effect.

Advanced Knacks

Compounds: You know how to treat plant matter, and mix different kinds of flora to produce beneficial mixtures: healing balms, poultices, sleep aids, and the like. Note that such mixtures are not magical, rather compounds most hermits or midwives can feasibly prepare.

Poison: When Diplomacy fails and a military victory is impossible, an ounce of arsenic will sometimes suffice. This Knack lets you know what poison to use and how much to administer, as well as how to handle it safely. Your GM will have rules for using this Knack in the *GM's Guide*.

Quack: Specializing in “invisible” cures (such as sugar pills and colored water) that do more for the patient's ego than his body, you know how to make people feel like they are getting better. If they get some benefit from this, wonderful. If not, you will likely have moved on already.

New Sword School

Scappare School

Country of Origin: Vodacce, however only members of Sophia's Daughters or Heroes who have taken **Background: Liberated** can learn the Scappare School. Daughters who wish to learn the school (regardless of nationality) may purchase it for 25HP (or 50XP).



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Description: The Scappare School has its origin during the same time as the Inquisition's first purge of matriarchs during the reign of the Third Prophet. According to legend, it began with a young swordswoman named Giacoma Maestri. Knowledgeable in travel routes through Vodacce and Montaigne, she aided a Castillian woman and her daughters fleeing to Avalon.

Along the way, the two children asked her to show them how to defend themselves. With time being of the essence, she taught them just a few moves, using a couple of sticks rather than swords since they were all she had available. The girls were young and not particularly strong. Thus, she focused on teaching them to disorient an opponent and create space; for example, throwing dirt and rocks at them to momentarily break eye contact. Then she had the girls use their greatest ability, running. That way, she reasoned, they could escape to try again.

Over time, more and more Daughters heard about Giacoma's simple approach and began teaching their charges to escape in a similar manner. After Giacoma was killed protecting another woman, her fellows honored her by naming the school *Scappare*, a Vodacce word, meaning "to escape."

The school does not focus on killing an opponent or any dazzling moves. Instead, it uses whatever weapon is available to keep the opponent at bay until the swordswoman can find the right moment to flee.

Unfortunately its strength is also its weakness. Should they find themselves in a situation where escape has been cut off; the Scappare swordswoman will be hard-pressed to fight to the end. While Scappare does not grant membership in the Swordsman's Guild, it does allow practitioners to purchase Parry (Improvised Weapon), and Throw (Improvised Weapon) as if they were Basic Knacks.

Basic Curriculum: Athlete, Dirty Fighting

Swordsman Knacks: Disarm, Side-Step, Tagging, Exploit Weakness (Scappare)

Apprentice: Scappare swordswomen are taught to always be on the lookout for their moment. That point in the fight where their opponent becomes distracted. One of the easiest ways to distract a swordsman is to take their sword. That is the moment they need to change tactics and run.

Gain a free Raise on Disarm. In addition, gain a number of Raises on Chase Scenes immediately after the fight equal to your (cumulative) Mastery Rank⁷. These Raises can be used by the swordswoman or any allies to increase the distance⁸ between them and their pursuers or as bonuses to their Chase Rolls later on.

Journeyman: At this point Scappare swordswomen learn the true secret of improvised weapon. Most trained swordsmen are simply unprepared to deal with an opponent who does not use a typical weapon and they are completely at a loss to get through such a defense.

Gain 1 free rank in Parry (Improvised Weapon). This may raise it to 6. If not, you may later raise it to 6 by paying 25 XP

Master: Once they have their moment and they can keep their opponent at bay, Scappare swordswomen learn to slow down their opponents by putting them in the dirt

Masters of the Scappare School may make precise Throw (Improvised Weapon) attacks. To ensure they have maximum range, swordswomen are taught to throw something small. Damage for the Throw is 0k1. Range is normal for an Improvised Weapon (**PHB, p. 188**). But, if the attack is successful the opponent knocked prone (TN 5 to be hit) and must spend an action to stand.

If this action is immediately followed by a Chase Scene, the Scappare Master gains two additional Raises (in addition to those granted by Mastery Level)

⁷ 1 Raise at Apprentice, 3 at Journeyman, and 6 at Master.

⁸ If there are more than 5 Raises between them, the pursued automatically escapes.

The Crone

Roberta's eyes ached. At her age everything did, eventually. It would be no use trying to read anymore tonight. She started to put the book down, and nearly cut herself on the knife she'd absently left on the side table. She was getting careless, and if she did not watch out, she might cause irreparable harm to the book. After all, the journal was nearly three hundred years old. The cover had all but come apart and the pages were becoming brittle. She'd considered transcribing it. But there was just something about the smell and feel of an old book, written in ancient Cymric no less. It felt like an old friend. She had so few of those left.

Leaving the book, she shuffled across the room. She had not been this tired the last time she was this age. Then she heard it, a small, slight noise that could have been animals outside. But Roberta had lived several lifetimes. She knew the sound of intruders. Slowly, she blew out the lantern, carefully leaving the glass open. The dark would help obscure her and the smoke... well it had other properties.

A few minutes later, it was all over. Four bodies lay on the floor and Roberta sat winded, yet exultant. It was one of the few things that still got her heart pumping. Nearby, the only woman lay paralyzed but awake. In desperation, she confessed to wanting the knowledge Roberta had.

"I do not blame you." Roberta began, looking wistfully over to the journal as she sat down in a nearby chair. "You saw the chance to make yourself powerful and you took it. We must never be afraid to take what we want."

"Getting those men to help was smart. But you made a mistake." She paused then to look meaningfully over at the other three bodies now beginning to cool.

"You failed to study your quarry. It would have worked had I been anyone else. But I am not and you did not take the time to find out."

"They," she gestured dismissively, "take by force because it is the only advantage they have. We have to be smarter, study our enemies, learn their weaknesses, and strike at the right moment." Roberta chuckled. "I remember when I first saw the book. Like you, I wanted it. I knew the woman who had it would not willingly give it up. So I considered taking it. However, something stopped me, kept me from finding thugs to be my agents in exchange for some paltry roll in the hay."

At this she gave the young woman a hard stare. Immediately, the latter's cheeks flushed crimson. Roberta nodded. "Good, you do what you must to get what you want. Eventually, I learned she was lonely. So I befriended her. Let her take me into her confidence, teach me her secrets. Then, I..." Roberta stared off into the darkness.

When she turned to the paralyzed woman, she shook her head sadly. "You did not listen to what I said. I said, study your opponent, learn their weakness, only strike at the right moment. I wanted to see if you would use this chance. Instead, you listened to some old woman's ramblings. You are useless." As Roberta reached toward her knife, the young woman finally spoke. Her voice was calm, measured. "You're alone like she was, but that's not your weakness." Intrigued, Roberta turned to see the young woman sitting up. She knew about the paralytic. Not many did. She had done her research.

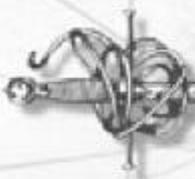
"You don't like visitors." The young woman continued. "And you don't share without being impressed first."

"This was to get my attention?"

"Yes. You impressed yet?"

"We shall see. So pray tell, what is my weakness?"

"You don't have one."



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Secrets

Players

The following sections describe the central beliefs of Sophia's Daughters Heroes. Players hoping to play Sophia's Daughters characters are encouraged to read through these for inspiration

Freedom

Freedom is the central tenet for all Daughters. Without freedom, no society can be just or fair. They believe all people must be free to make the decisions that affect their own lives, both because they are the only expert on their own lives, and because they have the most to lose from poor decisions.

People should be free from suffering, especially when the suffering is unnecessarily impressed upon them by outside forces. This is true regardless of whether those forces be personal, professional, societal, or due to supernatural influences.

People should be free from Sorcery. It is a chain which keeps humanity from moving forward. More importantly, those who control sorcery do not hold the best interests of those who use sorcery at heart. They have their own agenda, one that Daughters believe, will ultimately harm humanity. The Bargainers may be gone, but they can return. The Sidhe are proof of that. Gone for 628 years, they came back hailed as conquering heroes rather than the capricious and murderous despots they truly are.

Knowledge

If freedom is what Sophia's Daughters fights for, then learning and education are what they fight with. It is the reason they gather together in groups, discuss and argue what they know, write down their discoveries, disseminate it to others who can also make use of it and, most importantly, educate the uneducated. It is why they treat books reverently, not for what they are, but for what they contain. Their knowledge will one

day set Théah free. They have no desire to hoard the wealth of information they have. They fervently hope that one day everything they know will be common knowledge, shared equally by all.

Duty

When Daughters find someone they think might be a likely candidate for membership, they initially look for curiosity about the world around them, an interest in books and knowledge, and a general dissatisfaction with the status quo. But, a candidate can have all the right qualities and still not get an invitation if those qualities do not lead her to a desire to change things for all.

True Daughters feel a deep and unshakable sense of responsibility to make life better for all people. They put themselves in harm's way, spend years refining and researching their elixirs, make their life's work instilling values in the next generation, and a myriad of other actions all to bring about a better world.

Secrecy

Sophia's Daughters tried meeting the problems of the world head on. Made no secret of their work and freely gave of their time and effort. As a consequence, countless people across Théah suffered in the retribution aimed at them. While all will admit there have been changes for the better in the past six hundred years, the fact remains there are still women in danger. Right here, right now. Until the Daughters know that revealing themselves will not put even a single woman in danger, they must remain hidden.

If that were the only factor to consider, the discussion would be at an end. But it is decidedly not. An equal argument can be made that keeping the Daughters hidden puts more women in danger. After all, if they are unaware there is help out there; they are more likely to stay put even when they should flee. Thus the Daughters have a strange balancing act to perform. On the one hand they have to keep their names out of the minds of those who would do them harm while ensuring those who need them have the aid they deserve.

Gamemaster

Daughter's Secrets

Madame Abigail Snelling: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> 45
<i>Background:</i> Hunting, Fear
<i>Arcana:</i> Focused

Advantages: All Western Thean Languages (R/W), Age and Wisdom, Debater, Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Property, Storehouse, University, Trained Bird

Courtier: Dancing 2, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 5, Gaming 2, Gossip 3, Fashion 4, Lip Reading 3, Memorizing 3, Oratory 4, Politics 3, Scheming 2, Sincerity 4

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 2, Parry (Fencing) 2

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 3, Flora 4

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 3, Research 4

As Elaine's personal confidante, Abigail knows quite a bit about her, the Sidhe and their plans. While the Queen has not come right out and said it, Abigail is starting to suspect the truth about Meryth, the Graal, and Derwyddon's prophecy. That is why, more than any other member of the Avalon Council, she is pushing for the Daughters to reveal themselves to her.

She is certain the Sidhe have some dark plan. If the Daughters can squeeze the Sidhe out of the Queen's confidence, they will be better able to strike when it becomes necessary. Even if she is wrong about their

plans, they will still be ideally placed to support Elaine and their agenda. In fact, she is so certain of her plan she is considering going through with it regardless of the Council's wishes. The only thing that stays her hand is the worry the Daughters may fall to infighting when they must all be united in purpose.

She believes the plan will work because she knows the Sidhe are not omniscient. When her father died, he finally revealed the secret he had been hiding his whole life. The Snellings became rich by bargaining with the Sidhe for information. It had not been an easy matter; they were notoriously reluctant to share.

On his deathbed, he gave Abigail a book containing the secrets pried out of the Sidhe over years of dealings; their true names. Having even one name conferred power over that Sidhe. Within the book were the names of some of their most powerful. He made her promise to commit it to memory in case they ever returned seeking to eliminate that knowledge. She did as she was told, but in the process she learned something. The Sidhe could be bested and, they made mistakes.

Since their return, Abigail has feared their arrival at her doorstep. But thus far, they have chosen to let her be. When they do come, however, she will be ready. Out in the deepest part of the forest on the property is a building most are unaware of. Built with every Sidhe deterrent imaginable, she first used it to store her father's book. Then, once she realized she could best them, she used it to stockpile cold iron weapons. Currently, she is building a forge and training two of her most trusted students in the secrets to making cold iron.

Another of her most trusted students, Holly Styles, will be the next part of her plan. Once the forge is producing, Holly will make sure the weapons are spread throughout the Triple Kingdoms.

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Holly Styles: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 3
Wits: 3
Resolve: 4
Panache: 2
Reputation: 21
Background: True Identity
Arcana: Cowardly

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Thean, Vodacce (N), Guardian Angel, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Storehouse, Trained Bird

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 3

Herbalist: Compounds 2, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 1, First Aid 2, Flora 3

Merchant: Chandler 3, Accounting 3, Hagglng 4

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 3, Philosophy 3, Research 1

Sorté (Adept): Arcana 4, Coins 4, Cups 4, Staves 4, Swords 4

Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 3

Teacher: Oratory 2, Research 3, Writing 2, Cold Read 4, Leadership 1, Training 4

“Holly” was Simon, rather Simone Potenza. A liberator brought her and her mother to Avalon when she was five. Her mother was fearful of what her father would do when he discovered his daughter was a powerful Fate Witch, so they both ran. Unfortunately, a summer squall in the Trade Sea swept her mother overboard. They never found her.

Her first night in Canguine was spent at Styles Mercantile. Mrs. Styles was a Daughter and young widow who ran the safehouse. Seeing the young girl's distress, she took Simone in. Then, cut her hair and renamed her “Simon” to hide her from her father. As puberty set in she was sent to the Snelling Academy. There she adopted the name Holly and kept Mrs. Styles last name.

When Mrs. Styles' health started to fail, Holly came back home to care for her adopted mother. Since she could no longer hide as a boy, she and Mrs. Styles told everyone she had married Simon a year previously and that he had succumbed to an unknown illness in Luthon. After Mrs. Styles died, Holly inherited the business. She ran Styles Mercantile for a short while, continuing her mother's secret business of helping escaped Fate Witches. But, she quickly realized there were simply too many untrustworthy employees. So, she let it go by the wayside. Then, she went into the delivery business and hired back only those she could trust.

Normally when she needs to avoid the law, she simply bribes the right people. But if she has no other choice, she will reluctantly use her abilities despite the taint on her soul.

Holly has a great fondness for Madame Snelling, and plans to help her distribute the cold iron weapons when needed. But, she is uncertain this will be as useful as Madame Snelling believes. She has considered using her abilities to learn more, but fears the result could put her at odds with her beloved mentor.

Queen Cándida Salvador Aldana de Sandoval: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 2
Wits: 4
Resolve: 3
Panache: 3
Reputation: 90
Background: None
Arcana: Proud

Advantages: All Western Thean Languages (R/W), Tikaret (R/W), Age and Wisdom, Castillian Education, Elixir Brewing, Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Indomitable Will, Noble, Property, Storehouse, Trained Bird

Courtier: Dancing 4, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 5, Gaming 3, Gossip 3, Fashion 4, Lip Reading 2, Memorizing 3, Oratory 4, Politics 4, Scheming 4, Sincerity 5

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Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 4
Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 3, Flora 4, Poison 3
Politician: Etiquette 5, Oratory 4, Socializing 3, Diplomacy 4, Incitation 4, Politics 4, Rabble-rousing 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 5
Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 3, Research 4

The simple truth is the Queen Mother is broken. Her beloved sister-in-law Rosa died after marrying Leon. She suspects he had her killed or, worse, did the deed himself. He did not even have the decency to let her husband grieve over the body. Salvador I was very close to his little sister, and when she died, something died within him. That, more than anything, probably hastened his death.

