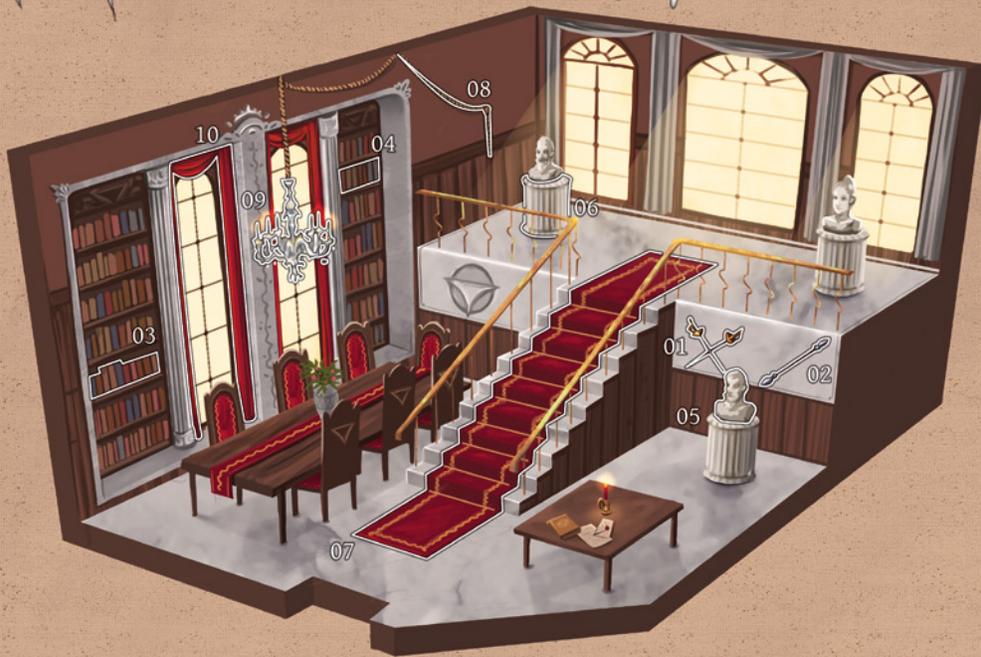




The Dark Eye



One Death
in Grangor



- 01 Take Rapiers
- 02 Take Two-lilies
- 03 Parry with a Book
- 04 Throw Books
- 05 Throw Bust
- 06 Roll the column
- 07 Pull on the carpet
- 08 Make the chandelier drop
- 09 Swing on the chandelier
- 10 Tear down the drapes

| Attitude Level | Attitude |
|----------------|---|
| Level 1 | The target feels insatiable hatred for the character. |
| Level 2 | The target is the character's sworn enemy. |
| Level 3 | The target does not like the character. |
| Level 4 | The target has a slight dislike for the character. |
| Level 5 | The target's opinion of the character is neutral. |
| Level 6 | The target has a slight feeling of affection/friendship/connection toward the character. |
| Level 7 | The target feels deep trust toward the character. |
| Level 8 | The target is deeply loyal to the character, and possibly even loves the character. |
| Level 9 | The target is in love with the character, or at least has a strong sense of connection or friendship and is ready to do anything for the character. |

Quality Levels and Actions (Examples)

| Quality Level | Intensity |
|---------------|---|
| QL 1-2 | The target performs the action, albeit reluctantly, or perhaps does not perform the action in its entirety. |
| QL 3-4 | The target performs the desired action to the character's satisfaction. |
| QL 5-6 | The target performs the action and fulfills special requests or aids the character voluntarily. |

List of Stolen Goods (page 31)

- 2 crates of coffee
- 10 sacks of peanuts
- 20 ounces amber
- 3 sacks cacao beans



One Death in Grangor



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To make a scene easier for the heroes, use these suggestions.



To make a scene more difficult for the heroes, use these suggestions.

Read-Aloud Text: You may read or paraphrase this text for your players. It contains no GM-only information.

GM Information: This information is not meant for the players (at least initially). Sometimes, it is just useful background information for the GM.

Rumors: When the heroes try to gather information, they might hear gossip and hearsay. Rumors are marked with a + (true), a - (false), or a +/- (partly true, partly false).

Regarding NPC Stats: The stats given for NPCs contain all information relevant to the scenario but might not be complete, as we do not necessarily include every skill with a rating higher than 0. This is especially true for NPCs with numerous skills, such as spellcasters and Blessed Ones (for example, the stats for a powerful NPC mage might not include a listing for *Prepare Food*).

Feel free to add applicable skills, as you see fit.

• These boxes contain important information about the scenario!

Quality, Prices, and Beds

Taverns and Inns are rated by levels associated with their *(Q)uality*, *(P)rice*, and *(B)eds*. *Quality* indicates the establishment's overall condition, *Price* modifies the prices listed in the *Core Rules* for goods and services by the given percentage, and *Beds* indicates the maximum number of beds available.

| Level | Quality | Price |
|-------|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Miserable hovel | Very cheap (50% of normal price) |
| 2 | Dirty dive | Cheap (75% of normal price) |
| 3 | Simple inn | Normal (normal price) |
| 4 | Good middle-class tavern | Expensive (150% of normal price) |
| 5 | Exquisite hotel | Very expensive (200% of normal price) |
| 6 | Luxurious hotel | Extremely expensive (400% of normal price) |

NPCs with this symbol hold a position that is important for future official adventures, but you may replace this character with another one of your choosing.

NPCs with this symbol do not appear in future official adventures. You may reuse them freely in your campaigns and adventures.

GM Introduction

Greetings to the Twelve! *One Death in Grangor* is a thrilling adventure set in a trading town famed for its many canals and ornate bridges. In this adventure, the heroes investigate an affluent merchant's tragic death. The trail of clues leads them from the city's splendid counting houses and patrician palaces to its seediest districts, where a violent encounter in a rowdy tavern culminates in a fast-paced pursuit of a surprising suspect. But something's not right. Did their prime suspect really commit murder, or was he framed?

Introduction

The Story Thus Far (warning: Spoilers!)

Sumudan de Vries was Grangor's latest rising star merchant. The inexperienced young man rose to fame when, at great personal risk, he became the first Grangoran native to conduct trade with Uthuria. Citizens still excitedly recall the fabulous party he hosted when his merchant ship returned safely, laden with exotic trade goods. He paid his stockholders with the money he earned from that first venture and used the remainder to secure a seat on the city council, where he continued to gain political influence and glory. Indeed, the locals believed that Phex himself watched over *Sumudan de Vries*.

Not one to rest on his laurels, *Sumudan* quickly reinvested the remainder of his hard-won coin, securing pledges from new investors to finance a second journey to the southern continent. It wasn't too hard to find willing investors, as his previous expedition—though risky—paid large dividends. Nevertheless, *Sumudan* had to sell many shares in his company to secure enough funding for the trip. He considered this a minor setback, however—one that would garner sufficient wealth to buy back his company and permanently establish himself as an independent merchant.

Though Phex seemed to smile upon *Sumudan*, the capricious *Efferd* had other ideas. *Sumudan's* fleet encountered a violent storm on the journey's return leg. Two of the three ships were lost at sea; and the remaining vessel limped into port at Brabak, having sustained heavy damage. The funds from the few surviving trade goods barely covered the ship's repairs. While the crew waited anxiously to set sail for home, the captain ordered his first officer, *Darian Pekhebbber*, to travel ahead to Grangor and deliver the grave news.

Sumudan was devastated. He had bet everything on this mission's success. Short on cash, the inexperienced merchant had convinced himself to let the fleet sail for Uthuria without insurance coverage, which meant he was now bankrupt. Even the money acquired from the sale of his home would not repay his stockholders; *Sumudan* would suffer the worst fate a Horasian could endure—losing his reputation and honor. Seeing only one way out, the ruined merchant jumped to his death from a window in the top floor of his counting house.

What Happens Next?

Unfortunately, *Sumudan* was not the only person to find out about the shipwreck. After delivering the news, *Darian* starting drinking heavily in a tavern known as *Murder Him* (named for the exclamation commonly shouted

during imman games). *Arn Knokenbreeker* overheard *Darian's* drunken mutterings and knew that once news of the disaster spread, his secret lover *Odina Hortemann*—a patrician who purchased many shares in *Sumudan's* expedition to Uthuria—would be left destitute.

In desperation, *Arn* contrived a plan to give *Odina* time to sell her shares: he killed the drunken *Darian* outside the tavern and dumped his body in the canal, weighing it down with an old anchor in the hope no one would ever discover it.

He then told *Odina* what he had done, presenting her no other choice but to try to convince *Sumudan* to withhold news of the shipwreck until she could sell all her shares. Alas, *Arn* and *Odina* arrived at *Sumudan's* counting house just after his death. Upon searching the merchant's office, they found a farewell note, in which *Sumudan* explained his motives.

Realizing they were now the only ones in town who knew the truth, *Arn* and *Odina* decided to keep the shipwreck a secret, especially since *Odina* was involved in the venture. To avoid raising suspicion about the expedition's outcome, they stole *Sumudan's* note and planted false evidence to make *Sumudan's* death seem like a murder.

The heroes enter the picture at this point. Their investigation into *Sumudan's* alleged murder reveals *Thuan de Vries*—*Sumudan's* good-for-nothing son—as the prime suspect (*Arn* chose to frame *Thuan* for his father's murder). As credible as the evidence seems at first, the heroes quickly begin to doubt *Thuan's* guilt. When *Darian Pekhebbber's* body turns up unexpectedly, clues begin to point to *Arn Knokenbreeker* as *Sumudan's* murderer. The heroes know *Arn* has ties to *Odina*, but convicting a respected patrician of collaborating in such a crime will require more than flimsy accusations. Furthermore, *Odina* is not the only one who stands to lose a fortune if the heroes' investigation succeeds....

Important Background Information

Before you begin your adventure, we want to take the time to introduce you to the setting—the city of *Grangor*—by giving you a detailed description (see *Grangor: City of Canals*, starting on page 10).

Also, in detective adventures, heroes often need to use the *Asking Around* skill to gain information, or use various social skills to convince NPCs to help them. To that end, we provide the Focus Rules for *Asking Around* (page 6) and using Social skills (page 7). You may choose whether to use these rules with your players. The adventure itself starts on page 16.

Choosing Heroes

Finding clues and interrogating suspects requires heroes with keen wits and intellects, who also know how to navigate social situations. Heroes with strong social skills get a chance to shine during this adventure. However, as not everyone willingly parts with their secrets, heroes must sometimes use other skills, such as stealth. Moreover, heroes who possess noble ideals, are curious by nature, or have a fierce sense of justice should be eager to investigate and solve Sumudan's death.

Exotic characters and heroes from barbaric cultures are not well-suited for this adventure, as they can easily give the wrong impression in Grangoran society. Elves may find the goal-oriented nature of this adventure difficult, because they are Unworldly. The Grangorers treat Thorwalers with caution, due to the many sea raids of the past; however, they consider a lone Thorwaler mostly harmless.

This adventure presents a unique challenge for fighting heroes—Grangor has strict weapon laws, so most of the combat that takes place is *Brawling*. Heroes specializing in ranged or heavy weapons may quickly find their skills are rather useless (see *The Weapon Laws: Challenge or Annoyance?* on page 18), unless they learn to improvise with on-hand items.

Using Fate Points

Optional Content

Detective scenarios are all about following trails, collecting evidence, and combining that evidence to draw a definitive conclusion in the end. However, players are not always able to differentiate between a *good lead* and a *red herring*; also, they might forget an important detail, especially during an adventure played over multiple sessions.

To keep your players from getting frustrated, you can institute the following rule: whenever they are stuck, they can spend a *Fate Point* to receive a hint. This hint should usually manifest as a coincidental scene that happens shortly thereafter—such as an overheard conversation or a chance encounter—giving the heroes a nudge in the right direction. During the adventure's last chapter, it can also be helpful to give your players the answers to any remaining questions in exchange for a *Fate Point*, as they'll need all the pieces to solve the case.

Search for Clues: Rules for *Asking Around*

During the adventure, the search for important clues requires thorough questioning of all parties involved. To discover anything more than vague clues—and avoid a painstaking scavenger hunt to produce any kind of substantial trail from them—the heroes must take their time and approach the task systematically. To avoid boring your players with countless NPCs who reply to the same questions with the same useless answers, we present the rules for *Asking Around*, with which you can speed up this process.

Asking Around is a Level I Focus Rule that expands on the basic game rules found in the *Core Rules*. It is especially useful in this adventure, and you are welcome to use it in other adventures, as well. For more information about this rule, see the *Aventuria Compendium*, page 45.

Asking Around Check

The *Streetwise* (*Asking Around*) check involves asking several different people questions, choosing the right words, and/or offering small bribes for cooperation to obtain information from a settlement's inhabitants. *Asking Around* in a city requires a cumulative check (or a cumulative group check, if more than one adventurer is looking for information). The GM can adjust the time interval, based on the city's size, if desired.

The GM can limit *Asking Around* to a specific number of searchers, but the general rule is a group sees results faster when they work together.

As usual, the searchers achieve a partial success with 6 QL. For example, they might find a single clue, or someone who knows at least the partial truth of events. With 10 QL, the searchers should find what they are looking for, provided the information is available in the place they're searching.

Choosing A Topic When Asking Around

Before conducting their search, the heroes must first decide on a topic. For instance, they may decide to ask, "Where may I find Hook Joe?" or "Has someone recently smuggled a Gwen-Petryl stone through Havena?"

Their topic can be broadly defined or tightly focused. Broadly defined topics are less specific and provide only rough information; but, the information is typically easy to obtain. Focused topics involve much more detail and result in more precise information—if the heroes can find someone who is willing to talk, that is.

Social Interaction During the Search

The heroes may decide they want to use other Social skills during their search—such as *Intimidation*, *Seduction*, or *Fast-Talk*—to help loosen a witness's tongue. Depending on which type of character the heroes approach (such as a tavern maid, a beggar, or the leader of a band of thieves), the GM may choose to allow them to swap another Social skill for a single *Streetwise* check during their research.

Note: Heroes may not replace their first research check in this manner.

Depending on whether the selected topic is broadly defined or focused, the GM may grant a bonus of up to +3 on the research check or increase the difficulty by up to -3, respectively.

The Correct Language

If the heroes want to gather information from someone, they must speak that person's language.

- This means a hero must have, at least, *Language II* in the language typically spoken in the city (in Grangor, this is Garethi (Horathi)).

- A *Language I* ability is not enough to use the *Asking Around* skill without penalty (when a hero has only *Language I*, increase the difficulty of all *Asking Around* checks by -1).
- There are no penalties for *Language III*.
- At the GM's discretion, other languages may also be relevant when speaking to specific people.
- The GM decides whether knowledge of Special Abilities such as *Foxian* makes certain information available (for instance, a rogue would only share information with a hero who speaks *Foxian*).

Critical Successes and Botches

The heroes' *Asking Around* research should immediately end upon achieving a critical success. If the information is available, the heroes successfully obtain it. They may even gain further useful hints, if those with whom they speak are friendly enough to help the heroes in other ways or provide additional clues.

However, a botch causes the heroes to clash with the people they are questioning. Perhaps they question the wrong person, who becomes suspicious and sends thugs after them. In any event, the heroes can no longer access that information in this way.

Search for Clues: Rules for Using Social Skills

Detective scenarios require a lot of social interaction from the heroes. They must use their Social skills to coax information out of people, question witnesses, intimidate suspects, and persuade, seduce, and fast-talk their opponents. This is not always an easy task, though, because not everyone readily gives the heroes answers as they attempt to find the perpetrator(s) of a villainous deed. Indeed, the heroes may have to make assumptions and decisions based on nothing more than the attitude of a person they question. In such cases, you may find it helpful to use the following rules for *Social Conflicts* for your players' social interactions in this adventure (for more information about the Level I Focus Rule: *Social Conflicts*, see the *Aventuria Compendium*, page 40). These rules make the game slightly more complex. Note that heroes with high Social skill ratings have more to contribute when using Social skills in this manner.

If you don't like this Focus Rule, or think it puts your heroes at too much of a disadvantage, ignore it and resolve social conflicts with simple, competitive checks (see the *Core Rules*, page 25). To do this, first differentiate between the *active party* and the *passive party*. The active party is the side that tries to exert influence, while the passive party is the one resisting the manipulation. The active party uses *Fast-Talk* or another skill to attempt to

convince the passive party to perform an action, while the passive party resists the attempt with *Willpower*.

Social conflict takes two basic forms: influencing another person's attitude, and forcing another person to act. Both methods may be combined if time permits, but doing so requires different skill checks.

Social Conflicts

Attitude

Every person has a certain attitude toward others (see *Bannbaladin* in the *Core Rules*, page 288). Initially, Aventurians have a neutral attitude toward other Aventurians (level 5), but NPCs with prejudices may have a lower initial attitude level (as low as 3) toward a hero, at the GM's discretion. Additional modifications may apply, depending on the NPC's and hero's cultures.

Attitude

| Attitude Level | Attitude |
|----------------|---|
| Level 1 | The target feels insatiable hatred for the character. |
| Level 2 | The target is the character's sworn enemy. |



Roleplaying Social Conflicts

Optional Rule

Every gaming group can choose to simply resolve social conflicts by roleplaying them. In this case, compare the influencing party's skill rating in *Persuasion*, *Seduction*, or *Fast-Talk* to the defender's *Willpower* to measure relative performance. As a matter of fairness, when using this optional rule, a character who lacks any ability in these areas should not achieve success after success simply because that character's player is eloquent or devises clever arguments. In general, when roleplaying social conflicts, greater success should come only to characters with better skill values. This rule makes the game a little bit less complex.

Players who spend AP to increase their characters' Social skills should enjoy an advantage over characters whose players think up good arguments but do not spend a single AP on Social skills.



| | |
|----------------|---|
| Level 3 | The target does not like the character. |
| Level 4 | The target has a slight dislike for the character. |
| Level 5 | The target's opinion of the character is neutral. |
| Level 6 | The target has a slight feeling of affection/friendship/connection toward the character. |
| Level 7 | The target feels deep trust toward the character. |
| Level 8 | The target is deeply loyal to the character, and possibly even loves the character. |
| Level 9 | The target is in love with the character, or at least has a strong sense of connection or friendship and is ready to do anything for the character. |

All Social checks gain a bonus of +1 for each attitude level above 5 and receive a penalty of -1 for each attitude level below 5 (see the *Aventurian Compendium*, page 43).

The GM decides a NPC's initial attitude toward a player character, as modified by the situation. However, as a rule, assume that NPCs start with an attitude level of 5.

Influencing an Attitude

First the GM must decide which skills to use for the social conflict. If the skill is not clear, have the active party describe how they want to influence their target. The winner, and the result, is decided by net QL (the QL that remain after subtracting the lower QL total from the higher QL after the competitive check).

- The GM decides the check interval based on the situation. Often, the active party wants to make only a single check, but it can still be important to know how much time must pass before another check can be made. For suggested intervals, see the *Skills and Check Intervals* table. When using the rules for social conflict, characters may make only one check every 24 hours to change a target's attitude.
- If the active party wins, the passive party's attitude toward them increases by one level per net QL. Furthermore, the passive party remains unaware of the influence attempt.
- If the passive party wins, they may adjust their attitude level by one level per net QL in their favor, though they are not required to do so. Furthermore, they become aware of the active party's attempt to influence them. ○

• It is possible an NPC won't mind that a character attempted to change their attitude; therefore, they don't necessarily need to decrease their attitude level.



- A character can never change the attitude of a target by more than two levels. For example, a passive party that starts out as a sworn enemy (level 2) can only be raised to attitude level 4 (the target has a certain dislike for the character). The exceptions are spells, liturgical chants, botches, and critical successes, which may increase or decrease the passive party's attitude level beyond this limit.
- A botch changes the attitude level by 1D3+1 to the disadvantage of the party that botched, and a critical success changes it by 1D3+1 in favor of the party that rolled it.
- The GM decides if an absolute limit exists between a player's character and an NPC. For example, the GM could decide the attitude level of the character's archenemy may never rise above level 2.

Skills and Check Intervals

| If Active Party uses: | And Passive Party uses: | Check Interval should be (depending on situation) ... |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| <i>Persuasion</i> | <i>Willpower</i> (<i>Resist Persuasion</i>) | Between 1 hour and 1 day |
| <i>Seduction</i> | <i>Willpower</i> (<i>Resist Seduction</i>) | Between 1 minute and 1 hour |
| <i>Fast-Talk</i> | <i>Willpower</i> (<i>Resist Fast-Talk</i>) | Between 1 minute and 10 minutes |

Force Action

Instead of changing the target's attitude toward the character, social conflict can, depending on the skill, also be used to suggest certain actions and make the other party carry them out. Characters can use this option initially, or after manipulating the target's attitude. In either case, the active party makes a competitive check against the passive party. The chosen skill need not be the same as the one used to change the target's attitude.

- The interval is identical to the interval for changing the target's attitude.
- If the active party wins, the net QL determine how enthusiastically the other party carries out the action.
- In the case of a tie, the passive party does not carry out the action, but also does not notice the attempt to influence them.
- If the passive party wins, they notice the influence and may react accordingly. In this case, the GM may decide that the NPC's attitude toward the character changes immediately.
- The character may make one check to force a target to carry out an action. The GM decides whether to allow another check with the same action against the same target.
- Forced actions end at the GM's discretion.

Strong and Weak Arguments

Optional Rule

When roleplaying social conflict scenes, the GM may set modifiers of -3 to +3 for the use of strong or weak arguments. This optional rule makes the game a bit more complex.

- The GM can decide that someone is not even tempted to carry out a specific action, regardless of success. For example, characters cannot *Sweet-Talk* their archenemies, and elves cannot *Incite* an orc tribe to smash their holy images in a Brazoragh sanctum, no matter how successful their rolls.

See the *Aventurian Compendium*, starting on page 42, for additional examples of actions characters can perform using force action.

Quality Levels and Actions (Examples)

| Quality Level | Intensity |
|---------------|---|
| QL 1-2 | The target performs the action, albeit reluctantly, or perhaps does not perform the action in its entirety. |
| QL 3-4 | The target performs the desired action to the character's satisfaction. |
| QL 5-6 | The target performs the action and fulfills special requests or aids the character voluntarily. |

Example: Rowena wants a Tulamydian city guard to protect her while she is in town. His attitude towards her starts at neutral (level 5), and she attempts to change his attitude level before she tries flirting. Rowena's player makes a competitive check on Seduction (Flirting) against the guard's Willpower. The GM sets an interval of 1 minute. Rowena and the guard come from different cultures, increasing the difficulty by 1, but the guard is a pleasing-unto-Rahja womanizer (bonus of +1), for a net modifier of +/- 0. The player achieves 1 QL, so the guard's attitude increases to level 6.

Rowena does not have much time, so she stops attempting to change his attitude and begins flirting with him in earnest. Again, both make a competitive check, but Rowena's player receives a bonus of +1 due to the guard's attitude level. Her player achieves an incredible 5 net QL. The guard is smitten with Rowena. He lets her pass the city gate without hesitation and looks after her, telling her which areas of the city she should avoid.

Grangor: City of Canals

“We are free burghers, all of us, without a fat prince over us. We live in our own palaces, which we earned by working diligently and eagerly with our own hands. This is the promise Grangor makes to its children: Work hard and avoid indulging in idleness, like the sluggard southlanders, and you’ll succeed—no matter what part of Grangor you’re from.”
-a proud Grangoran merchant

“They’re all uptight and humorless—from the harbor workers to the moneybags. They know nothing besides work; for them, it is always about business. They see art and amusement as a waste of time, and what they see as diligence and eagerness is often nothing but stinginess and greed. In general, everything is about money for them. They say, time is money; it is no wonder you can buy almost anything there—where even time has monetary value.”
-a traveler from the Wild South

Region: Horasian Empire, Duchy of Grangoria

Population: 15,000

Governance: Monied Aristocracy; Free City under the rule of an elected Master of the City, currently *Gwynn Willforth*. He presides over a city council consisting of the 44 richest burghers in the city.