Then, while she was busy preparing for her husband's death, she got another shock. Her older son, and the woman he loved—both of whom she had been grooming for the throne—disappeared and were presumed dead. It was only later she learned he had been captured by the Inquisition. Lorena told her as much when she contacted the Queen Mother to tell her first, that she was safely out of San Cristobal thanks to Los Vagos and second, she was with child.

Lorena feared the Inquisition's spies so the two of them agreed to keep her presence a secret. But, that means Queen Cándida must contend with a grandson she will probably never get to meet. When she thinks about it too long, her heart begins breaking anew.

She knows Los Vagos are keeping an eye on her and her child because the Queen Mother knows the secret identity of two key members and has suspicions about a third. Don Andrés Bejarano de Aldana and Don Hector Ontiveros may think they have her fooled. But, they are the oldest friends of her son Javier, and a mother knows. That is why she cannot begrudge Don Andrés his "rides into the country," She knows El Vago is busy protecting Castille. She also suspects Don Andrés' daughter, Doña Maria-Soledad Aldana y Rivera of being in Los Vagos. After all, someone had

to play the role of El Vago alongside Don Andrés during his defence of her youngest.

Still, she cannot bear the thought that the Daughters do not have any members also keeping an eye on her. Lorena has not told her where they are (for fear that the Inquisition might discover it), so the Queen Mother has been quietly making inquiries at all major cities throughout Castille. Meanwhile, she is looking for Daughters ready and willing to lay down their lives to protect Lorena and her child. Quietly, she hopes they might be able to arrange a meeting that she might see them, at least once.

Meanwhile, her baby sits on the throne unable to speak to her without permission. Her most hated enemy—the man responsible for taking her oldest away—holds that permission over her head like a blade. She is desperate for any hope for a better future. If she does not get it soon, she may not survive.

Sofia Rodrigues Aldana de Ramirez; Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> 90
<i>Background:</i> True Identity
<i>Arcana:</i> Self-Controlled

Advantages: All Western Thean Languages (R/W), Castillian Education, Elixir Brewing, Linguist, (Wo)Man of Will, Membership (Sophia's Daughters, Swordsman's Guild), Noble

Aldana (Journeyman): Feint 4, Riposte 4, Tagging 4, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 4

Courtier: Dancing 5, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 4, Gossip 3, Fashion 3, Oratory 3, Politics 4, Scheming 4, Sincerity 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

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

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 3, Flora 4, Poison 3

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Politician: Etiquette 5, Oratory 4, Socializing 3, Diplomacy 4, Incitation 4, Politics 4, Rabble-raising 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 5

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 3, Research 4

“Sofia” is really *Doña Lorena Ríos de Aldana*. She was in love with Crown Prince Javier and was planning on becoming his Queen once he ascended the throne. But that was not to be.

She survived because Los Vagos warned her that the Inquisition was coming. They knew she was pregnant with Javier’s child and feared what the two of them on the throne meant for their future hold on Castille. She and her most-trusted servant Raúl fled her rancho just in time. Raúl now acts the part of her husband; doing all he can to ensure both she and her child are safe from harm.

Her son is the rightful heir to the throne. But, he is far too young to know or care about such matters. Fearful of the Inquisition’s ears and eyes, she has only told Queen Cándida that she is safe. The two of them decided she should keep a low profile because the Inquisition is most certainly still looking for them.

Unfortunately, she sees women in need and simply cannot just stand by and do nothing. Thus far, her solution has been to vow them all to secrecy before giving them her potions. Three times it has worked and with each time she grows more certain none of them will speak out. It will mean disaster if and when that proves wrong.

Even though she desperately hopes he is not, she believes Javier is dead. He fears the same and, in addition, is unaware he has a son. Should either find out differently, they would stop at nothing to be together again.

Ranya Ibsan Samara: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 6
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> 17
<i>Background:</i> None
<i>Arcana:</i> Indecisive

Advantages: All Crescent Languages (R/W), Thean (R/W), Ussuran, Vodacce, Eisen, Linguist, Membership (Sophia’s Daughters, The Invisible College), The Pilgrimage, Storehouse, Trained Bird, University

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

Doctor: Diagnosis 4, First Aid 4, Surgery 3

Engineer: Architecture 4, Drafting 4, Mathematics 3

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

Professor: Oratory 4, Research 4, Writing 3

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 6, Philosophy 5, Research 5

Teacher: Oratory 4, Research 5, Writing 3, Cold Read 3, Leadership 3, Training 5

Ranya is ideally placed to keep tabs on the Invisible College. For many years she dutifully reported on their activities. But recently, the Invisible College has been taking interest in her work. In addition, she has become friendly with many of them. The situation is dividing her loyalty. That is the real reason for her continued silence and it is also the reason she has stopped forwarding the Daughters information about the Invisible College.

Ranya’s Storehouse is bigger than anyone knows. She has excavated and designed a special room hidden in the basement below it. The entrance is a ladder hidden behind one of the bookshelves. Because of its design, the secret lower floor maintains a fairly consistent temperature and humidity. That protects its contents, a dozen rare texts, and five scrolls left behind after the sacking of the Library at Alexia, Ranya’s great-great grandmother dug the scrolls out of the wreckage after the Crusaders left. They have

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been soaked and fire-damaged but four of them are still intact, for now. The fifth scroll is nothing but scraps. Unfortunately, Ranya's grandmother attempted to unfurl it, and nearly destroyed it in the process.

Finally, Ranya has noticed something disturbing. Daughters from all over Théah send her copies of their books, both to spread advancements in knowledge and to ensure they will not lose the books to mishap. Being an avid reader, she diligently reads each one, and she has noticed a pattern. Books coming in from Castille, Montaigne, and Vodacce are showing a distinct pattern of mis-information. Initially she assumed it was simply error and corrected the books. But over time, she is noticing the pattern seems designed to move research into the so-called blood sciences away from—well—something.

Whatever it is, it could have implications in her research. She has considered taking this information to the Invisible College, but has held back...for now.

Bayana Meryam bint Saliba: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 3
<i>Finesse:</i> 4
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 2
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> -12
<i>Background:</i> Wanted
<i>Arcana:</i> Ruthless

Advantages: Crescent (R/W), Combat Reflexes, Elixir Brewing, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Night Trained, Poison Immunity (x5), Scoundrel

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 2

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 1, First Aid 2, Flora 3, Poisons 4

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 3

Bayana's story has some truth to it, but is largely fiction. She did not come from north, rather just the other side of the peninsula in Kulkadir. She worked at a hospital there, but when authorities came looking into some suspicious deaths, she fled before more questions could be asked. Unbeknownst to her, they have not stopped looking. Should they ever make their way to Zafara, she may well have to flee again. She would hate that because she has grown fond of the numerous stray cats she has been caring for.

It is unfortunate that her kindness to cats does not generalize to her fellow humans. Bayana is obsessed with death, and has used several elixirs to help speed the sick on their journey to the other side. Then she watches them closely as they go.

Banaya is lying about not being able to understand the markings on the Storehouse. They warn of "forbidden knowledge" contained within. She believes there may be formulas for forgotten elixirs. But with the Hospitaliers there guarding the place, she cannot sneak past without getting caught. She hopes to convince a naïve group of Daughters to run interference for her.

Berta Keonig: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 6
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> 63 (83)
<i>Background:</i> None
<i>Arcana:</i> Prudent

Advantages: All Western Languages (R/W), Combat Reflexes, Elixir Brewing, Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters, Swordsman's Guild), Past Services, The Pilgrimage, Storehouse, Trained Bird

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 5, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 5, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 5

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Bodyguard: Interpose 4, Shadowing 3, Unobtrusive 4, Ambush 4, Cold Read 3, Conceal 3, Menace 3

Eisenfaust (Master): Beat 5, Bind 5, Disarm 5, Exploit Weakness (Eisenfaust) 5

Heavy Weapon: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 5, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 4

Herbalist: Compounds 5, Cooking 5, Diagnosis 4, First Aid 4, Flora 5, Poison 4

Panzerfist: Attack (Panzerfist) 5, Parry (Panzerfist) 5

Scappare (Master): Disarm 5, Pommel Strike 5, Side-Step 5, Exploit Weakness (Scappare) 5

Scholar: History 5, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 4, Occult 4, Philosophy 3, Research 5, Theology 4

Spy: Conceal 3, Disguise 3, Forgery 3, Memorizing 3, Shadowing 3, Sincerity 4, Stealth 3

Eisen Daughters are wrong about Berta's age. She is actually closer to 150 years old. They are also wrong about the number of times she has taken the Breath of Life. Seven years ago, she took a third draught and something went terribly wrong. Rather than kill her, however, the elixir drove her insane.

She now believes "secret people" are manipulating Sophia's Daughters for their own reasons. They have subtly changed the knowledge in *der Erdkeller* to trick other Daughters into helping their cause. She believes she can correct their changes to save Sophia's Daughters. Toward that end, she has burned several irreplaceable books in the Storehouse and edited over a dozen more. Fortunately, her thoughts are scattered so most of the collection is still recoverable, that is, if someone were to discover what she is up to. However, Berta is a woman of action. She has already dealt with the few Daughters who have discovered her activities. What little is left of them now fertilizes the woods nearby.

Berta's book is a collection the things she has learned about the "secret people" and their motivations. As this has been going on for years, the book is hundreds of pages of gibberish, nonsensical ramblings, and paranoid delusions. It comes complete with a number of pictures she has drawn (none of which make much sense) and a hit-list of those she believes are working with, or in thrall to, the "secret people."

Tanja Guessler: Hero

Brawn: 3

Finesse: 3

Wits: 3

Resolve: 4

Panache: 3

Reputation: 28

Background: Defeated

Arcana: Reckless

Advantages: Eisen (R/W/N) Montaigne, Vodacce (R/W), Able Drinker, Combat Reflexes, Fencing Academy, Keen Senses, Large, Membership (Sophia's Daughters, Swordsman's Guild), Rucken

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 4, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Bodyguard: Interpose 5, Shadowing 3, Unobtrusive 3, Ambush 4, Cold Read 3, Conceal 2, Menace 4

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 3

Drexel (Master): Disarm 5, Lunge 5, Pommel Strike 5, Exploit Weakness (Drexel) 5

Heavy Weapon: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 5, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 5

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 4, Diagnosis 4, First Aid 4, Flora 4

Scappare (Journeyman): Disarm 4, Pommel Strike 4, Side-Step 4, Exploit Weakness (Scappare) 4

Teacher: Oratory 3, Research 1, Writing 1, Cold Read 3, Leadership 5, Training 3

The Grey Hawk still has some tricks up her sleeve, seeing opportunity where others do not. Her lack of students combined with her being seen frequently in nearby bars looking for work is meant to convey the appearance of a mercenary in desperate straits. The kind of person who would be willing to take jobs from Vodacce families hunting down their wayward fate witches.

Those are exactly the kinds of jobs she gets hired for. Her reputation from the war still carries a lot of weight, despite the fact that she has never actually brought a fate witch back to their family (families who fail tend not to brag about it).

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Sometimes, when they are on the wrong trail, she simply goes along with it. They eventually give up and pay her. Other times, she actively sabotages the family's efforts. Through various methods, she informs The Grey Hawks of her direction and heading. When the time is right, the mercenaries strike, holding them off for a time, or killing them when necessary.

Unfortunately, the story about Eloisa Baglio is completely true. She has vowed it will never happen again. Thus, occasionally, her appearance in nearby taverns is not so much an act.

Kenna MacCodrum: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 2
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> 8
<i>Background:</i> Sidhe Lover
<i>Arcana:</i> Star-Crossed

Advantages: Avalon (R/W/N), Montaigne, Thean, Elixir Brewing, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Noble, Storehouse, Trained Bird
Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Gossip 2, Fashion 2, Oratory 1, Sincerity 1
Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2
Herbalist: Compounds 2, Cooking 1, Diagnosis 1, First Aid 2, Flora 3
Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 2, Natural Philosophy 1, Philosophy 1, Research 3

Kenna is worried about her Council and about their ability to make wise decisions. But, what really scares her about the Council is what issue might be presented. With the Daughters' fear of the Sidhe, she is concerned she might have to advocate doing something which would harm Tossel.

Irrespective of the Council, her other worry is for Tossel's safety. Despite his assurances otherwise, Kenna believes he is in trouble. She insisted on the

spot closest to his home so she could help him. Her worry is all-consuming.

In the quiet times she thinks about the things she has done for him. Then, she remembers she agreed to marry a man she does not love. She dreads the day she will have to tell him the truth. Because that will break his heart and she will be the cause of it. He did nothing to deserve such a fate.

Fiona MacClellan: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 3
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 2
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> 11
<i>Background:</i> Orphaned
<i>Arcana:</i> Stubborn

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Thean, Keen Senses, Lightning Reflexes, MacEachern Weapon (Fencing Sword), Membership (Sophia's Daughters, Swordsman's Guild), Small
Andrews (Journeyman): Lunge 4, Feint 4, Riposte 4, Exploit Weakness (Andrews) 4
Athlete: Break Fall 3, Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Leaping 3, Side-Step 2, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1
Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3
Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 4, Diagnosis 4, First Aid 4, Flora 4
Spy: Conceal 3, Disguise 3, Forgery 3, Memorizing 3, Shadowing 3, Sincerity 4, Stealth 3

Fiona's family were not killed, they were taken. Fiona saw it all. It began the day Queen Elaine returned with the Graal. Fiona was out playing when an impossibly beautiful young man walked past her. He paused to smile at her, revealing a mouth too large for his face. He walked straight into her home without even knocking. Then, she heard the screams. She ran toward the house but, by then, it had gone quiet inside. There was blood, but no bodies, and no beautiful man with a too-large mouth.

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When Fiona was given this assignment, she was more than happy to take it. After all, it was not the first time she had met the legendary heir to the MacEachern heritage. However, it is obvious Connie has not recognized her from their earlier meeting. Fiona was not in disguise then.

She came seeking the means to get her family back. To do so, she explained, she needed one of Connie's famous weapons. She still has it safely tucked away in a secret, but very accessible, closet in the small room she rents. To this day, it remains untested. Fiona will not risk alerting the Sidhe to the fact that cold-iron blades still exist. If necessary, Fiona plans to use Connie as bait to lure her family's abductor close. Then, she will get the answers she is looking for, even if she has to pry it out of his overly large mouth.

Ríona O'Harrab: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 3
Wits: 3
Resolve: 3
Panache: 4
Reputation: 41
Background: None
Arcana: Friendly

Advantages: Avalon (R/W/N), Cymric (R/W), Eisen, Montaigne (R/W), Thean (R/W), Vendel, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Personal Relic (Her Father's Harp), Showmanship, Storehouse

Bard: Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, History 3, Oratory 5, Riddles 3, Sidhe Lore 3, Singing 5

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 2

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Flora 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 2, Natural Philosophy 3, Philosophy 2, Research 4

Ríona has no supernatural powers; her "ability" to be in the right place has to do with the fact that she is a good listener. When she arrives in a new town, she

listens to the other patrons. Soon, she knows where problem areas are. Then, she makes sure to be nearby, should they need her.

However, given the Inish Daughters' paranoia about the Sidhe, jokes about her "abilities" could become problematic. Possibly even putting Ríona's life (and anyone she has had contact with) in danger.

If she were forced to flee, that would ruin all of her hard work. Ríona's mother was a Daughter, so she inherited a small but well-stocked Storehouse. She has been endeavoring to put it all to music. That is the real reason behind her travels. She is trying to make her stories, songs, riddles, etc more popular. The more crowds ask for her work, the more bards will learn it and pass it along themselves, bringing the Daughters' thinking to the masses.

Norah O'Connell: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 3
Wits: 3
Resolve: 2
Panache: 3
Reputation: 22
Background: Vow
Arcana: Passionate

Advantages: Avalon (R/W) Cymric (R/W), Thean, Combat Reflexes, Keen Senses, Membership (Sophia's Daughters, Swordsman's Guild)

Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Side-Step 2, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1

Buckler: Attack (Buckler) 3, Parry (Buckler) 4

Donovan (Journeyman): Bind 4, Disarm 4, Riposte 4, Exploit Weakness (Donovan) 4

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 4

Herbalist: Compounds 2, Cooking 2, Diagnosis 1, First Aid 1, Flora 2

Spy: Conceal 3, Disguise 3, Forgery 3, Memorizing 3, Shadowing 3, Sincerity 4, Stealth 3

Norah's story is true. But, what she learned from all that reading was the Sidhe are never to be trusted. They are inhuman and cold. All Theans will breathe a

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bit easier when they are gone forever. She has vowed to see that happen in her lifetime. Other than that, she has only one secret, the reason she stays at The Bottomless Well being pawed at by foul-smelling louts. She needs to keep an eye on the O'Sheedys and the Well.

Eileen and Devon are the ones with the lion's share of secrets. The pub's name is not just for show. There really is a deep well hidden in the basement of the pub. The O'Sheedys only go down there on special occasions and have forbidden Norah from entering the basement or drawing water from it. The water acts as entrance to Bryn Brysail, realm of the goodly folk. For eons an O'Sheedy has been responsible for protecting and safeguarding the entrance from all those who would do the Sidhe harm. Norah is the first Daughter to gain the O'Sheedy's confidence. As long as she stays, the Daughters will be able to take the fight to the Sidhe.

The meetings she hosts are just what they appear to be, carefully orchestrated exchanges of information. In them, Norah informs local Daughters about those who come and go through the entrance. She also makes note of which of her fellow countrymen seem to have allied with the Sidhe.

Anne Duboise du Arrent: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 4
<i>Panache:</i> 5
<i>Reputation:</i> 59
<i>Background:</i> None
<i>Arcana:</i> Fortunate

Advantages: All Western Thean Languages (R/W), Thean (R/W), Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Noble, Property, Trained Bird

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

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 2

Courtier: Dancing 3, Diplomacy 5, Etiquette 5, Gaming 2, Gossip 5, Fashion 4, Lip Reading 3, Oratory 4, Politics 4, Scheming 3, Sincerity 5

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 3, Flora 4, Poison 4

Politician: Etiquette 5, Oratory 4, Socializing 6, Diplomacy 5, Politics 4, Scheming 3, Sincerity 5

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 3, Philosophy 3, Research 3

While everyone knows Anne's kindness is genuine, they do not know its purpose. She has been trying to get all Montaigne nobles to do the same. That is the real motivation behind who gets invitations to her parties. This serves two purposes. First, Anne gets access to all the best gossip. She knows who to blackmail and how to get them to go along. She does not do the work herself, of course; that would ruin her reputation for not sharing gossip. However, other Daughters know how to make use of what she knows to push for a better society. It is slow going, but there are a few of the lesser nobles who are beginning to see the benefit of their enlightened thinking.

More importantly, it brings her closer to her ultimate objective, L'Empereur. She wants the bastard dead. He and his sycophants will surely kill the country if he is not stopped. This can only end when the nobles kill off the last of the peasants, or more likely, when the peasants have enough of the nobles. Either way, too many people will die. But, she is not in a position of power. She does not rule Arrent, does not command armies, and is not in control of trade. Instead, the only force she has is the force of her personality and people's desire not to let her down.

Unfortunately, it makes her uninteresting to L'Empereur. That, in turn, makes it impossible to get him alone. At this point, she is ready to throw caution to the wind and just poison him at her first opportunity. It is a situation that has, thus far, eluded her. If she waits much longer, she may have to go with her backup plan, getting one of the Orphanage's former residents to do the job. She hates herself for considering it, but many more will die if she fails.

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Margot Babineaux: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 4
Wits: 3
Resolve: 3
Panache: 6
Reputation: 45
Background: Nemesis
Arcana: Overconfident

Advantages: Avalon, Castillian, Eisen, Montaigne (R/W/N), Thean (R/W), Keen Senses, Legendary Trait (Panache), Lightning Reflexes, Membership (Sophia's Daughters)

Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 5, Leaping 3, Side-Step 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2

Bodyguard: Interpose 2, Shadowing 3, Unobtrusive 3, Ambush 3, Cold Read 4, Conceal 2, Menace 4

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 5, Kick 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 5, Throat Strike 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 4

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 5

Herbalist: Compounds 2, Cooking 1, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Flora 3

Performer: Acting 5, Dancing 5, Memorizing 4, Oratory 5, Singing 5

Tout Pres (Master): Corps-a-Corps 5, Double-Parry 5, Tagging 5, Exploit Weakness (Tout Pres) 5, Exploit Weakness (Valroux) 4

Margot is a talented actress and a swordswoman. But, her choice of romantic partners is decidedly unconventional. Nevertheless, her public "seductions" are deadly serious. Margot is a liberator who has found a unique way to ensure the safety of other women.

After a desperate woman contacts her for help, the husband receives a letter from *Le Grande Jeu*. It invites him to attend one of Margot's plays (with his wife of course). The invitation includes attendance at an after-party. During the party the wife—who knows the plan—pretends to be seduced by Margot. The two women then go into a convenient room. The woman is, of course, under no obligation to do

anything once there. However, Margot is often not averse to it if the other woman is amenable.

Once they have had sufficient time, they return to the party. The appearance of having been cuckolded, in public, by a woman, enrages and humiliates the husband. His wounded pride takes care of the rest. Being the challenged party, Margot can control the outcome. She leaves the men either too dead or too injured to harm their wives ever again.

The rumors about poisonous or supernatural help are just talk. Margot is a master of the blade. That said, the women's safety is paramount, so if she ever thought a little poisonous help were needed, she would not hesitate.

Ustinya Numinova: Hero

Brawn: 3
Finesse: 2
Wits: 4
Resolve: 3
Panache: 2
Reputation: 38
Background: Prophetic Dreams
Arcana: Stubborn

Advantages: Eisen (R/W), Ussura (R/W/N), Tikaret (R/W), Vodacce, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Storehouse, Trained Bird

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Leaping 3, Lifting 2, Swimming 1, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

Falconer: Bird Handling 5, Animal Training 5

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Flora 3

Hunter: Fishing 2, Skinning 1, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Tracking 3, Trail Signs 3, Traps 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 4, Parry (Knife) 4, Throw (Knife) 3

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 2, Natural Philosophy 3, Philosophy 2, Research 4

Teacher: Oratory 3, Research 3, Writing 2, Training 4

Ustinya has a secret she has never told anyone. Since she was a little child she has had dreams that come

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true. They rarely do so in the way she thinks they will. But, the benefit of hindsight always reveals they were right all along.

Since her last birthday, she has started having dreams about her impending death. She sees herself, or rather her body, cooling on the ground, contorted by pain. It is surrounded by revelers, some of whom are people she considers friends. But, none of them seem concerned about her death. She is convinced she will die on her next birthday.

With that in mind, she is trying to find and train her replacement. She has so much to teach and so little time to do it in. That is why she is secretly bringing quill and ink along with her on her outings. There, hidden in a secret compartment in *Lezbbishche* are her memoires, complete with the secrets she has for training birds and a new, nearly unbreakable code capable of conveying far more information.

Kjersti Admundsdottir: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 5
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> -17
<i>Background:</i> True Identity
<i>Arcana:</i> Overconfident

Advantages: All Western Languages (R/W), Combat Reflexes, Elixir Brewing, Linguist, Membership (Agitäre, Sophia's Daughters), Trained Bird

Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 5, Leaping 2, Swimming 1, Throwing 1

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 2, Diagnosis 4, First Aid 4, Flora 4, Poison 4

Knife: Attack (Knife) 5, Parry (Knife) 5

Spy: Conceal 5 Disguise 5, Forgery 3, Memorizing 3, Shadowing 5, Sincerity 4, Stealth 5

Kjersti has many, many dark secrets, not the least of which is, she is the only daughter of Reune Vengasdotter. She also murdered her first husband

Jørgen. But, she set it up so she could claim self-defense.

She blackmailed the witness into giving false testimony. When Jørgen confronted Kjersti, she killed him and claimed he had tried to attack her. Then she badgered her daughter Aledia into backing her story. Why murder him? Jørgen had been advocating peace between the Vendel and Vesten, and, given his standing in the community, he was starting to win some over. But, Reune wanted the schism to continue, so he had to die.

Her moving had nothing to do with reprisals. Staying in Isafjordhur was part of the plan to help the schism continue. For years now she has been supporting and sometimes planning the Vesten raids against the city.

As for her second husband Jan, he accidentally discovered she was behind the raids. She had started talking in her sleep and he happened to overhear her mention the word "Agitäre." Worried about what else he might know, she killed him only to find Jan's daughter, Solfrid had witnessed the event. At first she thought to kill the girl, but she realized that would leave too many questions. Instead, she drugged the child with Forgetfulness and afterwards told her a lie about having a bad dream. Then she told both of the children he had gone out fishing early.

Her daughters are nothing more than a means to an end. She pushed Jan to make the marriage arrangements with Lauge Holgersen precisely because he was a self-righteous, unstable, man. She is aware of Lauge's desire for revenge against her daughters. She plans to use their deaths to inflame hatreds on both sides of the schism. It has almost come to fruition, and it has been planned perfectly. Why is it important to keep the schism going? Reune told her it was, and that is all she needs to know.

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Aledia Steffans: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 4
Wits: 3
Resolve: 3
Panache: 3
Reputation: 22
Background: Defeated, Nemesis
Arcana: Loyal

Advantages: Avalon, Eisen, Montaigne, Vendel (R/W/N), Vodacce, Thean (R/W), Combat Reflexes, Keen Senses, Large, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Trained Bird

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 5, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2

Courtier: Dancing 1, Etiquette 2, Fashion 1, Oratory 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 3

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 5

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Flora 3

Rassmussen (Master): Pommel Strike 5, Reload 5, Trick Shooting 5, Exploit Weakness (Rassmussen) 5

Scappare (Journeyman): Disarm 4, Pommel Strike 5, Side-Step 4, Exploit Weakness (Scappare) 4

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 3, Research 3

Teacher: Oratory 3, Research 2, Writing 2, Training 4

Aledia blames herself for her step-father's death, but not for the reasons Solfrid suspects. She blames herself because she knows what her mother is really like and this would not be the first time she lied about murdering someone.

Aledia has never forgiven herself for lying about the events leading up to her own father's murder. She saw everything, but fear of losing both parents (combined with a healthy dose of guilt from her mother) caused her to protect her father's killer.

She has no direct proof Jan was murdered, but she knows in her heart her mother is evil. She cannot look

her sister in the eye for all the guilt and shame welling up inside.

In her quiet moments, she considers digging a deep hole and burying the wretch in it. Then, she remembers that wretch is her mother, and she hates herself just a little bit more, both for considering it and not following through with it.

Solfrid Steffans: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 3
Wits: 3
Resolve: 4
Panache: 2
Reputation: 18
Background: Orphaned, Nemesis
Arcana: Perspicacious

Advantages: Vendel (R/W/N), Vodacce, Thean (R/W), Area Knowledge, Cold Climate Conditioning, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Night Trained, Small, Trained Bird

Athlete: Climbing 4, Footwork 5, Leaping 3, Side-Step 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throat Strike 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 3

Herbalist: Compounds 2, Cooking 1, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Flora 3

Hunter: Fishing 4, Skinning 4, Stealth 3, Survival 5, Tracking 5, Trail Signs 4, Traps 4,

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Teacher: Oratory 3, Research 2, Writing 2, Training 5

Solfrid never blamed Aledia for her father's death. But, it tears at her to see Aledia blaming herself. Aledia tries to hide it but Solfrid can see through her mask to the pain underneath. That, more than anything, is why she keeps her own secret from Aledia. For a while after her father died, Solfrid had nightmares about that morning. In the nightmares, she saw herself come downstairs and watch a heated argument between her father and adopted mother. It culminated with Kjersti murdering him.

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After not having the nightmare for years, several weeks ago, she dreamed it again. But, this time it did not end with her father's murder. Instead, Solfrid confronted her step-mother who tried to explain what had happened. At one point, she gave Solfrid something to drink to calm her down.

Then she woke up. As a result of this, she suspects it was a memory rather than a dream. To get proof, Solfrid has been looking for a recipe for the Memory Boost Elixir. If it should prove her dream true, she has no idea how she might get justice without breaking her sister's heart.

Patricia Cassandra Vestini: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 5
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> 31
<i>Background:</i> Vendetta
<i>Arcana:</i> Fanatical

Advantages: Castillian, Eisen, Tikaret, Vodacce (N), Elixir Brewing, Membership (Agitäre, Sophia's Daughters), Noble, Trained Bird

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1

Herbalist: Compounds 4, Cooking 1, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Flora 3

Sorté (Adept): Arcana 4, Coins 4, Cups 4, Staves 4, Swords 4

After setting her nephew, Prince Marco Vestini, on the right path, Patricia also suggested he invite the Inquisition to Vestini lands. Patricia is a devout Vatacine and believes Sorcery is a gift from Legion. After all, the Ninth Commandment says, "thou shalt not suffer a sorcerer to live." Even when that sorcerer is herself.

When she discovered her unholy powers, she considered committing suicide. But, then she realized she could use her gifts to punish all Strega. That is the real reason she began organizing escape attempts. She planned to lure them to their deserved fate. That way,

even if they outran their husbands, they could never outrun Theus.

Early in her plan, she contacted the man known as *L'Incubo della Strega*, (the Witches' Nightmare). He hunted fate witches for money, so she offered him more to make sure they did not return. He readily agreed, but she soon found he took her money and still sold his captures back to their families. That is the real reason she has vowed to put an end to him.