Temples: Boron, Efferd, Peraine, Phex, Rahja, Rondra, Travia (two), Tsa; shrine to Hesinde

Trade and Industry: Center of the northern sea trade and trade with the western Middenrealm, shipbuilding, salt trade, fishing, pilgrim’s port

Characteristic Features: Lagoon city with magnificent merchant palazzis (palaces) situated along broad waats (canals), next to warped houses in filthy waats; large storehouses in the port; lots of shipping travel; splendid bridges; important temple of Efferd that attracts many pilgrims; *School of Apparitions* (mage academy with emphasis on illusion and ghost summoning); Gyldenland Museum; Horas-Imperial Navy’s main military harbor; strict weapon laws.

Atmosphere in the City: sober, modest, and bustling; the Grangorers are always looking to increase their own wealth; highly commercialized, a stark contrast to the colorful and lively activity in the harbor.

The sober nature of its inhabitants and the power struggles of the merchant houses make Grangor an ideal setting for scandals and intrigues, where secrets are carefully hidden and must be tenaciously dragged into the light. The rich and the poor live close together here, and the swindler’s games are nothing compared to what happens behind the magnificent city palazzi walls. Grangor is a grounded setting, perfectly suited for crime adventures. Their strict weapon laws limit investigators’ means and require comprehensive deductive abilities.

In the struggle for supremacy on the *Sea of Seven Winds*, the *North Sea Company* and the seven sea cities occasionally exchange blows—sometimes in secret, sometimes openly. Foreign espionage operations often target the nearby military harbor, and organized crime controls the taverns and brothels in the city’s large port, where ships depart to even the distant Gyldenland.

What Do the Heroes Know About Grangor?

Depending on their backgrounds and local knowledge, the heroes may already know the following information. Otherwise, they can make checks to discover it.

Geography (Horasian Empire) check

QL 1: Grangor lies in the north of the Horasian Empire, at the estuary where the Phecadi spills into the *Sea of Seven Winds*. It is the largest of the seven imperial cities in this region, which is known as *Septimana* (and its inhabitants, *Septimanes*).

QL 2: The city was built on several islands. Hence, boats are the key means of transportation. Grangor is a city of merchants, who primarily conduct business with the north. The *Horas-Imperial Privileged North Sea Company*, which is located here, has nearly a monopoly.

QL 3: The climate is cooler and rougher here than in the fairer south. People often draw comparisons between the climate and the sort of people who live here. They’re considered respectable, prudish, hardworking, and frugal.

QL 4+: Some Grangorers consider entertainment a waste of time; time that could be better spent increasing their wealth. They find vagrants and slackers suspicious.

Law (Horasian Empire) check

QL 1: Grangor is part of the Horasian Empire. It lies in the Duchy of Grangoria.

QL 2: However, the city is independent from *Duke Cusimo Garlichgrötz*, who is also the Margrave of Windhag in the Middenrealm. Grangor is a free city, subject only to the Horas-Emperor in Vinsalt. It is governed by a council of merchants, who elect a Master of the City from their midst. Strict weapon laws are in place here, which forbid most foreigners from bearing arms.

QL 3: Jurisdiction is mild. A person can purchase their pardon from most punishments by paying a (very large) sum of money. In general, nearly anything in the city can be arranged with money. A city council seat must also be purchased.

QL 4+: The city council has two chambers, known as the Inner Salon and the Outer Salon. The 12 old patrician families, called *Ancestral Houses*, are seated in the Inner Salon. Merchants who pay at least 2,000 ducats in taxes

per year buy their seat in the Outer Salon, which currently has 32 members. The Inner Salon makes all significant decisions on laws and taxes, a fact of life that the Outer Salon members dislike.

Etiquette (Manners or Fashion) check

QL 1: Grangorers prefer plain fashion. In fact, even affluent Septimanes are expected to dress modestly. They dislike pomp and pride and consider spending money on entertainment indecent. They believe money should be used to perform charitable deeds or increase their own wealth.

QL 2: The Grangorers' clothing mirrors this rejection of pomp. They rarely wear light-colored clothes, especially not colorful ones. Instead, most of their clothing consists of black, gray, and dark blue tones. They typically wear millstone collars made from starched linen or—if they are quite wealthy, from Drölan Lace—and adorn their heads with stiff hats.

QL 3: The Grangorers love understatement. Thus, an affluent Grangorer's clothes are quite modest at first glance. Besides lace, they require Hesindigo and Chorhopan Ink dyes; and their white collars are meant to demonstrate that they stand above life's everyday problems. In their clothing, as in all respects, they emphasize quality over quantity.

QL 4+: The Grangorers find strong displays of public emotion suspicious. Instead, they exercise self-discipline, described as a *stiff upper-lip* south of the Septimana—half in jest, half in admiration.

History (Horasian Empire) or Myths & Legends (Horasian Empire) check

QL 1: Thorwaler pirates have always favored Grangor as a target, and they are greatly feared here.

QL 2: It is said that as his last heroic deed, Saint Geron the One-Handed slew the Eternal Dragon of Phecadia with the legendary sword, Sevenstrike. But afterward, a water dragon allegedly menaced the city on three separate occasions. It is unclear whether this is the same creature from the legend of St. Geron.

QL 3: Grangor is a popular destination among pilgrims of Efferd. Presumably, Saint Efferdan—who lost her ten children and husband at sea, yet kept strong in her faith to Efferd—lived here. As a reward for her faithfulness, Efferd turned twelve of her tears into sea green stones, said to protect seafarers from dark powers. The stones are kept in the temple to this day.

A Tour of the City

In the Grangor lagoon, the Phecadi flows down from the Northmarches, splits into the loamy Yellow Phecadi and the clear Blue Phecadi, and washes around a group of islands—on which the city of Grangor sprawls. The city area includes not only the quarters situated on islands

such as Old Grangor, South Grangor, Kopp, Koppstone, Koppstone, Sudertown, Newhaven, and Traviashore, but also Sickles—called Terra Ferma—the former village on the mainland. To the west of the Phecadi estuary lies **Castle Windehag (01)** (no longer part of the city), which belongs to the Duke of Grangor, *Cusimo Garlischgrötz*. Grangorella, the island in the southwest, is no longer subject to the city government, either. On the inhospitable chalk rocks, hidden behind mighty bastions, lies the **headquarters of the Horas-Imperial Navy (02)**—called the *Domicile of Seven Seas*—as well as the sea warriors' garrisons, and the renowned **Cadet School (03)**. Grangorella is directly subject to the crown and is a restricted military base—no one may leave or enter without a pass. Nevertheless, rowdy sea soldiers and curt naval officers are a constant sight in the city.

Countless canals, also called *waats*, cut through the city quarters in a close network, meaning much of the traffic here consists of boats and graceful gondolas. Inspired by the myth of the Eternal Dragon of Phecadia, which Saint Geron slew in this area, many of these gondolas feature a bow carved in the style of a long, dragon's neck. Ferries regularly travel between the different ferry stations, relieving traffic on the city's narrow bridges. Rental services loan out slender canal boats for a daily fee; hiring someone to operate the boat costs a few halers extra.

Old Grangor

Old Grangor, South Grangor, and Kopp island are among the oldest residential areas of the city. If you enter the city from the mainland, you usually arrive in Old Grangor. The ferry travels at an hourly pace (a bit less frequently on the Windhager shore) between the farming village of Sickles and the **pilgrim's port** in Old Grangor. A high wall surrounds the former main port, which you can now only cross via the two-story, 164-foot long **pilgrim's house (04)**. There, you must pay an equipment tax and a fee of 1 silverthaler before you can enter your name into the city's pilgrim book. In addition, you must leave all weapons and armor that fail to comply with the strict weapon laws in the pilgrim's house. You can store these items in the pilgrim's house for another silverthaler and reclaim them when you leave the city. Finally, after being issued a document confirming your right to stay in Grangor, you can enter. Pilgrim's maps are available to help visitors navigate the city.

The city, in all its splendor, readily receives travelers. Merchant quarters and counting houses stretch out along the waats, wooing travelers' attention and coin with their decorative and playful facades. Fountains trickle amid magnificent gardens in interior courtyards, and gargoyles with dragon-like heads gaze down on passersby from high rooftops. The Grootewaats is the largest of the waats—spanned by six, stony bridges. However, you'll find the



most beautiful and best-known palazzi, the **Drakenbrügg (05)**, with its six small towers, along the Northwaat and Gyldenwaat.

To the north, directly at the Northwaat, lies the grandiose, white marble *Festuman Hall of Exchanges and Deposits*, usually referred to as the **Northland Bank (06)**. Almost directly opposite this stand the large **Stührmann & Mezzani Printing House (07)** offices, where you'll also find the editorial offices of the *Grangoran Commercial Gazette*, a newspaper focusing on mercantile matters. Close by, the **King Khadan Hall (08)**—a concert and opera house—stands out as rather square and boring-looking in a row of beautiful patrician buildings, a stark visual reminder of the Grangorers' ambivalent feelings toward art and entertainment. Though they consider it a virtue to promote the fine arts, many zealous merchants view the theater as nothing more than an idle waste of time, which could be better spent increasing their wealth.

In the northeast—close to the Longwaat—at the *Square of 800 Souls* lies the **burgher house (09)**. The Grangorers repurposed this former armory and prison after winning their independence, in remembrance of everyone who died fighting for the city's freedom. The town book, in which every free burgher's name in the city is written, is kept here.

If you follow the Longwaat to the south, you'll reach the extravagantly palatial **main counting house of the North Sea Company (10)**, which stands directly at the intersection between the Longwaat and the Grootewaat. Here, in magnificently decorated halls that would make

a noble proud, the governors and directors of the *Horas-Imperial Privileged North Sea Company* decide matters that affect the entire Septimana, as well as the northern *Sea of Seven Winds*.

At the far east, the **Duke Cusimo Aqueduct**, a masterpiece of Horasian architecture, connects the Terra Ferma to the city. The aqueduct transports clean Phecadi water from the Phecano Forest to Grangor, where the Grangorers then store it in a gigantic **cistern (11)**.

Just a few street corners away lies the noble brothel, the **Red Salamander (12)** (Q4/P5/-). Its existence and location leave a bitter taste in the mouths of quite a few fine Grangorers. But despite—or, some would say, precisely because of—its bourgeois location, the brothel enjoys lasting popularity.

In the heart of Old Grangor, inconspicuously embedded in a row of burghers' homes, lies the **House of the Traveling Salesman (T01)**, as the temple of Phex is called here. At the start of a new trading day, the temple's large trading hall is full of life—from simple burgher to affluent merchant. Loud voices permeate the air, as people stand in front of the fox god's altar shouting the most current offers for countless business and shipping company shares and property documents,

• The sea merchant guild is abbreviated as HPNC. It enjoys far-reaching duty and trade privileges in the northland trade, in which it desires a monopoly.



while others write the current prices on large slate tablets on the walls. Luxurious side halls provide opportunities to conduct business in peace and quiet. There is no dedicated thieves' temple, thus the Blessed Ones of Phex perform their services outside the temple walls. Thugs and beggars only visit the temple for urgent matters—their discomfort at being treated with suspicion by the expensively dressed merchants is quite evident.

Along the nearby Longwaat lies the noble **Wheel and Cup (13)** casino (Q5/P5/-). It is said more merchants have lost their fortunes here than from their stock going bust. Following the canal to the south, you soon reach the **town hall (14)**, with the *Vanderzee Tower* reaching far above everything else. Another marvel of the Horasian art of engineering, the tower has an enormous clock face on all four sides, behind which fully mechanical, mighty gears move the large hands to keep time. Behind the façade of the town hall, which is divided by archways, the Inner and Outer Salons meet for regular proceedings.