Then, she turned to the Oppositionists. They were exactly what she needed; zealots out to eliminate the scourge of Sorté. While they did the work she wanted, they were simply too few in number. She soon grew frustrated by their lack of progress.

Finally, she came to Reune Vengasdotter's attention. Reune told her about Agitäre; that they were frustrated the Daughters ignored or condoned the sin of sorcery. Patricia joined immediately. Since Reune's death, she has shared timetables with both Agitäre and the Oppositionists.

Overall, she has seen great progress. Eventually all Strega will die, and then it will be her turn, knowing the fate of all sorcerers. But, secretly she believes all her good work will earn her an exemption from Theus' wrath.

Giada Bencivenni: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> 22
<i>Background:</i> Pressed into Service
<i>Arcana:</i> Perceptive

Advantages: Vodacce (R/W/N), Thean (R/W), Able Drinker, Elixir Brewing, Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Storehouse, Trained Bird

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 2

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Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3
Forgery: Calligrapher 3, Forgery 4, Paper Maker 2, Research 4, Cryptography 3
Herbalist: Compounds 6, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Flora 3, Poison 4
Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3
Merchant: Innkeeper 4, Accounting 3, Bartending 3
Riverboat Pilot: Balance 2, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1, River Navigation 1
Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 2, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 2, Research 4

Giada's mother Luciana was a cold woman who cared nothing for others, least of all her daughter. Her focus was forever on the First Tome. As a result, Giada wanted nothing to do with it. Instead, she threw herself into Elixir Brewing, learning secrets her mother neither knew nor cared about. With each of Giada's successes, her mother's disdain grew.

Instead, Luciana spoke only of Giada's duty to the Tome. As soon as she could, Giada turned her back on her mother and the book to be with her father, a pirate and ne'er-do-well who absolutely adored her. After a few short years, Luciana used lies, guilt, and manipulation, to coerce Giada to return. Giada hated her for that, and for taking her away from her father. But mostly, she hates herself for going along with it.

From an early age, Giada could recite all the Tome's rules. *Don't take it off the stand. Don't take it out of the room. Keep the door closed at all times.* On and on and on. Of course, there was the big one: *Don't make any copies.*

The problem, as Giada saw it, was that her mother could never really explain why they were not supposed to make copies. Thus, as soon as her mother was in the ground, she began making a copy. During her time with her father, she discovered she had a knack for forging important documents (a very useful skill if you are a smuggler).

It took several years, but at last, Giada is nearly finished. It is exacting in its detail down to the type of paper and ink used. Once it is done, she will replace the original and see, once and for all, if there is a

reason the Tome should not be copied. Because if there is no reason, Daughters should not have to travel half way across Théah to learn its secrets. When that happens, she will finally be free.

Enemies and Allies Secrets

Eileen O'Sheedy: Henchman

	<i>Brawn:</i> 2 <i>Finesse:</i> 2 <i>Wits:</i> 3 <i>Resolve:</i> 2 <i>Panache:</i> 3 <i>Reputation:</i> 12 <i>Background:</i> Lost Relative <i>Arcana:</i> Loyal
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Advantages: Avalon, Cymric, Thean, Specialty: Seduction 3, Sidhe Blooded: Dangerous Beauty, Very Slow Aging, Unseelie Ally

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Leaping 2, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

Merchant: Innkeeper 2, Bartending 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Devon O'Sheedy: Henchman

	<i>Brawn:</i> 3 <i>Finesse:</i> 2 <i>Wits:</i> 2 <i>Resolve:</i> 3 <i>Panache:</i> 2 <i>Reputation:</i> 8 <i>Background:</i> Lost Relative <i>Arcana:</i> Trusting
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Advantages: Avalon, Cymric, Thean, Sidhe Blooded: Very Slow Aging, Keen Senses, Unseelie Ally

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 2, Sprinting 2, Throwing 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

Herbalist: Cooking 3, Diagnosis 1, First Aid 1, Flora 2, Poisons 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 2, Parry (Knife) 1

The First Tome

To get to the beginning of Devon and Eileen's story you have to go back quite a bit farther than forty-some years. Over a thousand years to be exact. At the height of Numa's power, Devon and Eileen had young girl. She was their pride and joy. But, it all went bad when they found a gleaming pool. While their backs were turned, their child went in, enchanted by the colorful water. Soon after, something else came out. It seemed human, but its eyes were too piercing, its smile just off center. It was terrifyingly beautiful and it wanted to know why they had opened a door to Bryn Bresail.

The O'Sheedys tried to explain it had been an accident. But, the creature did not care. It would hold their child as punishment. If the O'Sheedy's wished to have their daughter back, they had to guard the well for a hundred centuries. When the O'Sheedy's lamented they would not live that long, he told them so long as they guarded the entrance, they would age a mere day for each year that passed. They were heartbroken as they would still be in their 50s before their daughter was returned. But their love was too strong and so they agreed.

Over the eons there have been strangers who have gotten nosy. Then, the O'Sheedys—reluctantly of course—must dispatch them. Usually its poison, Devon has gotten quite good at procuring it from a certain mushroom that stopped growing nearly a hundred years ago. But, occasionally Eileen must get involved. She finds it all distasteful, but it is rare to find a man who will turn down a roll in the hay with the innkeeper's wife. Afterwards, he is usually not prepared to defend himself. A quick slash of the throat and he is just another traveler who did not make it home.

If none of that works? Well there is always the Thing. They do not know what else to call it. But, it seems to know when they are in over their heads. Neither of them has ever seen it, but they know when it has arrived. The inn goes completely back. Then, the screaming starts. It always leaves an awful mess. Last time they had to set the inn on fire because they could not get the stains out.

The O'Sheedys know why Norah is here. But, they are tired and are not even half way through. They wait hoping, perhaps, the whole matter will resolve itself without them. It has happened before.

Emmerich Beringer: Henchman

<i>Brawn:</i> 3
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 2
<i>Resolve:</i> 2
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> 11
<i>Background:</i> Orphaned
<i>Arcana:</i> Loyal

Advantages: Eisen (N) Montaigne (ACQ), Vodacce (ACQ), Academy, Able Drinker, Combat Reflexes, Firm Grip, Membership (Swordsman's Guild)

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Eisenfaust (Apprentice): Beat 3, Bind 2, Disarm 3, Exploit Weakness (Eisenfaust) 2

Heavy Weapon: Attack (Heavy Weapon) 3, Parry (Heavy Weapon) 3

Panzerfist: Attack (Panzerfist) 3, Parry (Panzerfist) 2

Waylay: Ambush 3, Lie in Wait 3, Set Traps 3, Shadowing 2

Emmerich has no secrets. If Tanja told him to march to his death, he would pack up and start on his way.

Francine St. Martin: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 4
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> -22
<i>Background:</i> None
<i>Arcana:</i> Cruel

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Castille (R/W), Montaigne (R/W/N), Age and Wisdom, Keen Senses, Ordained

Criminal: Cheating 4, Gambling 1, Lockpicking 3, Pickpocketing 3, Shadowing 2, Stealth 2

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2

The First Tome

Fence: Appraising 4, Hagglng 4, Socializing 3, Underworld Lore 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 2, Parry (Knife) 2

Priest: Mooch 3, Oratory 2, Philosophy 2, Religious Lore (Vatacine) 2, Writing 2

Scholar: History 1, Mathematics 3, Philosophy 2, Research 2

Francine might not have recognized Donat and Florian on sight, but she remembered their names. More importantly, she knew what they wanted. Fortunately, neither had the brains or savvy to become criminal masterminds and fooling them was not difficult. But, their stupidity meant they could be useful to her. For the past two years, she has been playing the part of a defeated woman to perfection. Both men have been taken in by her act and are completely assured of her loyalty.

Meanwhile, they have been bribing and threatening the right people, setting up this operation, completely unaware it will be Francine alone who benefits. Once finished, she will convince them they need her to get everything running smoothly. Then, they will help her escape. Of course, she will not mention the key to the escape is both of their deaths. But, they will learn soon enough.

Once outside, she plans on starting anew, unaware that several new contenders now work in Paix. Not that it would stop her. She has put bodies in the ground before. She will do so again if need be, damn the consequences and those in her way.

Lauge Holgersen : Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 4
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> -16
<i>Background:</i> Vendetta, Ousted
<i>Arcana:</i> Self-Righteous

Advantages: Eisen, Montaigne, Ussuran, Vendel (R/W/N), Thean (R/W), Debater, Faith, Indomitable

Will, Ordained, Personal Relic: Book of the Prophets, University

Criminal: Ambush 4, Gambling 2, Lockpicking 3, Pickpocket 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 4

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3

Priest: Oratory 4, Philosophy 2, Religious Lore (Objectionism) 4, Writing 2

Spy: Bribery 2, Conceal 2, Disguise 2, Interrogation 3, Lip Reading 2, Poison 3, Shadowing 3, Stealth 4

Streetwise: Socializing 2, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 4

Lauge's obsession has only deepened in the last five years, pushing him to far darker places than most suspect. His street preaching led him to Isafjordhur's underbelly, and the criminals there desperate for absolution. His crusade against the Steffans sisters began with having them quietly followed. Soon, he learned about the Salon's exclusively foreign, exclusively female students. He was convinced there was more to it but did not have the proof. He tried several methods to learn more, including breaking into the Salon. But, nothing gave him what he was looking for. In desperation, he abducted one of the sisters' students.

Her name was Henriette, and initially she claimed to be just a visitor. But under duress, she finally cracked. She confessed escaping her husband with the help of an actress named Margot Babineaux. Soon, he learned about Sophia's Daughters, the secret cabal of women bent on subjugating men and subverting Theus' divine will. He also learned membership in the cabal was passed down from mother to daughter.

He knew what he had to do next. It would both gain him far more valuable information, and revenge his wounded pride. He would kidnap the sisters' mother, Kjersti Admundsdottir, force her to tell him everything she knows, and then leave her body someplace very public. His plan required many things but most problematic was the expense. Fortunately, he knew how to get money.

The First Tome

Earlier this month, he sent a letter to Henriette's husband, *Maurice Beaumont du Verre*. The man is rich. Lauge hopes he also wants revenge. If they succeed, who knows what else they might accomplish?

L'Incubo della Strega: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 4
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 2
<i>Panache:</i> 4
<i>Reputation:</i> -41
<i>Background:</i>
<i>Arcana:</i> Greedy

Advantages: Castille (R/W), Eisen (R/W), Vendel, Vodacce (R/W/N), Dangerous Beauty, Left-Handed, Membership (Swordsman's Guild), Scarovese, Unbound

Aldana (Apprentice): Feint 6, Riposte 3, Tagging 2, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 2

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1, Side-Step 4, Swimming 2

Courtier: Dancing 3, Etiquette 3, Fashion 2, Oratory 2, Politics 2, Scheming 3, Seduction 3, Sincerity 4

Criminal: Ambush 3, Gambling 2, Lockpicking 3, Shadowing 4, Stealth 4

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

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

Firearm: Attack (Firearms) 2

Hunter: Survival 3, Tracking 4, Traps 4

Rider: Ride (Horse) 3

Sailor: Balance 4, Climbing 2, Knotwork 1, Leaping 2, Navigation 2, Pilot 1, Rigging 2

Villanova (Master): Double-Parry 5, Feint 6, Stop-Thrust 5, Exploit Weakness (Villanova) 5, Exploit Weakness (Capputina) 2, Exploit Weakness (Ambrogia) 2

The man now known as *L'Incubo della Strega* has a life story. But, he keeps it well-hidden. Instead, he tells anyone who asks one of several dozen different tales, none of which are true. Given that he is unbound, no one can really check.

But, his story is irrelevant. What is important is what he does. The Daughters' research is correct; *L'Incubo* is motivated solely by greed. But, they are wrong in thinking money is the only thing he desires. He has been known to take weapons, property, animals, art, information, and women's affections as his payment. In fact, one of his favorite tactics is to set up a situation in which the family and the escaped Strega get into a bidding war over her return. Back and forth he will go from family to Strega, each time getting a little bit more to sate his greed. He has even been known to pose as a friendly face, perhaps rescuing the Strega from her family in order to set up his scheme.

The Daughters are also wrong about how he tracks runaways. He has no supernatural aid, just a keen mind. When he began working for Patricia Vestini, she never explained how she coordinated the escapes. But, he figured out her system. Now, even when she changes it, she does so in a predictable manner. Knowing where the escapees are going and how long it will take makes tracking them quite a bit easier. He does not always use this information (to ensure she does not figure him out) but it is always available when he needs it.

Lastly, there is a place where Daughters could learn everything about him. The Villanova School checked him out thoroughly before training him. At the hidden school, deep in an unnamed swamp in Villanova is a file under the name, "Vittore Fiorentino Vargas a.k.a. *L'Incubo della Strega*."

Maurice Beaumont du Verre: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 1*
<i>Finesse:</i> 1*
<i>Wits:</i> 2
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 1*
<i>Reputation:</i> -35
<i>Background:</i> Defeated
<i>Arcana:</i> Hot-Headed

*These statistics represent his abilities subsequent to losing the duel to Margot Babineaux.

The First Tome

Advantages: Avalon, Castillian, Eisen, Montaigne (R/W/N), Combat Reflexes, Gentry, Property, Scoundrel, Unnerving Countenance: Below Average

Athlete: Climbing 1, Footwork 4, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1

Courtier: Dancing 3, Etiquette 4, Fashion 4, Oratory 3, Seduction 4, Sincerity 3

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

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Streetwise: Socializing 5, Street Navigation 3, Underworld Lore 4

Valroux (Apprentice): Double-Parry 2, Feint 3, Tagging 2, Exploit Weakness (Valroux) 1

Upon recovering from his humiliation at the hands of Margot Babineaux, Maurice began scheming to get his revenge. He tried everything, called in favors, leveraged properties, and paid exorbitant sums all in an effort to ruin *Le Grande Jeu*. All, to no avail.

It seemed the nobles of Charouse had greatly enjoyed the spectacle of his abject humiliation (especially when he soiled himself while begging for his life). They had no intention of letting him take away their cruel diversions. They called in their own favors, leveraged their own properties, and paid far more exorbitant sums to keep things just the way they were.

Thanks to his extensive list of bad habits, Maurice knew enough shady people to hire an assassin. He got the best man he could find. Margot put him in the ground. Everywhere he turned, it seemed, he could find no favor, at least as far as Margot or *Le Grande Jeu* were concerned.

As a result, he just sat alone, his rage growing with each passing night, until a letter from *Lauge Holgersen* appeared on his doorstep. In it, Lauge told of his own travails. Then, he revealed the existence of a secret cabal of women dedicated to undermining men of power and stature. In closing, he mentioned Maurice's wife and how he had learned all of this. For the first time in a long time, Maurice smiled. Soon enough they will both taste revenge.

Raúl Ramírez de Araujo: Henchman

Brawn: 2

Finesse: 3

Wits: 2

Resolve: 2

Panache: 3

Reputation: 7

Background: Vow

Arcana: Passionate

Advantages: Castille (R/W/N), Eisen, Montaigne, Vodacce, Membership (Los Vagos, Swordsman's Guild),

Aldana (Apprentice): Feint 2, Riposte 4, Tagging 3, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 2

Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 5, Fashion 2, Oratory 1, Sincerity 4

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

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Philosophy 3, Research 3

Servant: Etiquette 5, Fashion 2, Menial Tasks 4, Unobtrusive 5

Raúl has worked for the Rios de Aldana family for years. He considers them to be the family he never had. But truthfully, Doña Lorena Rios de Aldana has always been his favorite. Smart and strong willed, he knows she is going places. He will be certain of it; even if he must protect her and her son with his life. Unfortunately, that is exactly what it may cost him. Her plan is to stay in Altamira and just "lay low." But he knows her as well as she knows herself. Eventually, she will do something which will garner unwanted attention; that is, if she has not done so already.

He is not making the situation any easier. Raúl secretly works for Los Vagos, gathering and disseminating information to various cells throughout Castille. It is the reason for his business' location and clientele. Recently, he learned the Inquisition has returned to Altamira. They left the city after their disastrous attempt on Alvara Arciniega's life turned him into a folk hero. He does not know why they are back, but he fears it could be related to Doña Lorena and her son.

The First Tome

He has spoken with *Don Alejandro Vasquez de Soldano*, leader of the Altamira cell of Los Vagos, about them. The plan, should it be needed, is for the General to secret them out of Castille while Raúl acts as bait. He has also considered contacting Sophia's Daughters (he learned of them from watching her) to ask them for help. However, he does not know how to contact them or if they would be receptive if he did.

Tossell: Unseelie

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 4
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 6
<i>Reputation:</i> -35
<i>Background:</i> None
<i>Arcana:</i> None

Advantages: Avalon (R/W/N), Cymric, Appearance (Intimidating), Cold Hearted, Combat Reflexes, Dangerous Beauty, Evil Reputation, Iron Susceptibility, Keen Senses, Legendary Trait (x5), Lightning Reflexes, Sidhe Spear
Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 4, Throwing 3
Courtier: Dancing 5, Etiquette 4, Fashion 4, Oratory 5, Seduction 5, Sincerity 3
Polearm: Attack (Polearm) 4, Parry (Polearm) 4
Glamour (Master): Horned King 5, Blackcloak 5, Queen Maab 5, Thomas 5, Jack 5

Tossell is not a selkie but an Unseelie with a cruel streak eons long. His pitiable back story is merely a ruse to lure in a naïve, love-struck, young woman. He intends to use her for his greater scheme. Every two or three generations, Tossell remembers the MacCodrum's once did something to him so horrible, so horrific, that mere words do not convey the depths of his offence.

Of course, he does not remember what it was and chances are good he just made the whole thing up to give himself an excuse. But whatever the case, when he remembers, he comes for revenge. This time the object of his ire is Fergus MacCodrum, the chief's

son. For several years he watched Fergus and eventually learned of the young man's fondness for Kenna MacKindric. Then, Tossell wooed her, told her just the kind of story she would be sure to fall for, and vaguely hinted at some danger as yet untold.

To rescue her "one true love" she has married a man she does not love, moved to carry on her clandestine affair, and even positioned her house to be closer to him. It could not have worked out better in Tossell's mind. Now all he has to do is wait for the opportune moment to reveal it all! When Fergus realizes his predicament, his heart will break in a thousand pieces and Tossell will have his revenge, again.

As for what will happen with Kendra and anyone else caught in the fallout, well, simply put, it is beneath Tossell's notice.

Previously Published NPC Secrets

GMs using this version of Sophia's Daughters will find many canon NPCs no longer fit. The following are changes that will rectify that.

Rhyanna ferch Hysel: Henchman

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 2
<i>Panache:</i> 2
<i>Reputation:</i> 0
<i>Background:</i> Prophetic Dreams
<i>Arcana:</i> Intuitive

Advantages: Avalon, Cymric
Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 4, Sprinting 3, Swimming 3, Throwing 2
Hunter: Ambush 3, Stealth 4, Tracking 3, Trail Signs 3
Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Rhyanna's back story is the same; at least that is what she tells anyone who listens long enough. As for its truth, that is up to interpretation. But, one thing is undeniably true. Rhyanna is not altogether sane.

The First Tome

Then, there is the matter of her premonitions. Occasionally, she prophesizes about someone nearby. It could be about them directly or about someone they know well. But whatever the specifics, when she does so, that person will find her prophecy coming true. Once upon a time, she was an oracle. However, one of her dreams revealed something the Sidhe did not like. As a result, they drove her mad, ensuring reality and her prophetic dreams merged into one.

Their curse did not stop her prophesies, it only slowed them down. They are in her head, somewhere, just waiting for someone to come along and help her unlock them.

Captain Ysabette (Isabelle) du Montaigne: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 3
<i>Resolve:</i> 2
<i>Panache:</i> 4
<i>Reputation:</i> 65
<i>Background:</i> True Identity, Hunted
<i>Arcana:</i> None

Advantages: Avalon, Castillian, Montaigne (R/W), Thean (R/W), Combat Reflexes, Connections, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Trained Bird
Athlete: Break Fall 2, Climbing 4, Footwork 3, Lifting 2, Rolling 3, Sprinting 2, Swinging 3, Throwing 2
Commander: Ambush 3, Gunnery 3, Leadership 4, Logistics 3, Strategy 3, Tactics 3
Courtier: Dancing 2, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 4, Oratory 3, Politics 3, Seduction 3
Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 2, Throat Strike 3
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3
Firearm: Attack (Firearms) 2
Rogers (Journeyman): Bind 5, Corps-a-corps 4, Disarm (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Rogers) 4
Sailor: Balance 3, Cartography 3, Climbing 4, Knotwork 4, Leaping 2, Navigation 4, Pilot 3, Rigging 3, Swimming 2, Weather 2

Ysabette is captain of the Wayward Swan. It is a sometimes pirate ship, sometimes blockade runner,

sometimes honest merchant vessel with an all-female crew.

Ysabette loves the idea of women helping other women. That is why she will sail to the Vodacce Islands to smuggle women out of the country. Well...that and sneaking such a distinctive ship and crew into the heart of enemy territory right under the noses of the Merchant Princes is simply a lot of fun.

When she is not helping women escape, the Wayward Swan has been known to attack Explorers' ships (usually while they are in port as they are known to have serious firepower). When she takes a haul from one of them, she dumps the cargo overboard somewhere far from land.

If she is not doing either of those, she will run the Montaigne blockade just to ensure someone will inform her father. It brings a smile to her face just imagining him turning purple with rage.

Jazhani binte Noura: Henchman

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 2
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> 26
<i>Background:</i> None
<i>Arcana:</i> Insightful

Advantages: Crescent (R/W/N), Thean (R/W), Elixir Brewing, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Spark of Genius (Philosophy), Trained Bird
Courtier: Dancing 4, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 3, Fashion 4, Oratory 3, Politics 3, Seduction 3
Herbalist: Compounds 4, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Flora 3, Poisons 3
Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3
Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 4, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 5, Research 4

Jazhani is a member of the Crescent Council. She attends when she is able (her travel is restricted by the health of her husband and the rules of her tribe). The

The First Tome

Council looks forward to her arrival as she is not only well-regarded, but the force of her words and insights mean she has everyone's attention when she speaks.

Outside the Crescent Empire she is hardly known, as she has not yet written down her thoughts. This is a matter of some concern for her fellow Council members. They believe her philosophy—a radical form of skepticism which posits doubt should be applied equally to all human endeavors—could significantly alter all Daughters methods if they became aware of it.

Wilma Probst: Hero

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 5
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> 56
<i>Background:</i> Obligation
<i>Arcana:</i> Focused

Advantages: Eisen, High Eisen (R/W), Montaigne, Vodacce, Connections (many), Elixir Brewing, (Wo)Man of Will, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Noble, Trained Bird

Courtier: Dancing 4, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 5, Fashion 4, Gossip 4, Mooch 3, Oratory 5, Politics 5, Scheming 4, Sincerity 4

Merchant: Accountant 4, Calligrapher 3, Haggling 3, Scribe 5

Scholar: History 3, Law 3, Mathematics 4, Philosophy 3, Research 2

Servant: Etiquette 5, Fashion 4, Menial Tasks 3, Seneschal 5, Unobtrusive 4

Rider: Mounting 2, Ride 3

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 1

Wilma is the organizational genius who keeps what is laughably called Freiburg's Government running. That is, when she is not taking donations, making treaties, collecting taxes, condensing criminal statistics, and the hundreds of other things required to keep the lives of everyone in Freiburg as hassle free as possible, all by herself of course.

As such, she does not have much time for Sophia's Daughters' activities. She has even had to cut back significantly because she is overwhelmed. Nowadays, Daughters can only expect the following from her.

- Organize and secure hidouts; moving them around the city randomly to ensure there is no pattern for the curious to find.
- Once a week reordering safe routes ensuring no one is using one path too much, or in a way that might get tracked.
- Every three days checking in on the day to day operations at the Freiburg Storehouse to see who has been looking into which books. One never knows when they are going to need a recommendation for an entirely different book.
- Once-a-month meeting with members of the Tapestry who make Freiburg their home. She wants to know what they are looking into, any new developments they might have gotten. As a bonus, the meetings allow them to share information or ask for help if they need it.
- Finally, not on any regular schedule, she reads missives from members of the Loom who use her as a hub to get their information out to those who need it. In general the information is not that relevant to her, but one never knows when a Daughter will need help and cannot wait for the message to be passed along. Since she knows everyone, it is usually not difficult to send the right person for the job.

But other than that, she simply does not have time to help Sophia's Daughters.

The First Tome

Tamara Breslau Fyodnava v'Riasanova: Hero

Brawn: 3
Finesse: 4
Wits: 3
Resolve: 4
Panache: 2
Reputation: 43
Background: None
Arcana: Exemplary

Advantages: Ussuran, Thean, Faith, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Noble, Trained Bird
Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Leaping 2, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2
Commander: Ambush 2, Leadership 5, Strategy 5, Tactics 5
Courtier: Dancing 2, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette 2, Fashion 3, Gossip 4, Oratory 2
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 5
Hunter: Skinning 4, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Tracking 3
Knife: Attack (Knife) 5, Parry (Knife) 5
Pyryem (Master): Firebird 5, Goshawk 5, Owl 5, Man 5, Songbird 3, Speak 5
Rider: Animal Training 3, Mounting 3, Ride 5
Streetwise: Scrounging 3, Socializing 1, Street Navigation 4, Underworld Lore 3

Tamara is in an odd position with Sophia's Daughters. While she is the ruling Knias of Gallenia, Breslau is far from the Daughters' stronghold, and the Council meetings in Soudal. There are few active Daughters there. Most are old women worried about local cures. They have no desire to involve themselves with issues outside Gallenia. Instead, they pass on oral traditions and mix local antidotes. Thus, Tamara feels isolated.

Moreover, the Daughters treat her like she is an errand girl. Her duties consist of taking the Coloring Elixir to Pavtlow once a month and instructing Ketheryna Fischler Dimitritova about Sophia's Daughters. This, despite the fact that Ketheryna's servant, Leonore, is a Daughter and is with her on a constant basis.

On top of all of all this, Tamara must deal with the growing love she has for the Gaius, and what the future holds for her. She cannot understand why the Daughters would be so cruel, or what she has done to deserve this. She is almost at her breaking point.

Fidencia Suarez: Henchman

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 2
Wits: 3
Resolve: 2
Panache: 2
Reputation: 4
Background: Obligation
Arcana: None

Advantages: Castille (R/W/N), Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Trained Bird
Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 4, Fashion 2, Oratory 1, Sincerity 4
Servant: Etiquette 4, Fashion 2, Gossip 4, Hagglng 2, Menial Tasks 3, Unobtrusive 5

Fidencia is a servant in the Bejarano del Aldana Rancho. Specifically, she is the *dueña* to Maria-Soledad Aldana y Rivera. In addition, she is the only eyes and ears the Queen Mother has on her son's advisors. Unfortunately, Fidencia has little information. What she has comes from going into areas of the Rancho she would not normally be found. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find excuses for being there.

Fidencia is utterly devoted to Maria-Soledad and is beginning to suspect the young woman knows more about El Vago than she is letting on. She is unaware Good King Sandoval has turned his attention toward Maria-Soledad. If so, the Queen Mother might order Fidencia to try and broach the subject of Sophia's Daughters with her. That would be a mistake as far as Fidencia is concerned. While a wonderful and brave young woman, she is far too headstrong and impulsive for the Daughters, at least as far as becoming the next Queen Mother is concerned. Besides, Fidencia already has a candidate picked out and she is closer to the King than any suspect.

The First Tome

Valentina Villanova: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 3
Wits: 4
Resolve: 3
Panache: 3
Reputation: 29
Background: Defeated
Arcana: Perceptive

Advantages: All Mainland Thean Languages, Thean, Noble, Small

Artist: Painting 4, Sculpting 5

Courtier: Dancing 4, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 4, Fashion 3, Gossip 4, Lip Reading 3, Oratory 3, Politics 4, Scheming 5, Sincerity 5

Knife: Attack (Knife) 5, Parry (Knife) 5

Merchant: Seamstress 4, Steward 4

Sorté (Master): Arcana 5, Coins 5, Cups 5, Staves 5, Swords 5

Valentina is not a Daughter. It is dangerous enough passing messages to Juliette (see *Vodacce* sourcebook). But, when one is involved with Giovanni Villanova there is simply no one in Théah who can be trusted. Giovanni has eyes everywhere. She just cannot take the chance. She is, however, aware of their existence and has even dreamed wistfully of one day joining. Perhaps after she puts Giovanni deep, deep, in the ground...

Lorraine Weller: Hero

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 2
Wits: 3
Resolve: 4
Panache: 5
Reputation: 43
Background: None
Arcana: Passionate

Advantages: Avalon, Montaigne (R/W), Thean (R/W), Vendel (R/W/N), Connections (Many), Membership (Merchant's Guild, Sophia's Daughters), Merchant Patron, Trained Bird, Vendel League Seat (Special)

Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 2, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 1

Courtesan: Acting 4, Cold Read 5, Dancing 5, Etiquette 5, Fashion 5, Gossip 5, Jenny 5, Masseur 4, Mooch 5, Poison 3, Politics 5, Seduction 6, Sincerity 5, Unobtrusive 5

Doctor: Diagnosis 3, Examiner 3, First Aid 1

Knife: Attack (Knife) 2, Parry (Knife) 3

Merchant: Accounting 4, Haggling 3, Jenny 5, Jeweler 3, Vintner 2

Scappare (Journeyman): Disarm 4, Pommel Strike 4, Side-Step 4, Exploit Weakness (Scappare) 4

Scholar: History 4, Law 3, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 1, Research 2

Lorraine still fervently believes in Sophia's Daughters. Their efforts to aid women and promote equality are laudable goals. It is the reason she runs the Jenny's Guild the way she does. Why she aggressively defends her sisters, and harshly punishes all transgressors.