To the south of the town hall, the slow flowing Hangmanwaat separates Old Grangor from South Grangor. The Grangorers use this central canal to execute corporal punishment and public humiliation; crowds of people typically gather here whenever a delinquent is sentenced to be submersed in the waters. At the eastern end of the waat stands the **Academy of Apparitions (15)**, a small mage's school specializing in illusion magic and ghost apparitions. Unfortunately for the mages trained here, the academy graduates' reputations do not correspond to the magnificent building's three-story palazzi-like exterior, with its delicate arcades. Inside the building—in what seems almost a justification of the mage school's existence—is a **shrine to Hesinde (T02)**, which is open to the public.

At the western end of the Hangmanwaat lies the famous **fish market (16)**, with its three large market halls. Here, the Grangorers conduct flourishing trade—from sunrise to sunset—behind artful arcades. Though fishermen make up a large part of the market's business, there are far greater goods being offered than the fruits of Efferd. A clock tower looks out over the bustling market activity.

South Grangor

South Grangor, which Grangorers still consider the *better* address in poorer areas, begins below the Hangmanwaat. The farther south you travel, the more fissures you'll see in the houses. Most of them are built partially on soft ground and begin tilting to the side after a few decades, before sinking completely into the mud. The canals here also become narrower, and the water flows sluggishly and creates foaming bubbles. Houseboats moored in the narrow waats make it difficult to advance. Like pearls on a string, they often line the canals—forming their own rows of floating houses.

To the southwest of the Hangmanwaat stands the famous **Gyldenland Museum (17)**, founded with souvenirs the equally famed Captain Jastek brought back from his first journey to the Gyldenland, about 290 years ago. The museum now stretches across three buildings and Jastek's Gyldenland liner—the *Bride of the Wind*—moored opposite the museum. For 13 halers, you can gaze in wonder at a substantial number of exhibits (both genuine and alleged) from the distant west continent. Since the famous Captain Harika of Bethana's return from her journey to the horizon, the museum's collection has grown once more.

Not far from the museum, on the spacious *Square of Saint Efferdane*, lies the **Pilgrim's Temple (T03)**. This house of the sea god, Efferd, is also the oldest place of worship in the city. Solid as a rock, it gained prominence by surviving every catastrophe in the city's history. The temple's chronicle, known as the *Scroll of Years*, also serves as a chronicle of the city itself. The temple of Efferd is a popular pilgrim destination—due to Saint Efferdane and every year, the city houses over a thousand guests.

The **guild house of the Helmsmen (18)** also lies on this square, as do several pilgrim's refuges.

Further south, on *Geese Square*, lies the **Temple of Home and Hearth (T04)**, one of two temples of Travia in the city. In 1015 FB, the Grangorers started to gradually renovate and spruce up the house with the lurid, shiny orange roof made of Drôlan shingles. The temple provost, **Mother Amalande**, wants her place of worship—with its white, marble altar and Silasan gold-work offering bowls—to gain renown throughout the land. But, money spent to further the temple's fame is not spent other places, such as the adjacent **orphanage (19)**, which the city now finances. The innkeeper **Traviadan**, who grew up in the orphanage himself, feeds the orphans in the **Cozy Parlor (G01)** inn (Q2/P2/B14).

Close to the Vesselbeck Dike, which connects South Grangor to Sudertown, lies **Murder Him (G02)** (Q2/P2/-), the favorite local tavern of Grangor's imman team—the *Grangor Eagles*. Only the most hardened types gather here, as violent quarrels regularly break out between the rough players—especially now that they no longer play imman regularly. To make ends meet, the players offer their services as bodyguards. To their own dismay, they receive more praise as bodyguards than they ever did as imman players.

• The temple's teaching of having an open, generous hand also lures many beggars into the city—much to the more affluent inhabitants' dismay.

•• The Helmsmen's Guild regularly goes before the city council to speak on behalf of the guilds and trade policies, but the council rarely heeds their suggestions.

Sudertown

South of the Vesselbeck Dike lies Sudertown—the island of unfulfilled desires and dreams—home to fishermen, shipyard workers, and day laborers. Old, decrepit houses—some of which have partially sunken into the sand—lean over narrow, stinking waats, above which hang rows of clothesline. The air is full of the smells of fish, sweat, and tar. As though wanting to put a stop to the dreariness, **The Colorful House (G03)** (Q3/P2/-) tavern stands here, its exterior boasting all the colors of the rainbow. Actors, performers, and travelers gather here; though, in summer, they also like to set up tents on the *Traveler's Square*. In the center of the island stands the **temple of Tsa (T05)**, which is decorated with colorful, shiny mosaics.

Newhaven

Little of the city's upright character remains in this classic harbor district. Performers, sailors, and prostitutes fill the streets, where loud and rowdy behavior and the smells of pipe tobacco, sweat, and filth are common. Long rows of mostly brick, five-story storage houses extend along the canals, where the major merchant families' counting houses stand next to each other. Large cargo cranes discharge loads from freight ships arriving from distant harbors, before packhorses and burden bearers bring the loads into the storehouses.

If you arrive in the city by sea, Newhaven is the first place you'll set foot on dry land; in fact, many sailors never leave this island, with its many taverns and brothels, during their entire stay. Before you may see the rest of the city, you must first pay 7 kreutzers to register in the **customs house (20)**. If you plan on an extended stay, you must also present yourself in the pilgrim's house the next day. Armed persons must pay 1 silverthaler to store blades and armor here; the customs guards deposit the weapons in the pilgrim's house once per day. The strict weapon laws are technically observed in Newhaven, though it is difficult for the guards to stay on top of things with all the counting-house guards' special permits and the numerous traveling sailors. Thus, they perform regular inspections of visitors and sailors on the bridges spanning the Crookedwaat to Sudertown. Most foreigners cross over the large **Neebrügg (21)**, which leads directly to the *Traveler's Square*. If you follow the Crookedwaat to the south, you quickly reach the tastefully furnished brothel, **Dream Parlor (22)** (Q3/P3/-), which lies close to the beautiful **temple of Rahja (T06)** built from rose-colored marble. The **Wall of Efferd (G04)** (Q3/P3/-) tavern is popular among sea warriors, Gyldenland travelers, and burghers who dream of great adventures. The former sea soldier, **♠ Denderan**, who traveled to Gyldenland with the famous Harika of Bethana, runs the tavern and knows how to tell thrilling stories (both true and embellished).

The **Red Lotus (24)** (Q2/P2/-) brothel and the **Seven Winds (G05)** (Q2/P3/-) tavern are popular destinations

for seafarers who don't lose all their earnings in the **Traveling Haler (23)** gambling hall.

Kopp, Koppstone, and Koppsound

The islands of Kopp, Koppstone, and Koppsound encapsulate the heart of petit bourgeois uprightness. The simple people of Grangor, who claim to be respectable, live here. Pretty, half-timbered houses and narrow workshops stand tightly packed along the canals, which are as crowded with boats during the day as the streets are with people. Industrious activity characterizes the craftsman quarter, which seems deserted after sunset. Indeed, hardworking Grangorers who do not return to their own four walls and sit behind closed window shutters until sunrise head to one of the numerous taverns for a closing-time drink. The streets are nearly deserted.

Since 1018FB, the **Two-Lilies Bridge (25)** has connected South Grangor and the island of Koppstone, making Koppstone a sought-after address. Before then, people could reach the island only via ferries from Old Grangor or Newhaven. The Grangorers are quite proud of this architectural masterpiece, which allows even large ships to pass using a clever pulley mechanism. But crossing the canal is not cheap—people pay 5 kreutzers per wheel and leg to use the bridge.

If you come to the main island—Kopp—via Koppstone, you'll immediately see the **Two-Lilies guard barracks (26)** on *Geron's Square*. The barracks contain a scriptorium, an armory stand, a training hall, and a shipping pier. The **city prison (27)**, where suspects are imprisoned until their trials, stands diagonally from the barracks. Long prison sentences are rare in Grangor, which explains the small size of the sinister stone building.

You'll also find the **Dragon Temple (T07)** of Rondra on *Geron's Square*, which receives regular visits from the Two-Lilies guards, as well as sea soldiers and navy officers. The Grangorers hail Saint Geron as vanquisher of the Eternal Dragon of Phecadia, so it is no wonder that *Geron's altar* is among the temple's attractions. You can also see the red marble façade of *Famerlor's Tower* from here; during thunderstorms, lightning often flashes around it.

In close vicinity to *Geron's Square*, disguised as a seemingly conservative half-timbered house, stands the **House Thesia (28)** (Q3/P3/-) brothel. Its red drapes and a small, shaded red lamp in one window are the only clues that it is a house of pleasure. The location certainly pays off, as the house is a popular destination among the Two-Lilies guards. If they do not spend their entire salaries there, they often frequent the **Two-Lilies (G06)** inn (Q3/P2/-). Officers among the guards, as well as soldiers, tend to prefer the **Lion's Cellar (G07)** (Q3/P3/-), which, despite its name, is situated on the second floor of a weapons shop.



Life is calmer on Koppstone island, in part because of its remote location, but certainly also because the **House of Bishdaniel's Watch (T08)**—a temple of Boron—is here. As Grangorers are traditionally buried at sea, the Blessed Ones of Boron primarily devote themselves to dream interpretations, soul healings, and ghost exorcisms.

Traviashore

On the sandbank to the west of the city lies the newest quarter of Grangor. On Phex 7th, 1011 FB, the then young Blessed One of Travia ♀ *Jowinna Capresca*, came ashore here after a particularly rough voyage at sea. She interpreted her rescue as sign of her goddess' protection and began to construct the **Temple of Safe Refuge (T09)** from the remaining ship's timber. This second temple of Travia in the city quickly became a center of attraction for numerous beggars, day laborers, and outcasts. Along with her husband, ♂ *Father Udilo*, Jowinna gives passionate speeches denouncing Grangor's exuberant wealth and the accompanying decay of the Grangorer's moral values. Their speeches often include admonitions of Mother Amalande from the South Grangor temple. At present, a placid settlement—made from roughly timbered-together houses—has formed around the temple. Many who cannot afford the rents in Grangor, particularly day laborers and shipyard workers, live here.

Nearly everyone who has a regular source of income works in the shipyards south of the island. The **Shipyarder Brook (29)** is by far the largest and most profitable.

Sickles

On the mainland lies Sickles, a farmers' village whose acres and meadows not only supply food to Grangor, but also hemp and flax to its shipyards and rope workshops. Furthermore, a few of the larger merchant house

manufacturers own weekend cottages in the green. Directly opposite the ferry station is the **Beilunk Riders' messenger station (30)**; they can reach any city in the Horasian Empire from here in just a few days.

You can tell the farmers in Sickles are doing quite well for themselves with just one glance into the **temple of Peraine (T10)**, which is impressive with its modest riches. The temple also has a small infirmary, where Blessed Ones affectionately look after Grangorers who fall ill.

The residents of Sickles like to reminisce about the days when Grangorers came to the mainland in droves during the month of Praios to cheer on the famous *Grangor Eagles* in the **imman stadium (31)**. But the burghers' attitudes toward the game changed over time and the games became less frequent, then stopped altogether. From merchant to artisan, the prevailing opinion is that watching the game is an unnecessary indulgence. So, the wooden stands wither away in the rough, coastal winds, and no one is there to watch the youth of Sickles slog swollen cork balls through crooked goals.

Due to its mainland location, the strict Grangoran weapon laws are a bit more relaxed in Sickles. The **dueling grounds**, just a few yards away from the landing and directly below the aqueduct, are a reminder of this. Pugnacious travelers often come here to settle grievances or blow off steam. Though the dueling grounds are little more than a trampled portion of a field—at best, tolerated by the authorities—their purpose is known throughout the city. Rarely ever do duelists meet here alone; often, a whole crowd of curious onlookers follow, with much cheering and betting. The Two-Lilies guards only intervene when the commotion and uproar get out of hand—then, they send people away and impose hefty fines.

Death Pays All Debts



Hero Motivation

What led your heroes to Grangor is not important, but it is vital to the beginning of the adventure's plot that the heroes have a connection to the merchant *Sumudan de Vries*. When he is suddenly found dead, the heroes should feel an obligation to unravel the circumstances of his death. Below are a few possible suggestions, but you may replace them with other motivations, if you like. The closer the heroes' connection to Sumudan, the better.