But, these days she has no time to focus on the Daughters. She is still quick to defend Guild members and she acknowledges the great debt the Guild owes to the Daughters. But, the demands of Guildmaster outweigh all other concerns. If the Daughters need money, or a safehouse, or eyes and ears, they know they can count on her to get it done. But, she does not have the time—or desire, frankly—to do those jobs herself. The Guild must come first.

Maria Catarina Nicolletta di Caligari: Scoundrel

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 3
Wits: 3
Resolve: 4
Panache: 2
Reputation: 23
Background: True Identity
Arcana: Focused

Advantages: Castillian, Eisen, Montaigne, Vodacce (R/W/N), Appearance (Above Average),

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Connections (Several), Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Noble, Scoundrel, Trained Bird
Courtier: Dancing 3, Etiquette 3, Fashion 4, Gossip 3, Oratory 2, Scheming 2, Seduction 1

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 2, Diagnosis 1, First Aid 2, Flora 3, Poison 4

Performer: Acting 1, Dancing 3, Disguise 3, Oratory 2, Singing 2

Knife: Attack (Knife) 2, Parry (Knife) 2

Rider: Mounting 2, Ride 3

Streetwise: Scrounging 3, Socializing 1, Street Navigation 4, Underworld Lore 3

Maria has committed more and far worse crimes than anyone suspects. She has been employed by men of power on several occasions to seduce, and then eliminate their worst rivals. When Maria heard about the Daughters from Reune Vengasdottir, she saw her chance at a new life. Redemption was beyond asking, but a new life unfettered by her past was within reach. Then, Patricia Vestini of the Vodacce Council ordered her to do more of the same dirty business.

At their behest, she married, then killed three men. They were done away with quietly such that none of their deaths were connected to her. Recently they asked her to marry a fourth time. Unfortunately, she is starting to have strong feelings about Count Cesare de Caligari. Unlike the contemptible pigs she married previously, Cesare is a relatively kind man who seems to have a good heart. In fact, his only truly distasteful quality is the fact that he is Prince Caligari's grandson.

Maria is afraid the Daughters are going to ask her to kill him. But, she is more afraid of what will happen when she tells them, "No."

Madeline du Chatelaine: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 3
<i>Finesse:</i> 4
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> -31
<i>Background:</i> Vendetta
<i>Arcana:</i> Fanatical

Advantages: All Western Thean Languages (R/W), Thean (R/W), Elixir Brewing, Linguist, Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Noble, Property, Storehouse, Trained Bird

Courtier: Dancing 3, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, Gossip 3, Fashion 4, Lip Reading 2, Memorizing 3, Oratory 4, Politics 4, Scheming 4, Sincerity 3

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 4

Herbalist: Compounds 3, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 3, Flora 2, Poison 3

Politician: Etiquette 4, Oratory 4, Socializing 3, Diplomacy 4, Incitation 4, Politics 4, Rabble-rousing 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 3

Scholar: History 3, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 3, Research 4

Madeline's back story is the same as described in the original Sophia's Daughters' sourcebook.

Reune Vengasdottir: Villain

<i>Brawn:</i> 2
<i>Finesse:</i> 3
<i>Wits:</i> 6
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 3
<i>Reputation:</i> -31
<i>Background:</i> Dead to the World
<i>Arcana:</i> Deceitful

Advantages: All Western Thean Languages (R/W), Thean (R/W), Tikaret (R/W), Elixir Brewing, Linguist, Membership (Agitare, Invisible College, NOM, Sophia's Daughters), Indomitable Will, The Pilgrimage

Athlete: Climbing 5, Footwork 4, Leaping 3, Long-Distance Running 4, Sprinting 4, Swinging 3, Throwing 3

Courtier: Dancing 3, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 5, Fashion 2, Gaming 3, Gossip 3, Fashion 4, Memorizing, Seduction 3, Oratory 4, Politics 4, Scheming 4, Sincerity 5

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 4

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



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Politician: Etiquette 5, Oratory 4, Socializing 3, Diplomacy 4, Incitation 4, Politics 4, Rabble-rousing 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 5

Servant: Etiquette 5, Fashion 4, Menial Tasks 4, Seneschal 4, Unobtrusive 5

Scholar: Astronomy 4, History 4, Law 3, Mathematics 3, Occult 5, Natural Philosophy 6, Philosophy 3, Research 5, Theology 2

As far as Sophia's Daughters are concerned, Reune died several years ago. She was a brilliant researcher and natural philosopher who lead the High Council which got to the bottom of the whole Agitäre business. Her loss was keenly felt throughout the society. Quietly, some believed she was too obsessed with research best left alone. But, the matter is over now and they do not wish to speak ill of the dead.

Reune's story begins over a hundred and fifty years ago. At that point, she had already lived a full life and decided she was not quite through. She began making preparations to take her first draught of the Breath of Life. Her assistant, a young and foolish Fate Witch—whose name Reune never cared to learn—cut herself and accidentally spilled some of her blood into the mix. Then, she kept the matter secret until after Reune consumed it.

The elixir was different somehow and Reune immediately noticed the difference. Questioning the girl revealed her error and sent Reune into a fit of rage. Furious at the wasted time and effort, she murdered the girl, and in the aftermath, more of her blood landed in the elixir, resulting in a spectacular reaction.

Nearly a decade later, Reune had a working theory about the incident. It caused her research to turn decidedly dark. In short, the use of sorcerous blood—specifically that of fate witches—significantly increased the effectiveness of certain elixirs. It might, under the right circumstances, confer the ability to use their sorcery.

Reune began to dream of eternal life and power untold. Over the next century, she learned much: the

existence of *Novus Ordum Mundi*, how sorcerous blood could improve several elixirs, and many, many other terrible secrets. But for all that, she was still unable to fulfill her dreams. Frustrated, she turned to Daughters' knowledge, traveling to dozens of Storehouses looking for more information. But, word got around about her obsession and other Daughters started getting suspicious. A few even denied her requests to look at their books.

In response, she gave them something else to focus on. She had already learned about the Agitäre, so it was a simple matter to create a manifesto they could find. Soon after it was found, the Daughters called for a High Council. Reune was chosen to represent the Vendel/Vestenmannjavnjar and soon after, just as she had planned, was elected Chair.

With the authority of the High Council at her command, she gained, “unfettered access to any Storehouse and any book deemed necessary to uncover the truth behind Agitäre.” When other High Council members got suspicious or asked too many questions, she had Kjersti kill them.

Soon, she was the sole voice of the High Council. For twenty years she wandered Théah researching sorcerous blood. Once she felt she had a thorough understanding, she made her “final report.” Its conclusions were fabricated to allow her further access to Daughters knowledge should she have need in the future.

A few years ago, she realized she had become one of the longest-lived Daughters known. Wanting to avoid curiosity among her sisters, she decided “Reune” needed to die. She would simply continue her research under a new name in a new place. Now “Roberta Ventura” continues her work.

But, at over 200 years old, she is rapidly running out of time. That is why she has hitched her hopes to Alvara Arciniega. The Daughters assigned Roberta to oversee Alvara's experiments on blood sorcery. She is the same Roberta whose anonymous letters inflame

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Alvara's curiosity and bring her ever closer to her dream.

But those are not the only irons Reune has in the fire. Here are a few examples:

- In addition to getting Patricia Vestini to give her the locations of escaping Fate Witches, Reune is manipulating her into using her abilities to further Reune's research. When the time comes, Reune plans on having Patricia make one final, ultimate, sacrifice to bring her work to fruition.
- It was no accident Ranya Ihsan Samara found the Invisible College. Reune—through a proxy in the College—ordered members to contact Ranya. That allowed both the College and Reune to spy on her work. Reune sought her out both because Ranya's work might help her own and because Reune wants to know if Ranya is onto her scheme (see below).
- To ensure no other Daughters come to her conclusions, she has been “muddying the waters” of Daughters' research by sending books with incorrect information to several of the larger Storehouses including The University of Alexia Library, der Erdkeller, and Mansión de Búho.
- Kjersti Admundsdottir is not her child. She abducted the girl years ago as contingency that never materialized. She has filled the girl's head with lies and makes use of her whenever necessary. Kjersti is aware that Reune is still alive, but she is never sure where she is at. The whole “add friction to the Schism” plot is just a way to keep her occupied.
- Reune believes Tamara Breslau Fyodnava v'Riasanova is a good candidate for Agitäre if she becomes angry and desperate enough. Reune—again through proxies—maneuvered Tamara into delivering the Coloring Elixir. When that failed to infuriate her enough, she maneuvered Tamara into instructing Ketheryna about Sophia's

Daughters, knowing Tamara's feelings about the Gnias and Ketheryna.

Louis-Claude du Sinjin: Hero (for now)

<i>Brawn:</i> 3
<i>Finesse:</i> 6
<i>Wits:</i> 4
<i>Resolve:</i> 3
<i>Panache:</i> 6
<i>Reputation:</i> 102
<i>Background:</i>
<i>Arcana:</i> Lecherous

Advantages: Avalon (R/W), Castille, Montaigne (R/W), Crescent, Able Drinker, Dangerous Beauty, Membership (Knights of the Rose and Cross, Swordsman's Guild), Noble, The Secret, Vow

Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Leaping 4, Sprinting 4, Swinging 3, Throwing 3

Courtier: Dancing 3, Diplomacy 3, Etiquette 5, Fashion 4, Oratory 3, Politics 4, Scheming 4, Seduction 5, Sincerity 5

Desaix (Master): Double-parry (Fencing) 5, Feint (Fencing) 5, Lunge (Fencing) 5, Exploit Weakness (Desaix) 5

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 4

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 5, Reload (Firearms) 4

Knife: Attack (Knife) 5, Parry (Knife) 5

Scholar: History 4, Mathematics 3, Natural Philosophy 4, Philosophy 3, Research 2, Theology 2

Spy: Bribery 3, Conceal 4, Disguise 4, Read Lips 4, Shadowing 4, Stealth 5

Valroux (Master): Double-parry 5, Feint 5, Tagging 5, Exploit Weakness (Valroux) 5

Louis-Claude had more than a touch of fantastical thinking before he met up with Babette Traversé. Thus, the changes in his personality subsequent to that night were more subtle than people assume. That said, his recollections of the events that happened to him described elsewhere (see *Knights of the Rose and Cross* and the original *Sophia's Daughters* sourcebooks) should be called into question. The truth is closer to the description in *Relations* (see **Chapter 1 – History**).

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Like Berta Keonig, Louis-Claude had a bad reaction to the Elixir and went mad. He now believes the Daughters were out to kill him that night and at any moment they will return to finish the job. He is correct in his belief the Daughters are chasing him, but he ascribes harmful intent where there is none. His madness is also responsible for his mistaken belief about his age. The Daughters have all of Babette Traversé's notes. She used multiple memory elixirs to make certain she had an exact and accurate record of what took place. He really is only about 97 years old.

The Daughters must be very careful. The Knights are a formidable force with determined members capable of defending themselves and each other. They are far more capable in a fight than the Daughters are. If the two societies go to war, everyone will lose. But the hardest hit will be those who relied on either group for safety.

Storehouse Secrets

The Snelling Academy

The Academy's main purpose is to try out new teaching methods on a receptive audience. As a result, Academy graduates are at the forefront of social equality movements wherever they settle.

The rumors of the ghosts are nothing more than women in hiding. The secret basement where they stay before heading farther north is a bit cramped and boring, so sometimes the staff and other Daughters let them get a bit of exercise. The rumors simply keep those who are not in the know from looking too closely.

That does not mean the Academy is safe. Madame Snelling's work in the woods has attracted the interest of a minor Sidhe named *Frostmonne*. It has taken the form of a small frog and has, thus far, gone unnoticed. Madame Snelling's anti-Sidhe precautions have kept it from getting too close and for now it seems content to just watch. But, it is very curious both about the activity and about the fact that it

cannot seem to get any closer. If it should mention what it has learned to a more powerful Sidhe, it could well spell the entire Academy's doom.

The Snelling Academy (25 Points)

Large (8 Points)

Resident Daughters (3 Points) - 1 Guide, 1 Healer, 1 Librarian, 1 Swordsman

Elixir Lab (3 Points)

Safe Room w/Extra Supplies (3 Points)

Real Business (2 Points)

Defenders (3 Points)

Large Library (3 Points)

Mansión de Búho (Owl Manor)

Owl Manor has a number of secrets, not all of them kept by the Daughters. The first belongs to Sandoval's Guards. Daughters may not know why the Inquisition has not returned subsequent to the "siege" of Mansión de Búho, but the guards do. They took an oath to be loyal to, and to defend, the Sandoval line, *from all enemies*. When the Inquisition sent armed men who confronted the Queen Mother, they declared themselves the enemies of the Sandovals. Verdugo knows this and knows he miscalculated. While the Inquisition would win a battle of numbers against the Guard, they would lose in the court of public opinion. From now on the Guards must be on their toes, as Verdugo will stop at nothing to turn public opinion against them. In the meantime, they prepare. Using the cover of the Queen Mother's renovations, the Guards are reinforcing Mansión de Búho, making it ready to withstand a real siege. If the Inquisition wants anyone within its walls, they will have to kill every Guard there.

When the Queen Mother arrived from Vatacine City, Cardinal Verdugo sent her entire retinue along with her. Literally hundreds of women were uprooted from their homes to be brought here. Some came directly with the Queen Mother, others have been trickling in over time. It is Magdalena Lopez, the Stewardess of Mansión de Búho's job to vet each of them. A few days ago, she discovered something odd. One of the women, Felicia Trujillo, has no records of having served either the Sandovals or the Queen

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Mother in any capacity prior to arriving here. As a safety precaution, Felicia has been given duties far from any important Daughters' work, but Magdalena needs to know more before she acts. She has sufficient bodies to keep tabs on Felicia here at Mansión de Búho, but she needs someone to determine who Felicia Trujillo is and who she is working for.

In the past two years, Owl Manor has had a massive influx of new books and treatises. There have been so many, in fact, that the Tapestry have not been able to keep up with categorizing them all. Near the bottom of the pile is a rather staid little tome entitled, *Matrilinal Lineages of Castille 1505-1570*. It is little more than a list of marriages and issue which happened to minor nobility during the years inclusive. Were one to delve more deeply into the names, one might find the names María Estrada and Juan Verdugo. A closer look would reveal that both names had been written over two older names, Halima Bousaid and Abdul Najjar. Halima and Abdul came to Castille from the Crescent Empire over a hundred and sixty years ago, settled in Barcino and got married. When things began to get difficult for Crescents, they paid to have their names changed and converted to Vatacine. Research will reveal that these are two of Cardinal Esteban Verdugo's great, great grandparents. Given his stance on the people of the Crescent Empire, this news could be very damaging to his reputation.