Idea #1: The Old Friend

One of the heroes' old friends—a merchant or previous employer—secured a small fortune and wants to increase it. He has read of the Grangoran merchant, Sumudan de Vries, in the *Aventurian Herald*, and how he acquired his fortune with a daring expedition to the south continent, Uthuria. Sumudan's second expedition is expected to return shortly, and everyone who took part in the venture stands to be handsomely rewarded. The heroes' friend wants to invest in Sumudan's business before he sends his fleet out a third time. He asks the heroes to protect him—and the hefty sum of promissory notes he carries—as he travels to Grangor.

Suggested NPC:  *Menzel Brohm* (late 40s; 5'8"; dark, blond hair; Emperor-Alrik moustache; wears expensive clothes made from blue velvet; loves to make money; hates to miss good business opportunities; always needs to hear the latest gossip so he can refrain from participating in risky deals; *Willpower* 7 (13/14/13), *SPI* 2).

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Idea #2: The Share Certificates

A relative of one of the heroes invested in Sumudan's second venture to Uthuria, which is expected to return in a few days' time. Naturally, the relative expects to make a hefty profit. He sends the hero to Grangor with his share certificates, with instructions to cash them out once the fleet returns. He recommends the hero visit the de Vries counting house after arriving in Grangor, to find out exactly when the fleet is expected to return from the south continent. After Sumudan's death, the value of the shares is no longer clear. This should prompt the hero's interest in solving the case—after all, there's a lot of money at stake.

Alternatively, a hero—or perhaps the entire party—received de Vries share certificates as payment for a previous mission. If so, their own fortunes are suddenly at risk.

Idea #3: Looking for Specialists

The fleet traveling back from Uthuria is expected to arrive shortly. The transported goods are rare and valuable, thus Sumudan wants to hire *battle-hardened specialists* to protect the valuable freight from the time it arrives until it is resold. He offers 4 silverthalers per day—easy money for real heroes.

Furthermore, he needs *scholars* and *magicians* to categorize and grade the goods; he'll pay 5 ducats per artifact they analyze.

Idea #4: Temple Offering

Sumudan de Vries has much for which to thank the gods, as he obtained his great wealth practically overnight. A hero's home temple once helped Sumudan in some way, and he wishes to return the favor—promising a large, monetary offering. The Blessed One and his companions—the heroes—are sent to accept the offering and bring it to the temple.

Idea #5: The Eccentric

If you have one or two exotic characters in your group, you can use the following plot hook: a braggart named **▲ Rinaldo Oricetti** (27; good-looking; thick head of brown hair; endearing smile; loves taking risks; has colonial prejudices; hates his big mouth; seeks to move far, far away; *Willpower* 8 (14/13/15), *SPI* 2) urgently needs to hide from his creditors and has his mind set on asking Sumudan de Vries for a position as manager of his counting house in Uthuria. To make a good first impression and show how well he can deal with strange cultures, he hires the next exotic character he meets for 5 silverthalers per day (the last of his funds). He might even ask this character to act particularly outlandish or frightening to help him sell his image.

What Does My Character Know About Sumudan de Vries?

It is possible that educated heroes, adventurers with a mercantile interest, and characters from this region have heard of Sumudan. A successful *Commerce* check grants a bonus of QL/2 to the subsequent *Etiquette (Rumors)* check.

Etiquette (Rumors) check -2

QL 1: Sumudan de Vries gained his fortune practically overnight.

QL 2: He bet all his money—and that of his numerous investors—on a longshot: an expedition to the recently discovered southern continent, Uthuria. Taking that risk paid off well; when the fleet returned, Sumudan was rich.

QL 3+: His success brought Sumudan much fame and bought him a seat on the city council. He sent out a second, larger fleet, which he expects will return any day now. Sumudan believes his profits from this journey will make him one of the most influential merchants in the city.

Arrival in Grangor

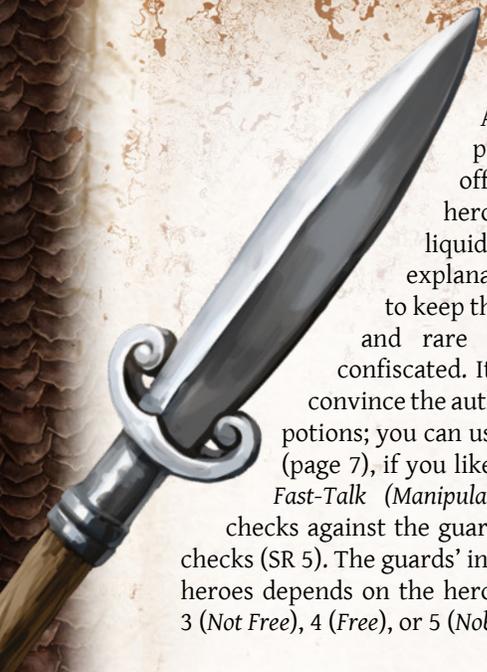
Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The small ferry's bow cuts into the smooth mirror-like surface of the water, like a knife. The cool sea breeze carries with it the smell of salt and fish. Freezing, you wrap your cloaks more tightly around you while your eyes wander over the passing burgher houses—their orange-red bricks shining in the autumn light of Efferd's sun. Between the houses, countless boats and gondolas transport goods and people from one place to the next on the various canals.

Seagulls screech and circle above you as the ferryman moors the boat on a landing in front of a large, walled-off square. A two-story brick building, decorated with arcades, stands before you—acting as a gate to the city.

The heroes reach Grangor the afternoon of the 13th of Efferd (or another day of your choosing). Many other travelers besides the heroes now stand on the large square in front of the **pilgrim's house (04)**—most hail from the west coast, though there are a few from more distant regions. There are a few pilgrims of Efferd, dressed in plain clothes, but most of the travelers seem to be merchants.

The boat drops the heroes and other travelers off at the pilgrim's port, and they must pass through the pilgrim's house before they can enter the city. The guards check their packs and make them pay the appropriate taxes. There is a fee for each item they carry, which is about 10% of the listed purchase price. Each hero must then pay the 1 silverthaler entry fee, which also allows them to enter their names in the pilgrim's book, if they so desire.



As in many other cities, poisons and intoxicants are officially banned in Grangor, so heroes carrying hard-to-identify liquids or herbs must have a good explanation for carrying these items to keep their valuable strength potions and rare healing herbs from being confiscated. It takes considerable effort to convince the authorities to let them keep their potions; you can use the rules for social conflict (page 7), if you like. The heroes primarily make *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulation*, *Sweet-Talk*, or *Debate*) checks against the guards' *Willpower* (*Resist Fast-Talk*) checks (SR 5). The guards' initial attitude level toward the heroes depends on the heroes' (presumed) social status: 3 (*Not Free*), 4 (*Free*), or 5 (*Noble*) (see *Core Rules*, page 338).

Heroes Without Weapons

The local weapon laws may shock the heroes even more than the duty they must pay on the items they carry. In Grangor, only city burghers, nobles with at least a baronet rank, and Blessed Ones can carry a side-arm such as a rapier, sword, or saber. Members of the Two-Lilies Guard are also authorized to wear armor and bear weapons. All others are strictly prohibited from carrying or using armor and weapons—except for a staff or blade weapon no longer than a dagger—throughout the city area. Travelers must leave their weapons behind in the pilgrim's house and pay a fee of 1 silverthaler to store them. If they choose to do so, they receive a document that allows them to retrieve their weapons when they leave the city.

The Weapon Laws: Game Mechanics

In terms of game mechanics, the weapon laws mean only heroes with the advantage *Blessed One* or *Noble II* may keep their weapons and armor in the city of Grangor. Even here, there is room for discussion if a noble character's social status is not apparent or the Grangoran guard does not know or recognize the noble ranks of the culture from which they hail. The same applies to Blessed Ones whose deities are not generally associated with the aspect of warfare—the guards ask detailed and nit-picky questions. But, on principle, Grangorers trust these individuals to use their weapons responsibly. Heroes who have a burgher letter from the city of Grangor, which is possible with a corresponding character background, may also enter the city with their weapons (Prerequisites: Advantage *Rich I*, no disadvantage *Not Free*).

The Weapon Laws: Challenge or Annoyance?

The strict weapon laws provide a unique flair to playing in Grangor, and force heroes to focus on other strengths and find solutions other than the usual, martial ones. If combat does ensue, the typical fencing duels and bloody skirmishes become street fights—usually with bare knuckles, but often with daggers and improvised weapons. These can be exciting situations, and many players enjoy the challenge these special conditions present.

However, they may equally frustrate other players. After all, they've invested a lot of AP in their fighting characters to increase skills they can't really use here. There are several ways you can spotlight these types of characters to ensure their players still enjoy the adventure. For instance, you can place items the heroes can use as improvised weapons in battle scenes. Or, you can present alternative ways to shine as heroes. Perhaps the characters have certain advantages or skills which the Grangorers deeply respect?

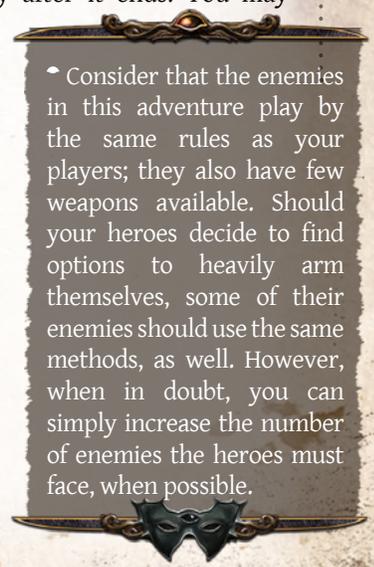
Bypassing the Weapon Laws

Alternatively, you can provide the following options to circumvent the weapon laws. This way, the players can decide for themselves how they want to play out the adventure. • ○

• **Acquiring a Burgher Letter:** In theory, anyone can become a burgher in Grangor. They must simply pay a fee of 10 ducats at the **burgher house (09)** to enter their name in the town book. In doing so, they receive a burgher letter, which not only authorizes them to bear arms, but also allows them to follow a trade and own property. However, they are then obligated to pay taxes based on their wealth—5 ducats at minimum—and cannot take a noble title.

After the application process, others have one week to voice their objections. We do not define whether the applicant obtains full burgher privileges during this probation period, or only after it ends. You may determine this for your gaming group, depending on how easily you want to make weapons available to them. The probation period forces the heroes to use their weapons responsibly, instead of acting like camels in an Unau porcelain store, as the faintest complaint from another burgher could lead to revocation of their burgher rights and confiscation of their weapons.

• Consider that the enemies in this adventure play by the same rules as your players; they also have few weapons available. Should your heroes decide to find options to heavily arm themselves, some of their enemies should use the same methods, as well. However, when in doubt, you can simply increase the number of enemies the heroes must face, when possible.



Illegal Weapon Purchase: Where there are bans, there are those who circumvent the bans—the illegal weapons trade flourishes in Grangor. These shady fellows wait at the pilgrim’s house exit for newcomers who look as though they lost something important. Intercepting the poor fools, the crooks lead them to a small boat, not far away, meandering along one of the small canals. Hidden beneath a tarp, usually guarded by at least one more person, lie all sorts of weapons from the pilgrim’s house property room, which found their way into smugglers’ hands in roundabout ways. The crooks sell the weapons (and a bit of armor) for 2-3 times the listed purchase price. Quite expensive, compared to the cost of acquiring a burgher’s letter, but for heroes of dubious origin, it may be their only option to arm themselves. You control via the price whether you want to give the players the illusion of an option to purchase weapons, or actively want to help one or more of your players acquire them.

 If you want to make things slightly more difficult for your players, no smugglers approach them, directly. They must first make a *Streetwise (Asking Around)* check -2 to find someone willing to sell them weapons.

Owning Illegal Weapons

If the heroes illegally purchase weapons, they would do well to consider how they plan to transport them, since any type of armor and weapons longer than a dagger are rather conspicuous in an environment where nearly everyone else is unarmed and the Two-Lilies guards are notorious for their regular searches. If the guards catch the heroes with an illegal weapon during such an inspection—and the heroes cannot provide dispensation—they’ll incur hefty fines or shame sanctions, which could even lead to submersion in the Hangmanwaat.