But, that is not the only book with the potential for explosive consequences. Another innocuous book, *Pflanzenarten von Nord Eisen* (Plant Species of Northern Eisen) has a sealed letter hidden within its pages. In it the author, Delia de la Cruz, the Castillian representative on the third High Council lays out the case that Reune Vengasdottir, Chair of the High Council used the Council's authority to her own ends. She tells of witnessing Kjersti Admundsdotter murdering the Vodacce representative, but not before admitting she was following Reune's orders. She ends by saying she will most likely be dead soon also, and begging the Queen Mother to stop Reune and Kjersti. Somehow, the letter was never delivered and ended up here.

Mansión de Búho (32 Points)

Large (8 Points)

Resident Daughters (3 Points) - 1 Guide, 1 Healer, 1 Librarian, 1 Swordsman

Elixir Lab (3 Points)

Safe Building w/ 1-Way Doors and Extra Supplies (5 Points)

Defensible (3 Points)

Defenders (4 Points)

Large Library (3 Points)

Secret Entrance (2 Points)

Vantage (1 Point)

كتابخانه دانشگاه الكسيا

(The University of Alexia Library)

The biggest secret about Ranya's book exchange project is that many of the books she has requested were actually covers for Daughter works secreted within. All of the scribes she sent were Daughters who had been given specific instructions about how to determine if the Daughter's works were still there and how to extract them if they were.

Several were important enough, Ranya instructed the scribes to create a copy without the Daughters information; then steal the original. Unfortunately, one of the scribes got caught in the act. Worse, the Daughter was in Arivan. Punishment there can range from having the offending limb removed to being sold into the slave market. Ranya has tried writing letters to no avail. She needs someone to rescue a fellow Daughter.

كتابخانه دانشگاه الكسيا (11 Points)

Small (2 Point)

Defensible (3 Points)

Secret Entrance (2 Points)

Large Legendary Library (4 Points)

Der Erdkeller (The Earth Cellar)

The Earth Cellar has three huge secrets. The first two could destroy not only the Storehouse but fracture the Daughters should they come to fruition. But, the third could redefine Sophia's Daughters from the ground up, should it come to light.

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Berta Keonig is insane (see **Daughter's Secrets**). She has been altering, eliminating, and destroying books that the “secret people” are putting incorrect information into for their own purposes. Fortunately, Daughters may be able to minimize the damage and perhaps even recover some of it. That is because Berta has not been discreet in covering up what she has done. Her reputation and local Daughters' awe of her have mostly kept her from getting caught thus far. The bodies of the few who have figured it out now fertilize the woods around *der Erdkeller*.

Reune Vengasdotter (see **Previously Published NPC's Secrets**) is concerned other Daughters may be able to replicate her work. The books that inspired many of her experiments are still available here. She wants to be the only one with that information, so through intermediaries, she has been sending books with incorrect information to places like the University of Alexia Library, Mansión de Búho, and *der Erdkeller*.

In Alexia, Ranya is already aware someone is altering information, and she has isolated those books. At Mansión de Búho, the Queen Mother gets so many books, those that have not been vetted are stored offsite. Thus far, none of Reune's books have made it in. But Berta is too disorganized to notice. There are books in the collection Berta has not damaged which are, nevertheless, still incorrect. Finding those is vitally important, and a much tougher prospect.

But, the biggest secret is, *der Erdkeller* is not *der Erdkeller*. Specifically, the Storehouse currently run by Berta Koenig is not its original site. The story famously told and retold by Eisen Daughters is missing an important detail. Inga Schuhmacher was in charge of *der Erdkeller* and did sell fake cures for pay. But, that was not the only thing she sold. For a few years prior to the story, she had been slowly removing books she thought could be valuable. She brought those books to the current site to await customers. Unfortunately, she unknowingly consumed the Freeze Elixir (see **Lost Elixirs** p. 109) and thus never shared the existence of the other Storehouse not too far

away. It sits there now, locked tight and collecting dust, just waiting to be rediscovered.

As for its contents, in addition to a large selection of Daughters' knowledge written prior to 1000 AV, there is also a beautiful and extensive painting near the back which details different women's activities from many different eras. At first glance the scenes appear to be randomly placed. However, if one were to start in the middle then go out in a spiral around the first, a pattern would emerge. The number of women in each scene comes out as 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and continues until 377. More interesting, the scene depicted in the 0 space is *der Alde Erdkeller's* front door. In fact there are seven other Storehouses depicted, each of their front doors revealed within the scene (as of 850 AV). Their relative distances and direction from *der Alde Erdkeller* are represented by the difference between the number of women depicted in each scene, and their location on the map. Finally, there are three display cases. The first is empty, but the other two contain volumes II and III of the First Tome.

Der Neue Erdkeller

The New Earth Cellar (15 Points)

Medium (4 Points)

Elixir Lab (3 Points)

Defensible (3 Points)

Secret Entrance (2 Points)

Large Library (3 Points)

Der Alde Erdkeller

The Old Earth Cellar (13 Points)

Medium (4 Points)

Defensible (3 Points)

Secret Entrance (2 Points)

Large Legendary Library (4 Points)

L'Orphelinat de St. Denis

(St. Dennis' Orphanage)

The Orphanage has a secret most outside of it are completely unaware. To help the children bring in their ill-gotten gains, the Mother Superior ordered extensive re-designs of the lowest levels of the Orphanage. As a result, there is a rat's nest of tunnels

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and hiding places which lead out of the basement into the sewers, all the way down to the docks and to virtually any spot in the city. At one time the children claimed they could traverse the city without once ever setting foot on the street.

Ostensibly, the Daughters have sealed up those old tunnels and have given the children strict instructions not to use them anymore (for fear of the dangers inherent in crawling around in such unsafe construction).

However, in reality, the Daughters are shoring up the foundations and building a safe room for escaping women to lay low when necessary. Future expansion plans including adding an extensive library (which would cover up the entrance to the underground portions) and possibly an elixir lab.

Last year, some of the Snelling Academy graduates enacted a plan to help rehabilitate former residents. Their plan was to pay them to keep an eye on the current residents when they were out and about. The idea being, the former residents would know criminal behavior and be able to report such. Unfortunately, it seems to have backfired as several of the informants have taken the children under their wing and set up criminal enterprises of their own. Worse, these former residents are a lot savvier about crime and have been using the current residents to spy on the Daughters' doings. Several of the children, used to criminal activity, seem to have taken up old habits. Daughters' homes have been broken into. While no one has been hurt yet, it remains a distinct possibility.

L'Orphelinat de St. Denis (11 Points)

Medium (4 Points)

Resident Daughters (0 Points) - 1 Healer

Safe Room w/Extra Supplies (3 Points)

Real Business (2 Points)

Secret Entrance (2 Points)

Lezbbishche (The Rookery)

Ustinya (who believes she will die at her next birthday) is trying to write a complete treatise on the

secrets of bird training. She keeps the manuscript safely hidden in The Rookery.

She has been looking for a replacement, but thus far, without luck. At this point, she is just hoping whoever ends up with the Rookery will find her book and make good use of it.

However, should anyone find it, they will find one of its conclusions shocking. Ustinya, for all her talent, believes there is more to the Daughters' trained birds than any realize. She has trained birds for locals and for Daughters. In her opinion, Daughters' birds are more receptive to training than should be possible and she thinks she knows the reason. Matushka has influenced them. Frighteningly, Matushka's "gift" seems to apply equally to birds anywhere in Théah, but only to the ones Daughters have.

Lezbbishche (7 Points)

Small (2 Points)

Safe Closet w/1-way Door (2 Points)

Mobile (1 Point)

Small Legendary Library (2 Points)

Steffans' Parlor

For the most part, the Parlor is exactly what it seems to be. The rooms for students are used by fleeing women. This far away from Vodacce, there is very little chance husbands will find them. Even if they did, they would be walking into the heart of "enemy" territory. The classrooms are used for education, which includes self-defense, but that is not their focus.

Both the Elixir Lab (where the sisters make healing elixirs for the injured) and the saferoom are hidden. The entrance to both is under the bell in the middle of the courtyard which calls the students to training.

The three bullet holes in the front gate come from a disagreement Aledia had with a young man named Linus Peters. Linus asked to look around the parlor claiming he wanted to study the architecture. Unsure whether it was a legitimate request, Aledia turned him

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down and that began an escalation which ended with Aledia escorting him to the gate at gunpoint.

Still unwilling to stop, he called her a derogatory term from what he thought was a safe distance. She turned and fired three times in rapid succession, each bullet narrowly missing his head. When he recovered enough to realize what was happening, he found Aledia holding a fourth pistol, aimed right between his eyes.

Aledia was right not to trust him. The roof of the parlor is made from a ship Linus' father never finished. His father was a shipwright who fell on hard times, and had to sell everything. Despite getting a fair price for the unfinished boat, Linus thinks of that ship as his birthright and he will have it back at any cost. Currently, his plan is to contact friends in the Guerilla Alliance, and ask one of them to make a bomb for him...

Steffans Parlor (17 Points)

Medium (4 Points)

Resident Daughters (1 Point) - 1 Healer, 1 Swordsman

Real Business (2 Points)

Elixir Lab (3 Points)

Safe Room (2 Points)

Defenders (2 Points)

Secret Entrance (2 Points)

Small Library (1 Point)

Il Piccolo Fiore (The Little Flower)

Given *The Recovery* is an often-retold story; it is not surprising The Little Flower's secret is well-known by Vodacce Daughters. Over two thousand years ago, underneath the inn was the Numan town of Besontio. An eruption from nearby Monti Lepini obliterated this beautiful Numan resort in less than an hour. In fact, the "ancient Numan road" leading to the main inn is actually the roof of Besontio's largest bathhouse. At some point it was excavated, and pipes installed to bring the waters to baths at the inn. The town would probably have been forgotten had the treasure caravan from Alexia not stopped here.

The Recovery

Late on the night of Primus 3, 1089, three Vodacce Daughters from the villages nearest *Il Piccolo Fiore* sat waiting in pitch darkness. Just above their heads, they could hear the grumbling of the guards who had drawn overnight guard duty. A few of the Daughters smiled. The men had been given just enough of the Lust Elixir to make them agitated and their behavior revealed it.

Suddenly, there was a scuffling sound, as though the guards had all snapped to attention, their boots dragging across stone. Sibilla had arrived. She coughed a bit, trying to rough up her voice. The Disguise Elixir could make you look like someone else, but there were few women who could sound like a man. Fortunately, Sibilla had some skill.

It obviously worked as the guards raised no alarms. After some muttered discussion the guards' gave their report. Once they finished, Sibilla gave them an hour and a half of leisure time. The Lust Elixir must have done its job as none so much as questioned the order before running off. Too bad they would find themselves frustrated.

A few minutes later, there came several sharp raps from the trapdoor. Immediately afterward it came open revealing the brilliant night sky filled with stars. Staring down from above was an officious looking soldier wearing the uniform of the Vatacine Guard. The Daughters could not help but notice his well-oiled goatee.

When "he" spoke, Sibilla's, decidedly-feminine, voice urged everyone up. "We have less than an hour and a half, my sisters," she began, keeping lookout for any of the other Church Guards. "I have marked the wagons, and time is not our friend. Let's get to work."

The First Tome

In preparation, Daughters further excavated the bathhouse and repaired its roof. While still remarkably sturdy, there were several places where the stone had broken apart and fallen in. Daughters repaired most, but covered a few of the broken areas with water troughs, plant boxes and the like. Each was a cleverly designed one-way trapdoor leading down into the bathhouse. Once all are locked, the only way into the bathhouse is through the maintenance tunnel which supplies the water to the inn. The pipes there are hot enough to damage the unwary, keeping most curiosity seekers from exploring too far.

Safely away from the pipes, through a confusing maze of tunnels left over from the excavation, is the small room where the First Tome is kept. This far underground, surrounded by hardened lava, the room is always the same temperature and humidity, perfect for keeping the Tome from being damaged. Once inside, visitors are confronted by the Rules, carved into the stone on the far side of the room.

- *The Tome doesn't leave the room.*
- *The Tome doesn't leave the stand.*
- *Keep the door closed.*
- *Report any damage you noticed or caused.*
- *No food or drink near the Tome.*
- *Use only the light sources provided.*
- *Do not make any copies.*
- *Always wear gloves.*

The room is remarkably clean and comfortable looking. Lanterns have been hung specifically to maximize the light while highlighting important areas and protecting the contents from their flames. There is an ancient mosaic on a side wall depicting several of the ancient Numan Gods frolicking in a bath while cherubs and satyrs watch from nearby. The Tome is on an angled pedestal in the middle of the room. In front of the pedestal is a chair with remarkably long legs. It is designed this way so as to make reading the Tome as easy as possible given it is not to be touched.

- *Il Piccolo Fiore* (18 Points)
- **Medium** (4 Points)
- **Resident Daughters** (0 Points) – 1 Healer
- **Real Business** (2 Points)
- **Elixir Lab** (3 Points)
- **Safe Room** (2 Points)
- **Secret Entrance** (2 Points)
- **Maze** (3 Points)
- **Small Legendary Library** (2 Points)

GM Secrets

The following information consists of several plot ideas, some secrets not described previously and optional rules to make the game run faster.

Khuzmar Tapestry

One of the spoils brought to Vodacce after the sacking of Alexia, this huge embroidery seems to be nothing more than a jewel-encrusted map of the Crescent Empire's coastline from Rahajeel to Iskandar.

But a closer examination reveals the jewels are not merely random adornments. Each type of jewel represents a different point of interest. What makes it hard to discern is its sheer size and variety of different colored jewels on it. Here are a few examples.

- Ruby – Trade City
- Pearl – Port City
- Emerald – Center of Learning
- Sapphire – Oasis
- Diamond – major point in the Second Prophet's journey through the Crescent Lands
- Amethyst – Bedouin Campsite
- Amber – Syrneth Site

But what makes it truly complex is the hue of each stone is also important. Examples include, bright rubies indicate the city is thriving and dark amber means the Syrneth site is underground. Unfortunately, the map is only accurate as of 983 AV, when it was created. In addition, unless one were an expert in

precious stones, it would be difficult to tell many of the gems apart.

Elixir Brewing

Optional Rules

As written, Elixir Brewing is rather straight forward. However, GMs wishing for a bit more complexity, or structure could consider any of the following.

- Elixirs can only be improved so much given the limited technology of 1667. As such, players can only take a maximum of 3-5 (GMs choice) raises to improve any one roll.
- Regardless of a Player's actual roll, once successful, an Elixir's resistance TN is just the base TN plus the raises taken.

For example, a Brewer makes a Calm Elixir (TN 15) but wants to make the effect 3k3 (2 Raises) and make it last for 6 Hours (1 Raise). Even if the Brewer rolled a 37 on their Compounds Roll the resistance roll would be against TN 30

- Elixir Brewers are experts in what they do. Even when they fail to make significant improvements in their concoctions, they still function correctly. As such, when Players fail to roll the TN with added Raises, if they still made the base TN, the potion works as written.

In the above example, if the Brewer rolled a 22, the Elixir would still be effective, just at 2k2 Effect for 3 Hours.

- **(Wo)Man of Will** – This advantage allows heroes to ignore many powerful effects including magic. As such it would make sense for it to work on many of the Daughters' Elixirs. Any Elixirs that affect the mental state of the hero or assert GM control are automatically resisted. Poisons or similar damaging effects work as normal.

The Breath of Life

As noted under its entry, Daughters have been known to die or be driven mad consuming this. GMs who wish to simulate these risks can use the Success Chart (See p. 66) as a guide.

Madness - Any Player who gets 3 or more Failures in one use of the Elixir is driven mad. At this point, the character becomes an NPC under GM control. Regardless of what form the madness takes, the NPC views former comrades as enemies and will do their utmost to destroy them.

Death - Once a Player has accumulated 10 Failures (regardless of the number of times they have taken the Elixir), the character dies.

Lost Elixirs

As mentioned under Creating New Elixirs, GMs are free to make up their own new formulas. Alternately, any of the following could be used. However a warning is in order. Using any of these would be a violation of the First Precept and at the very least, morally questionable.

Freeze – Causes the user to become immobile. They cannot make any voluntary movements (turning their head, walking, picking things up, etc). It causes no damage and they will not die (unless they are not fed/given water somehow). They simply cannot move. There is no known cure. (*Immobility/1 Roll/Permanent*)

Pain – takes effect via contact, ingestion, or inhalation. This Elixir activates whichever pain receptors it comes into contact with, causing excruciating pain. It causes no permanent damage but it is nearly impossible to do anything other than try to make the pain stop. Those under the effects of Pain are never quiet about it. Worse, the memory of Pain lingers in the minds of many of its victims, such that they can suffer for years afterwards. (*4k4 to all activities other than making the pain stop/Every Minute/15 Minutes*)

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Yearning - Users feel an overwhelming, desperate desire to please the first person they see after the Elixir takes effect. They are likely to do whatever they can to keep that person happy. However, unlike the Love/Hate Elixir, once this wears off, users know they were under some kind of compulsion, even if they do not know exactly what. (-3k3 to resist agreeing to whatever the object of their desire asks/Every 5 Minutes/30 Minutes).

Unanswered Questions

For those GMs who need a more information or are curious, here are some possible answers to unanswered questions presented previously.

How did Sophia's Daughter start?

Sophia's Daughters—that is, women sharing specialized information they have learned with other women for the benefit of all—began before the beginning of recorded history, when humans were first congregating together for mutual protection. While such groupings were mostly egalitarian, many cultures still delineated jobs by gender. Men went out to hunt while women joined together to protect children and gather fruits and vegetables.

Since they were not relying on stealth, such women would talk amongst themselves, sharing information they had learned with the other members to ensure the survival of all. As groups got bigger, the women's network of shared information got bigger along with it. Over time, hunter-gatherer societies gave way to agrarian ones. Women found value in continuing to share information among each other.

Why are there no Men in Sophia's Daughters?

Every profession has its own language. Not like Spanish or Vietnamese, but their own specialized meanings. For example, take the word "shoot." In photography it refers to the process of taking pictures. In contrast, when referring to firearms, it means pulling the trigger. Whereas in wrestling, it means to go for a takedown. Same word, specialized meanings. Hunter-gatherer societies had the same

issue. The meaning of words for hunters was different than the meaning for gatherers.

Within the group, women could use shortcuts in their conversations owing to shared experience. But, when women tried to speak with men, they could not use the same shortcuts. In essence, they needed to go back to square one and explain the basics. The same situation, by the way, as the men would face speaking with women about the hunt. Over time, it simply became easier to avoid topics on such specialized work as the time necessary to bring the listener up to speed would be cost prohibitive. That explains the situation up to around 1000 AV when everything, suddenly, got far more deadly.

By this point in history, the group of women who would eventually become Sophia's Daughters had already dealt with the Second Prophet and his "women need to focus on more traditional activities like childrearing and the home" schtick. These were women who had dedicated their lives to investigating some very serious, very complex natural phenomena. The Second Prophet dismissed their work as unimportant solely because of their gender. Naturally, they were hesitant to trust anyone spouting that kind of rhetoric.

Then the Third Prophet came along and got his followers fired up for war. He followed it up with the creation of the Inquisition. They, in turn, began hunting down and indiscriminately killing women *who were selflessly trying to save peoples' lives*.

After 1000AV, it was simply a matter of self-preservation. To reveal to men the inner workings of their organization was an unnecessary risk for dubious benefit. The men who were willing to help would do so without needing to "peer behind the curtain." The ones who were unwilling were the problem.

In addition, currently there are a lot of women who are, rightfully, afraid. Bringing men in might cause some to seek help elsewhere. Honestly, at this point, there is no help anywhere else.

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That said, the Daughters are not about to police anyone's body. As far as they're concerned, if any person lives as a woman, that person *is* a woman and is entitled to their aid.

Is Agitäre really a new Secret Society?

The truth about the origins and current activities of this shadowy group was left intentionally vague. This allows individual GMs to make their own stories.

However, the women in this book who claim to have joined Agitäre, do not belong to that group (if it even exists). Instead, they are simply women Reune Vengasdottir has connived into helping her with her own agenda. They have been told whatever lie Reune thought necessary to gain their allegiance. This, in part, is why Agitäre (as presented in this book) has no consistent message or purpose.

How widespread is Reune's Agitäre?

Reune is over 200 years old, she is a member of three different secret societies, she is a brilliant scientist, and an expert manipulator and blackmailer. She has agents throughout Théah. For example, she has been able to manipulate Tamara Breslau Fyodnava v'Riasanova despite never having met the woman. She did so while never leaving Castille.

That said, she has only one true believer as a follower, her "daughter," Kjersti. The rest have been told a story that fits their own narrative, or have been blackmailed into doing her bidding. Making the former understand the truth of their situation or freeing the latter from their blackmail would quickly make membership dry up.

Why do Sophia's Daughters hate the Sidhe?

The central focus of Sophia's Daughters is freedom. In their view, sorcery is a form of slavery. Sorcerers are born into a kind of indentured servitude to those who gave them powers, and no one really knows what price will be extracted for their largesse, or if the sorcerers would be willing to pay when the bill comes due.

Daughters hate the Sidhe because, unlike the bargainers who are no longer around (at least as far as anyone can tell), the Sidhe are still here. They actively manipulate their sorcerers and the people of the Triple Kingdoms. They can see with their own eyes that the people are afraid. Afraid they might say or do something that offends a Sidhe for fear of what their wrath might entail.

In addition, because of the effect of the Flying Elixir, Daughters can sense the wrongness of sorcery. They view it as a stain upon the soul that only went away when the Sidhe left Avalon and took Glamour with them.

If Daughters do not sense wrongness in all sorceries, why do they believe all sorcery is wrong?

Confirmation bias. Humans tend to interpret new information as lending support to their previously held beliefs or theories. So rather than point out the problem, they reinterpret what they have experienced to fit what they already believe. For example, if a Daughter did not sense anything wrong with a Piryem mage, she might tell herself they were too far away or the Flying Elixir was wearing off, etc.

So what is the difference between the "wrong" and "not wrong" sorceries?

Glamour, Porté, El Fuego Adentro, Sorté, (and Zerstorung and Carl Native if they are used) all have some effect the Barrier. The rest do not.

What are on the five scrolls at the University of Alexia Library?

Obviously they are whatever they need to be. But here are a couple of suggestions:

- A scroll containing one or more lost Elixirs.
- A map of an unknown continent, a forgotten Storehouse, or the Key explaining the Khuzmar Tapestry.
- A treatise on early Daughters' history which may include mention of the second (or third) volume of the First Tome.



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- A list of the royal line of succession for a nation that did not exist at that time, branches differently from what historically happened and suggests the reader may be the heir to a throne.

What is the origin of The First Tome?

No one really knows for certain. But it is far older than anyone can imagine. Near the middle of the second volume is a first hand account of Sophia's experience with the First Prophet (which is how the Daughters have such an accurate picture of exactly what happened).

As for what it represents, it could be simply one of the few tomes to have made it through the Inquisition's purge. As such it could show how the ancient Daughters were not nearly as organized as is imagined.

Alternately, it could be an example of the kind of book a typical ancient Daughter might carry. Thick and built from whatever was available it was merely a repository for all the knowledge this particular Daughter had amassed. Its order would be merely a reflection the course of her life (The early pages would be her earliest learning. Toward the back, things she had learned later in life). Its lack of an index might be because it was never meant to be used by anyone she had not already explained it to.

Finally, it could be a repository of many ancient Daughters' knowledge. At one time it had some order but as the book was passed down from Daughter to Daughter and time marched on, pages needed to be replaced. Later Daughters transcribed various parts and put the pages where they could, and that led to its haphazard organization.

How aren't the elixirs magical?

All the elixirs' effects described above are based on real world chemical and environmental effects, with a large dose of creative license of course. Most are based on everyday spices. In fact, when looking for new and interesting elixirs, the spice rack is a good place to start. Many common spices have interesting side effects.

What does Ustinya Numinova's dream portend?

One answer is, it is exactly what it looks like. On her next birthday, during the celebration with a group of friends, she will die horribly. Maybe her friends are actually members of Agitäre who are trying to keep her from passing on her knowledge of bird handling. Or some message she received.

Alternately, someone could be twisting her strands, and the events portended by her dreams are the result of a change in her fate. Heroes might be able to find those responsible and return her to the path she was meant to follow.

Finally, it is possible the body she sees in her dream lying on the floor is not actually her. Perhaps a stalwart group of Sophia's Daughters will catch onto the fact that someone is trying to replace Ustinya for reasons unknown. They might catch up with the body double at Ustinya's party after she has been kidnapped and rescue her in the nick of time.

What is wrong with Louis-Claude du Sinjin?

He is delusional. While he is correct that a group of women seek him; he incorrectly believes they plan to do him harm. Worse, he cannot be dissuaded from this belief. He will use all the methods at his disposal (which includes all of the Knights of the Rose and Cross) to save himself from these women trying to "kill" him.

As for how he survived drinking the Breath of Life, I recommend searching the internet for "*Chevalier d'Éon*" and letting your imagination run wild.

Why the emphasis on not making copies of the Tome?

I know why you shouldn't in my campaign; I don't know why you shouldn't in yours. But, it could have something to do with discovering that the Tome isn't responsible for the Trait Increase.

Ussuran Historian

Traits		Advantages	
Brawn	2	Languages	(2)
Finesse	2	(Ussuran, Eisen)	
Wits	3	Architectural Awareness	(1)
Resolve	3	Cold Climate Conditioning	(1)
Panache	2	Eagle Eyes	(2)
		Membership: (Sophia's Daughters)	(5)
		Sword School	(25)
		Storehouse (Tiny, Small Library, Mobile)	(2)

Arcana: Reckless

Civil Skills

Archæologist

Occult 2, Research 3, Society Lore 2

Guide

Street Navigation 2, Survival 2, Trail Signs 2

Scholar

History 2, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 2, Research 3

Martial Skills

Athlete

Climbing 1, Footwork 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting

Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1, Attack (Improvised
Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Throw
(Improvised Weapon) 3

Scappare Swordsman School

Disarm 1, Pommel Strike 1, Side-Step 2, Exploit
Weakness (Scappare) 1

Income: 10 G starting /0 G per month

Vestenmannjavnjar Naturalist

Traits	Advantages
Brawn	2 Languages (1)
Finesse	2 (Avalon, Eisen, Vesten)
Wits	4 Cold Climate Conditioning (2)
Resolve	2 Elixir Brewing (20)
Panache	2 Keen Senses (2)
	Membership: (5)
	(Sophia's Daughters)
	Trained Bird (1)

Arcana: Rash

Civil Skills

Scholar

History 2, Mathematics 1, Natural Philosophy 2,
Philosophy 2, Research 3

Herbalist

Compounds 1, Cooking 2, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 2,
Flora 2

Martial Skills

Athlete

Climbing 1, Footwork 3, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting

Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3

Knife

Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Income: 10 G starting /0 G per month

Castillian Liberator

Traits

Brawn
Finesse
Wits
Resolve
Panache

Advantages

2 Languages (3)
3 (Castille, Eisen, Montaigne,
2 Vodacce)
2 Combat Reflexes (3)
3 Membership: (5)
(Sophia's Daughters)
(Swordsman's Guild)
Sword School (25)

Arcana: Loyal

Civil Skills

Athlete

Climbing 2, Footwork 3, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Guide

Ride 1, Stealth 1, Street Navigation 1, Survival 1,
Tracking 1, Trail Signs 1

Sailor

Balance 1, Climbing 2, Knotwork 1, Rigging 1

Martial Skills

Fencing

Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (Fencing) 3

Firearms

Attack (Firearms) 1

Soldano Swordsman School

Double-Parry 1, Tagging 1, Whirl 1, Exploit
Weakness (Soldano) 1

Income: 10 G starting /0 G per month

Crescent Infiltrator

Traits	Advantages	
Brawn	2 Languages	(10)
Finesse	2 (Eisen, Tikaret R/W,	
Wits	3 Ussuran, Vodacce)	
Resolve	2 Guardian Angel	(4)
Panache	3 Keen Senses	(2)
	Membership:	(5)
	(Sophia's Daughters)	
	Small	(2)

Arcana: Hedonistic

Civil Skills

Criminal

Gambling 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

Herbalist

Compounds 1, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 2,
Flora 1, Poison 1

Spy

Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

Martial Skills

Athlete

Climbing 3, Footwork 3, Sprinting 2, Throwing 1

Knife

Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3

Income: 10 G starting /0 G per month

Montaigne Courier

Traits

Brawn
Finesse
Wits
Resolve
Panache

Advantages

2 Languages (5)
3 (Avalon, Castille,
2 Montaigne, Eisen)
2 Combat Reflexes (3)
3 Keen Senses (2)
Membership: (5)
(Sophia's Daughters)
Sword School (25)

Arcana: Proud

Civil Skills

Herbalist

Compounds 1, Cooking 3, Diagnosis 2, First Aid 1,
Flora 1, Poison 1

Guide

Ride 1, Stealth 2, Street Navigation 1, Survival 2,
Tracking 1

Martial Skills

Athlete

Climbing 1, Footwork 3, Sprinting 1, Throwing 1

Dirty Fighting

Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1, Attack (Improvised
Weapon) 2, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2, Throw
(Improvised Weapon) 3

Scappare Swordsman School

Disarm 1, Pommel Strike 1, Side-Step 2, Exploit
Weakness (Scappare) 1

Income: 10 G starting /0 G per month



The First Tome

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I found inspiration for this book from several different sources. Check them all out, they are terrific.

- *L'Chavelier d'Eon* (Anime) from ADV Films
- *Rejected Princesses: Tales of History's Boldest Heroines, Hellions, & Heretics* (Book) by Jason Porath.
- *Romantic Outlaws* (Book) by Charlotte Gordon
- *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life among the Pirates* (Book) by David Cordingly
- *Dangerous Beauty* (Movie) directed by Marshall Herskovitz
- *Dangerous Liaisons* (Movie) directed by Stephen Frears
- *Mary, Queen of Scots* (Movie) directed by Josie Rourke
- *The Borgias* (TV) written by Neil Jordan