Thu, heroes with illegal weapons should attempt to conceal them for as long as possible—for instance, by transporting them underneath a tarp in a boat and using them only in a pinch, or by dressing in such a manner that the guards assume they are authorized to carry such weapons. The latter requires a *Disguise (Imitate Person)* check, with a penalty of -1 for each social status level the hero must overcome (see the *Core Rules*, page 338). The hero must feign a level 4 social status (level 3 if imitating a Blessed One). The *Disguise* check receives a bonus of QL/2 if the hero first makes an *Etiquette (Manners or Fashion)* check when imitating a noble, or a *Religions (corresponding deity)* check when imitating a Blessed One. However, if a hero is caught impersonating someone of higher social status, the guards not only punish them for owning illegal weapons, but also for unauthorized assumption of standing—which carries quite a severe sentence.

In the City of Canals

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You leave the pilgrim’s house and look out over the Grootewaart, Grangor’s most famous canal. Dozens of small boats navigate through the chasm, which is lined with magnificent counting houses and shops and spanned by broad bridges at regular intervals.

You cross into the bustling activity of this noble city quarter, where affluence and commerce go hand in hand. Many well-dressed burghers amble along promenades and squares, while others crowd into small alleyways with visitors from all corners of the world. Here, they scour the freshly delivered inventories of merchant shops and large market halls. Gondolas glide through even the narrowest of canals, and you can tell from the beads of perspiration on the foreheads of quite a few boatmen that it requires considerable concentration to navigate past the other ships.



The counting houses and market halls of the large patrician houses characterize Old Grangor like no other city quarter. Especially in upscale areas, like the Grootewaart, the shops line up like pearls on a string. Anyone owning even a small shop here belongs to the city’s major players.

You can find goods from all corners of the world in Grangor’s markets—in fact, if you can’t find it here, it probably doesn’t exist. Due to the practical monopoly Grangor has on northland trade, most of the goods offered—such as pelts, furs, fish products (including whales), and amber—are from the northern Sea of Seven Winds. You can even find Bornland goods, such as the famous Meskinnes, here.

The Counting House de Vries

The heroes likely want to visit the **Counting House de Vries (A01)** for one reason or another shortly after they arrive in the city.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The merchant prince’s counting house is a broad, stately building; its stepped gables, orange-red bricks, and white window frames amid a Hesindigo-blue façade lies north of the Grootewaart. Sumudan de Vries’ Colonial Goods is written in cast-iron letters above a double-winged door, through which a constant stream of affluent burghers and far-traveling merchants pass. An exotic, spicy smell rests over the storeroom’s broad shelves, where small spice bags lie next to jars of pickled fruits and metal

Transportation

In a city built on islands and spanned by countless canals, a boat is naturally the most popular means of transportation.

- Multiple ferry stations exist throughout the city; the heroes can cross from one station to another for 6 kreutzers.
- For a few halers (depending on the destination), they can also hire a boatman to glide through the waats.
- Boat rental services also offer slender gondolas, with dragon-shaped bows, for between 5-20 silverthalers (the price requires a *Haggling* check). However, the party should have at least one hero with AP in *Sailing* to navigate the boat. While simple punting doesn't require a *Sailing* check, navigating a boat on the highly crowded waterways requires the full ability and concentration of even an experienced boater.

coffers containing precious cacao powder. Next to these, you spot small signs labeling exotic looking items as genuine Uthurian. The counting house personnel wear black velvet skirts or pants, and the left side of their shirts is adorned with an embroidered ship with billowing sails in front of a sun sinking into the sea. They diligently hurry through the room, answering all the marveling visitors' questions. Hovering over everything is a strange smell, which seems to emanate from a freshly prepared hot drink in the back of the storeroom.



The hot drink is a black, bitter tasting brew made from water added to ground, brown beans. This exotic drink is called *coffee*, and is said to be popular among Uthurian warriors who attribute an invigorating effect to it. The demand for coffee has recently increased in Grangor, as the exotic, Uthurian product is currently fashionable. Too bitter for the Grangorers' taste, they sweeten the coffee with milk, sugar, or even cinnamon—that is, if they can afford such extravagances.

Some of the products offered here are not actually from the south continent, though the signs claim otherwise. Many simply come from the Tulamydes or wild Moha tribes, and are sold here for many times the usual price. The heroes can identify the counterfeits with a successful *Commerce* check -2.

Tadeo Agtstone, who manages the counting house, receives the heroes. With honest regret, he tells the heroes Sumudan is attending an important meeting at the Northland Bank; therefore, he cannot personally see them. Since Sumudan is a very busy man, Tadeo suggests

the heroes make an appointment so can he guarantee the merchant has the time to hear their request. As it turns out, Sumudan's schedule is free the next morning during the first hour of *Peraine* (9am).

The purpose of the appointment is to direct the players to revisit the counting house after Sumudan's death. The appointment also can serve to introduce the heroes to each other, if they haven't met previously. Either way, the heroes may spend the evening exploring the city or visiting one of the numerous establishments described in the city guide.

‡ Tadeo Agtstone

Brief Description: Mid-50s; 5'11"; manager of Sumudan's counting house; brilliant at procurement, competent merchant; delicate man with a round head and gray, curly hair; black, velvet clothes with bronze trim and the merchant house's emblem—a ship with billowing sails in front of a sun sinking into the sea—embroidered on the left side of his shirt; lace collar; stiff hat; a stylish pince-nez rests on his large nose.

Function: Trusted contact in the Counting House de Vries; motivates the heroes and provides information.

Background: Sumudan's right-hand man, Tadeo manages the counting house during the merchant's frequent absences. He is involved in all Sumudan's matters—or so he believes—and can provide advice to the heroes. He does not know about the threat of Sumudan's bankruptcy, as the merchant did not share that information with anyone.

Alibi: He spent the evening of Sumudan's death at home with his family, where he read the *Grangoran Commercial Gazette* in front of the fireplace—as he does every evening. He remembers all the headlines, and can also provide details on the content, if the heroes ask.

Attitude: Begins at level 6; his attitude toward the heroes can increase to level 8 during the adventure.

Portrayal Tips: Gesture with your thumb and index finger in front of your eye to adjust your imaginary pince-nez, blink intently, and wrinkle your nose—that thing is constantly pinching you and never stays in place. Act friendly and courteous toward the heroes, but be assertive when it comes to representing the merchant house's position, or your own.

Important Stats: *Commerce* 14 (16/15/15), *Empathy* 12 (13/15/15), SPI 3

Wayside Events

The heroes can make the following observations while traveling through the city. These scenes are optional; the



intent is to convey the city's central themes. Most scenes loosely connect to the adventure's plot.

- **The Newspaper Girl:** A girl wearing tattered clothes and an old, flat cap loudly advertises the newest edition of the *Grangoran Commercial Gazette*—a mercantile paper that reports on major merchants' business ventures and share certificate profits and losses.

The latest edition mentions an opulent donation to the temple of Rondra, made by Sumudan de Vries, the one most blessed by Phex in the city. The merchant is quoted in the article as saying, "*The goddess always protects my ships against pirates and sea monsters; a modest offering is the least I can do!*" The article also mentions Sumudan's much-noted second venture to Uthuria that was expected to return shortly, with great speculation as to the riches the ships will hold this time. It is no coincidence Sumudan announced the donation just about the time he expected the fleet to return—his share prices rise, accordingly.

- **The Flying Bornlander:** Every street corner and archway in Old Grangor is plastered with large posters of a fat man with a thin moustache. Writing underneath his picture advertises the opera *The Flying*

One Night's Accommodation

Here are a few possible accommodations for the heroes to choose from during their stay in Grangor:

- The **Blue Phecadi (A02)** hotel: On the Longwaat in Old Grangor; a popular hotel for merchants; famed for treating guests like royalty (Q5/P5/B35)
- The **Dolphin School (A03)** lodging house: Located in South Grangor; solid pilgrim's refuge; next to the temple of Efferd; impersonal (Q3/P3/B30)
- The **Dragon Alley (A04)** inn: On Kopp island; crooked, half-timbered house for travelers who don't have much money; motherly innkeeper (Q2/P2/B12)

Bornlander—featuring the celebrated tenor, *Karun Varani*—currently being performed in the *King Khadan Hall*. The poster promises *all kinds of phantasmagorical sorcery* from the great *Gylduria de Vries*, who accompanies the performance.

• A Blessed One in your group might be in Grangor to accept this donation for the Church. If so, simply replace the temple of Rondra in this scene with an appropriate local temple.

A Gruesome Discovery

When the heroes head toward the Counting House de Vries the next morning, they see bystanders in front of the counting house shaking their heads and holding their hands over their mouths in shock—something is not right. The storeroom is deserted, and the counting house employees are gathered in the small, interior courtyard behind it. The door to the courtyard is open,

allowing anyone in the street to see the cluster of people forming there. Shocked whispers break through the eerie silence.

Besides the counting house manager, Tadeo Agtstone, there are five other people in the courtyard, including two guards, which the heroes can easily identify by their



attire, weapons, and helmets. They all stand in a semi-circle, staring at something on the ground.

If the heroes approach or make a *Perception (Spot)* check, they notice a man in his mid-50s, with shoulder-length, graying hair and a pointed beard, wearing a wealthy man's attire, laying on the ground. His eyes are wide-open; his previously white, millstone collar is soaked with blood. In hushed whispers, the bystanders voice what the heroes have likely guessed by now: the dead man is none other than the noted merchant, Sumudan de Vries.

It is plain to see the counting house employees' shock, but the two guards seem rather unimpressed. Both stand nearby, sipping from wooden mugs full of coffee.

♠ **Adaon Makkelijk & Gilmon de Traach**

Brief Description: Incompetent, know-it-all guards in

Two-Lilies guard uniforms (black and white mercenary clothes, heavy boots, breast plates, morion helmets, and two-lilies); *Adaon*: 38; 5'5"; shoulder-length hair; overweight; chubby-faced; loves pastries; hates when he must leave his desk for a case; needs someone to lecture. *Gilmon*: 36; 6'3"; lanky; sunken cheeks; loves to be respected; hates the effort required to be respected; needs someone to explain his job to him.

Function: Goofy, lazy, and incompetent guards, unable to spot a trail; which should challenge the heroes to start their own investigation.

Background: Adaon and Gilmon joined the guard not to fight crime, but to rest easy on their adequate pay. They bask in the respect the population has for them, take themselves very seriously, and like to assume an air of superiority. They gladly take advantage of any perks offered to them. *Readiness for duty* is not a notion they grasp;

Background

After his meeting at the Northland Bank, Sumudan de Vries met with officer Darian Pekhebbler, who told Sumudan about the fate of the fleet in a private conversation. Sumudan returned to the counting house—distressed and far too late—where only the diligent Tadeo Agtstone, just finishing his work for the day, remained. Reserved and distant, Sumudan retreated to his writing room, where he tried to drown his desperation in a bottle of wine. It became clear to Sumudan, no matter how he looked at it, that he was ruined. Further, this disgrace would follow his name forever. Taking paper and quill, he wrote a long farewell note, then jumped to his death in the interior courtyard.

Shortly afterward ♠ *Odina Hortemann* and ♠ *Arn Knochenbreeker* arrived at the counting house (see the description on page 62 and the plot summary on page 5), and found Sumudan's lifeless body. To conceal the suicide, Odina took the farewell note and placed fake clues around the writing room to make it appear that Sumudan had not been alone. Arn broke into Sumudan's writing desk and stole a strongbox and a valuable log, further pointing to foul play. Then, they locked the counting house from the outside. That night, Arn placed the log and key in Thuan de Vries' apartment. It is well-known throughout the city that Thuan's father despises him for being a scalawag and inept at managing money. Odina believes concealing the actual events will give her the time she needs to sell her shares in the Uthuria venture before people discover the truth and the shares lose their value—which would mean her ruin.

Stoking the Flames

The heroes arrive shortly after two guards, Adaon and Gilmon, have taken a superficial look at the scene, and

they instantly become witnesses to a heated spectacle. While Adaon and Gilmon believe Sumudan committed suicide, his employees simply cannot imagine such a thing. Sumudan was a successful man who had just risen to the ranks of the city council; furthermore, once the fleet returned from Uthuria, he stood to gain unimaginable riches. He already had plans to set out to Uthuria with an even larger fleet during the next month of Phex.

Whatever their reason, the heroes should feel the need to sort out the guards' suicide theory. It is quite possibly in their own interest to do so; if you used the plot hook from *The Share Certificates*, they stand to lose a sizeable amount of money (many won't accept their certificates while the circumstances of Sumudan's death are unclear). If you used *The Old Friend* or *The Eccentric*, their companion rejects the guards' theory as absurd—after all, both had lofty expectations for their meeting with Sumudan and react quite emotionally. Should the heroes be here because of the plot hooks *Looking for Specialists* or *Temple Offering*, then defiance might be their motivation—someone just deprived them of a lucrative mission or an offering to their temple!

Should none of these motivators be sufficient to get the heroes involved, then Tadeo or the counting house employees could doubt the guards' theory due to irregularities (which the heroes can discover in the section, *Search for Clues: The Body and Surrounding Area* on page 24). If the heroes applied as specialists, Tadeo could hire them as detectives. For solving the circumstances of Sumudan's death, he offers each hero de Vries share certificates worth 10 ducats, with the suggestion that they could easily be worth five times as much once the fleet returns from Uthuria.

rather, they take the path of least resistance. Neither the heroes nor the counting house employees can deter them from their conclusion that Sumudan committed suicide.

Animosities: Superiors, know-it-alls, and people who try to tell them how to do their jobs.

Alibis: The guards were at the *Two-Lilies* inn until the bar closed at the first hour of Efferd (around 2am), at which point they staggered home to their families. Depending on how the heroes act, the guards' slight hangovers might have a negative effect on their attitudes toward the heroes.

Attitudes: Both guards' attitudes begin at level 5, but can quickly sink to level 3 if the heroes suggest they are not doing their jobs correctly.

Portrayal Tips: Pretend to be holding a mug of coffee in one hand, from which you occasionally sip as though you are someone of importance. Adaon and Gilmon often speak over each other, talk in unison, or complete each other's sentences while nodding at each other in affirmation. Smile smugly at critical remarks and become gruff if the heroes do not agree with you. As guards, nobody has a right to tell you how to do your jobs.

Important Stats: *Willpower* 6 (13/12/11), SPI 1

Adaon: "But the case is..." *Gilmon:* "...entirely clear." *They glance at each other, look down at the body, look up to the open window, and then look back at each other with affirming nods. Both, in unison:* "Suicide."

What Happened Here?

The heroes have a few different options to try to figure out exactly what happened: speak to the guards, question the counting house employees, or search the body and surrounding area for clues.

The Guards

If the inquisitive heroes are not recognizable as people who command respect (nobles or Blessed Ones), the guards react sullenly and are standoffish to their intervention. They may even counter with questions such as, "What's it to you?" or "Who wants to know?" Getting them to cooperate and share information requires a competitive *Fast-Talk* (*Begging*, *Manipulation*, or *Sweet-Talk*) check against the guards' *Willpower* (*Resist Fast-Talk*) (one check for both guards). If the check is successful, the guards share their conclusion with the heroes: the merchant obviously killed himself. The window to his writing room on the third floor is open, and here he lies.

The guards cannot explain Sumudan's motivation, but state, "the situation is blatantly evident" over and over. They act belligerent and irritable if the heroes make any effort to start an investigation of their own. However, they cannot prohibit the heroes from doing so.

The Counting House Employees

Sumudan's employees are shocked about his death and

angry at the guards' stubborn insistence that it was suicide. Sumudan was an exceptionally gifted merchant; he would never kill himself (use the rumors on page 29 if you need arguments on which to base these claims).

To keep the employees from becoming hysterical and angrily stating wild theories as to why there is no conceivable way the merchant would kill himself, the heroes must make a *Treat Soul* check (they can reattempt a failed check every 30 minutes). If they succeed, the counting house employees can relay the following information:

‡ *Tadeo Agtstone* (See description on page 20)

Observation: He saw Sumudan at closing time, sometime during the second hour of Firun (6-7pm). The merchant spoke only a few distracted words of greeting, then withdrew to his writing room. Tadeo did not give it much thought; the merchant was busy and often seemed to be deep in thought.

Alibi: Tadeo spent the night at home with his family, where he sat in front of the fireplace reading the *Grangoran Commercial Gazette*, as he did every evening. He can recall all the headlines and give details about the content.

Suspicion: Success breeds envy, and Tadeo doesn't wish to wrongfully accuse anyone (A successful *Fast-Talk* check persuades him to reveal that the merchant, *Svealinja Watergaard*, used to be a city council member. But when several other merchants chose to invest in Sumudan instead, she could no longer afford the taxes to keep her seat).

‡ *Linaria Koperstek* (28; auburn hair tied in a bun; notably bright clothes and long fingernails painted coral-red; curious and chatty; copyist; *Willpower* 5 (13/13/12), SPI 2); *Attitude:* 6

Observation: She was the first to arrive at the counting house, shortly after the first hour of Tsa (around 7am). The door was still locked, which was puzzling, since she could see faint candlelight coming from the window in the upper floor. As soon as Nevinia unlocked the door, she hurried inside, where she discovered Sumudan's body in the interior courtyard. She is still in shock, but if the heroes are successful at calming her down (with a successful *Treat Soul* check) she can reveal much about her employer's family relationships.

Alibi: She left work shortly after the second hour of Firun (about 6pm) and spent the evening at home, alone (A successful *Empathy* check reveals this is a lie. The gondolier, *Pitri*, visited her, as he often does. Neighbors saw—and heard—them. She lies because she is ashamed of their relationship).

Suspicion: "The master's family matters are quite dreadful, indeed. His wife died two years ago, and his children cause him nothing but grief. His oldest, *Thuan*, is a drunkard and good-for-nothing with phony friends. His daughter, *Gylduria*, was



promised to some rich lad from the south. But, shortly before the wedding—the poor lad was already here—she married some actor in a moonlight fit. The poor master; Travia really didn't have good intentions for him.”

▲ **Nevinia Vardeen** (late 30s; broad shoulders; muscular upper arms; a few gray streaks in otherwise black hair; rough voice; speaks in short sentences; runs the storehouse; *Willpower* 4 (12/13/13), *SPI* 2); *Attitude*: 5

Observation: Nevinia arrived unusually early at the counting house this morning to receive two crates of cacao at the storehouse. She saw the copyist, Linaria, standing in front of the closed doors. Liniaria was worried, because Sumudan usually arrives first and opens the counting house doors. Nevinia unlocked the doors and—not a minute later—heard Linaria scream.

Alibi: She was at a rather crude party in *The Colorful House* (G03) until the bar closed.

Suspicion: There were problems with the harbor storehouse for some time. Entire crates and sacks kept vanishing overnight. She and Sumudan examined the shift schedules to catch the culprit, and concluded the thief could only be the drunkard and scoundrel, *Torvon Snakkeling*. Sumudan hired someone to beat up Torvon, and then fired him. The affair did not end there, and Torvon swore his revenge (the stolen goods included two crates of coffee, 10 sacks of peanuts, 20 ounces of amber from the first Uthuria journey, and three sacks of cacao beans.)

Search for Clues: The Body and Surrounding Area

The Courtyard: Sumudan's body lies in a small, square interior courtyard. Directly above the body, a window on the third floor of the counting house stands open, a silk curtain blowing in the wind.

☞ **Perception (Search)** check +2: A large pool of blood has formed around the body in a rather regular circle.

This would not be the case if Sumudan was moved after sustaining the head injury. No further traces of blood are found on the interior courtyard's stone floor.

☞ **Treat Wounds** check:

QL 1: Sumudan's head injury could have been caused by a fall from a great height.

QL 2: The blood around Sumudan's head is thick, sticky, and cold, which means the body has been here for quite some time.

QL 3: Sumudan sustained fractures all over, in all the places where his body now touches the ground. A fall from great heights would cause such injuries.

QL 4+: Physical evidence suggests Sumudan's body has been lying in this position for 9-12 hours.

☞ **Searching the body:** The merchant does not have much on him besides his clothes. In one pocket, the heroes find his pince-nez—glass shattered—and in another, a pocket watch that miraculously survived the fall. He has no counting house key on him.

The Writing Room: Tadeo obligingly leads the heroes upstairs. The writing room is narrow and unimpressive; it is hard to imagine one of Grangor's most affluent men worked here. Shelves containing books and scrolls line most of the walls. Next to one shelf stands a display case with crystal glasses, bottles, and different sized decanters—their contents likely intended to help seal important business deals. A large painting on the wall depicts a proud fleet of ships sailing on a calm, sun-filled sea. A map showing unfamiliar coastal regions (probably the northern coast of Uthuria) hangs next to it. A large, varnished writing desk sits in front of the only window in the room. A gentle breeze blows through the open window, causing the curtain to flutter.

You can allow the heroes to actively search the room and ask questions, or resolve their discovery of the following with a *Perception* (*Search* or *Spot*) check:

- **Writing Desk, I:** The writing desk is neatly organized, as though prepared for a painting, which makes the solitary red wine bottle standing on it seem quite strange. The bottle is empty, as is the goblet next to it. Someone obviously drank the wine, as residue remains inside the bottle and glass. On the opposite side of the desk stands a crystal glass that matches those in the display case. The glass still holds about a thumb of a reddish-brown alcohol that smells of roses. The heroes can attempt to match it to the alcohol in the case, or make a successful *Alchemy* (*Mundane Alchemy*) or *Carousing* check to conclude the liquid is *Wild Novadi*, a type of Chababian brandy.
- **Writing Desk, II:** What looks like a palm-sized ink splotch spread over the desk's surface. It looks as though someone sloppily wiped it away with a cloth or something similar. If the heroes look closer, they'll find kernels of pounce sand, used for blotting, on the desk's corner and on the floor.
- **Writing Desk, III:** The desk drawer looks like someone forced it open. Tadeo can tell the heroes what is missing: a timber strongbox with ivory inlays, which held the day's earnings (about 110 ducats), as well as a log book. In the log, a Captain *Bredo Siegenström* jotted down nautical distances, sightings, and landmarks to help find Uthuria—making it an invaluable book, if the reader understands what it is they're reading.
- **The Window:** Upon closer investigation, the heroes see the curtains are torn down on one side, as though someone suddenly and roughly pulled on them.
- **The Vault:** The heroes need at least QL 3 to find the vault. Behind a fake row of books, they find a small, locked vault bolted to the book shelf. A successful *Pick Locks* (*Combination Locks*) check at -2 reveals property documents, debt securities, and shares inside. The heroes may have to study the documents closely to comprehend them.
- **Missing Evidence:** A key to the counting house. Sumudan didn't have one on him, and the heroes can't find one here. They should be curious as to how the counting house came to be locked.

Incompetent Guards

By now, the guards are drinking their second mugs of coffee while they wait for their colleagues to come collect the body. If the heroes challenge the guards' decision and present their findings, the guards react indignantly at first and attempt to refute the allegations. "What utter nonsense; you're grasping at straws!" But they become increasingly subdued when the heroes present clue after clue. Eventually, Adaon attempts to shirk responsibility:

"By all means—if you think you know better... Nothing is keeping you from investigating this yourself. But you're just wasting your time."

If you prefer, you can use competitive *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulation*) checks against the guards' *Willpower* (*Resist Fast-Talk*) to resolve the argument between the guards and heroes. A successful check might also cause the counting house employees to take the heroes' side. The heroes can't entirely convince the guards, who are content to just sulk. After all, the heroes should be the ones to solve this mystery. Adaon's challenge to investigate the matter themselves could be Tadeo's cue to hire the heroes, if

These clues exist because of the following facts:

- **Writing Desk, I:** Originally, only the wine bottle and goblet were on the desk. Odina placed a second glass on the desk and poured a little Chababian brandy into it. With a successful *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulate* or *Sweet-Talk*) check, Tadeo or Linaria reveal this is Thuan de Vries' drink of choice.
- **Writing Desk, II:** The ink spot occurred when Sumudan wrote his farewell letter. The spill and the pounce sand are meant to point the heroes toward the fact that someone was writing here not long ago, but there is no document present. While Odina was tampering with the crime scene, she accidentally dipped her white shirt sleeve in the ink spot, making it look as though someone haphazardly tried to wipe it up. Later, the heroes might notice her shirt has an ink spot on the sleeve. However, Odina's shirt can only be used as a final clue in a line of other evidence. Don't worry if the heroes forget this detail, as they can solve the case without it.
- **Writing Desk, III:** Arn took the strongbox and the log, and placed them in Thuan de Vries' apartment. Odina used the money from the strongbox to pay off Thuan's gambling debts. Both are meant to reinforce the suspicion against him.
- **Window:** Arn pulled on the curtain to tear it, making it look like Sumudan tried to hold onto it before falling out the window.
- **Vault:** Odina and Arn did not look for the vault. No one stole anything from it or even tried to search for it, which may be a cause for suspicion.
- **Missing Evidence:** Odina and Arn locked the counting house from the outside when they left; Arn placed the key with the log book at Thuan's house.



he hasn't done so already. Make sure the heroes take responsibility for investigating Sumudan's death before the following scene occurs.

The Woman in Black

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The curious onlookers fall silent for a moment, then take a step back as they make way for a petite, middle-aged woman in expensive clothes and her broad-shouldered, hulking companion. The woman walks through the storeroom and the crowd of people, pausing in shock when she reaches the interior courtyard.



The newcomers are *Odina Hortemann* and her bodyguard, *Arn Knochenbrecker*. Odina says she had an appointment with Sumudan at the first hour of Ingerimm (10am) and seems both sad and shocked when she sees his body.

1 Odina Hortemann

Brief Description: 43; 5'3"; petite; long, black hair tied up into an austere bun; high-necked, black clothes that accentuate her figure; red-tinted cheeks; masterful merchant; brilliant judge of character.

Motivation: Odina invested a lot of money in Sumudan de Vries' second Uthuria venture (enough to threaten her very existence if her share certificates lose their value).

Agenda: If the true circumstances surrounding Sumudan's death came to light, the de Vries shares would be worthless. Odina wants to delay this for as long as possible and secretly sell her shares in the meantime. To give herself time to do so, she attempted to make Sumudan's suicide look like a murder. However, Odina did not expect the guards to forgo an investigation and conclude it was suicide out of sheer laziness. Therefore, she welcomes curious heroes who ask the right questions. With great care, she tries to use the heroes for her own purposes.

Function: The villain of the story; she attempts to use the heroes to carry out her plans but underestimates their cleverness and tenacity. The heroes' actions may lead to her conviction later.

Background: As patron of the *King Khadan Hall* (08), Odina was attending a performance of the *Flying Bornlander* the previous evening when Arn told her the fleet was lost at sea. She left the performance to try to prevent Sumudan from revealing this information to the public, but found the merchant

had already committed suicide. Following a sudden inspiration, she pocketed Sumudan's farewell letter and tampered with the crime scene. She believes that if the public thinks Sumudan was killed, no one will pay attention to the missing Uthuria fleet. During this time, she hopes to sell her shares to avoid bankruptcy. She and Arn Knochenbrecker are secret lovers. The brawny, former imman player fascinates her—and she appreciates his loyalty. However, she would not hesitate to sacrifice their relationship to save herself.

Alibi: On the evening in question, she was at the *King Khadan Hall* watching a performance of the *Flying Bornlander*, a 3+ hour opera. She can show her entry ticket as proof (she left the opera during the intermission and is unaware a tragic accident occurred during the second act).

Attitude: 5

Portrayal Tips: Appear worried about Sumudan's death and act friendly toward and helpful to the heroes. Sumudan was a good friend (true), and you want his possible murder investigated. If the guards refuse to do so, you are more than happy to let the heroes take the job. Avoid doing or saying anything that makes you look suspicious.

Special: Odina pocketed Sumudan's farewell letter and stashed it in the vault in her writing room. If her plan fails, she intends to use the letter as proof that she didn't kill Sumudan.

Fate: Odina does not appear in future publications, so her fate is open. She could meet her death at the end of this adventure, or be arrested and publicly punished. You may have her reappear as a villain in a later adventure. It is also possible that she and Arn flee the city together.

Important Stats: *Commerce* 14 (15/13/14), *Empathy* 12 (15/13/14), *Fast-Talk* 12 (14/13/14), *Willpower* 10 (14/13/14), SPI 2

Fate Points: 2

Rumors About Odina:

"She and Sumudan have done business for a long time. The first fleet was only able to set sail thanks to her money. But they both profit from it... The Hortemanns deal in luxury goods, after all." (+)

"It is said her investment in the second venture was even larger." (+)

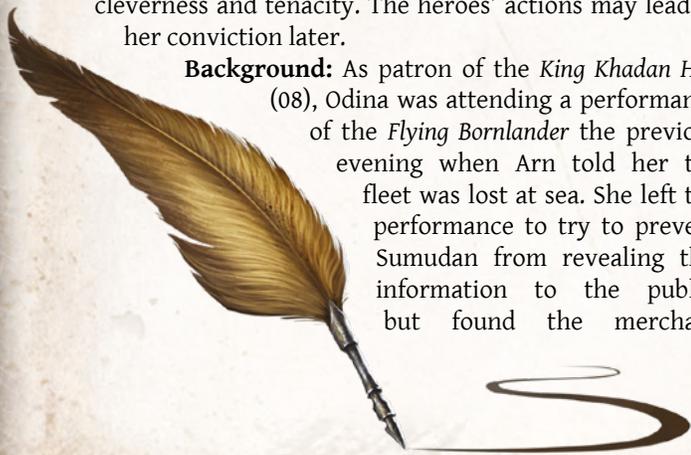
"No man could put up with her for long. She's a proud woman. Of course, that could be because of her bodyguard. (-) I hear he never leaves her side, if you know what I mean." (+)

1 Arn Knochenbrecker

Brief Description: 31; 6'6"; strong as a horse; wears a large earring in his left ear; competent imman player and equally gifted thug; average intelligence; Odina's bodyguard.

Motivation: Arn is Odina's bodyguard and secret lover. He's as loyal as a dog to her.

Agenda: He wants to protect Odina from any harm; he



is willing to risk his own life and even to kill for her. He privately hopes to become more than just her secret lover.
Function: Odina's brawny bodyguard and partner in crime; later, an obstacle the heroes must overcome.

Background: This former street urchin found a career with Grangor's imman team, the *Eagles*, and quickly achieved the position of team captain. When he could no longer live off his earnings from the increasingly sporadic games, Arn followed his colleagues' examples and became a part-time bodyguard for hire. He first met the patrician, Odina Hortemann, in the *Murder Him* tavern, and she took a liking to him. His part-time bodyguard services became regular work and the two eventually became secret lovers. Arn hopes Odina can help raise his social station and that she'll publicly announce their relationship one day. He often hangs around with his old friends at the *Murder Him*. There, he encountered Darian Pekhebbber, whom he later killed and unceremoniously dumped into a canal when he realized Darian's knowledge could threaten Odina's—and, thus, his—economic existence.

Alibi: He and Odina were at the opera the whole time, which she confirms (This is a lie. Arn was at the *Murder Him* while Odina was at the opera. He arrived and joined Odina during the intermission, after the first act.)

Attitude: 3

Portrayal Tips: Wear a stubborn facial expression, look grim, growl, and be taciturn.

Fate: Arn does not appear in future publications. The heroes might kill him, or he may be executed in the Hangmanwaat. But, he could also possibly escape.

Important Stats: *Fast-Talk* 7 (13/13/13), *Feat of Strength*

13 (14/16/16), *Intimidation* 14 (13/13/13), *Willpower* 7 (13/13/13), SPI 1; for further stats, see page 62.

Fate Points: 1

Rumors About Arn

"Arn used to be a wild bull; now he is just a tame ox. That odious patrician controls his leash." (+)

"Really? You've never heard of Arn Knockenbreeker? The best captain the Eagles ever had! It is a real shame you don't see him playing anymore." (matter of opinion)

What Does Odina Want?

Odina arrives to ensure everything goes according to plan. That the guards suspect suicide perturbs her; she does not want anyone to start an investigation into his personal life. Nevertheless, she encourages the heroes to follow up on their suspicions.

To avoid implicating Odina prematurely, introduce her *after* the heroes accept the case. Even then, limit their interactions with her so clever characters don't suspect anything.

You should also avoid using *Fast-Talk* checks for Odina, since these risk drawing suspicion. She exhibits real sorrow over Sumudan's death, as they were long-time friends; however, she feigns her dismay because she has already had time to absorb the shocking news.



The Initial Investigation

Early in their investigation, the heroes find indications that someone may have murdered Sumudan. To confirm their suspicions, they must first investigate Sumudan's life. This might include questioning the counting house employees and, possibly, Odina. The heroes might also talk to neighbors to see whether anyone noticed anything strange the night he died. You can use the employees' answers as guidelines for other potential witnesses' answers to the heroes' questions. Otherwise, stick to the rumor section on the following page.

Eventually the heroes' suspect list should include the following four people: Sumudan's daughter, *Gylduria* (page 30); his son, *Thuan* (page 37); his rival, *Svealinja Watergaard* (page 30); and the former storehouse worker, *Torvon Snakkeling* (page 35).

Three of the suspects turn out to be innocent—though the heroes could level a good case against any of them—and, in the end, the evidence seems to point to Thuan. If you want to shorten the adventure, steer the heroes' suspicion

toward Thuan from the start and go directly to *Seek and You Shall Find*, on page 36. To lengthen the adventure, cast the spotlight on another suspect first, so the heroes follow that trail, instead.

Shortly before leaving the counting house, Odina asks the heroes to keep her informed of all findings, as she is Sumudan's main shareholder. She tells them she plans to meet individually with the other shareholders over the next few days in a side hall in the temple of Phex, and asks that they report to her there if they learn anything new (see *The Shareholders*, on page 46).

The Neighborhood Optional Content

If your heroes decide to talk to the neighbors, they eventually encounter *Captain Tonia ter Grachten* (63; gray hair; weather-beaten face; small, ice-blue eyes; smokes a pipe; loves to tell exaggerated stories about her journeys;

• In fact, the figures Tonia saw were Odina and Arn. But since Tonia knows Gylduria and Karun, and they have similar statures, she assumes she saw Sumudan's daughter and son-in-law. Tonia becomes evasive and vaguely describes the figures' build (a petite woman and a large, burly man) if the heroes ask whether she is certain about whom she saw. The heroes can also reveal her uncertainty with an *Empathy* check. But, since the heroes should not find out she is unsure at this point, you should only allow them to make an *Empathy* check if they specifically ask to do so. You should also keep your NPC's checks secret.

hates know-it-alls; needs new tobacco; *Willpower* 4 (11/15/13), SPI 1), who lives in the house on the other side of the waat.

Tonia tells the heroes she returned from a meeting of the Helmsmen's Guild yesterday around the second hour of Ingerimm (10pm). When she tied her boat to the landing, she saw *Gylduria de Vries* and her husband, *Karun Varani*. They approached from the north, crossed the bridge, and headed toward the counting house at a fast pace. She didn't find it strange at the time. •○

The heroes can also make an *Asking Around* check +2 (15-minute interval) to discover this information.

easily distracted; loves the arts; hates that she can hardly make a living at it; desperately needs money for necessary repairs to the hall; *Willpower* 10 (14/14/15), SPI 2; *Attitude* 5), stands next to them—looking worried—to oversee the repairs. A carriage-sized wooden prop ship sits at the edge of the stage, its side splintered into many pieces.

The heroes can learn the following facts in *King Khadan Hall*.

- *The Flying Bornlander* is a popular opera about a greedy merchant who makes a bargain with dark powers and ends up cursed to sail the seas for all eternity. Meanwhile, in Festum, his lover awaits broken-hearted for his return.
- A tragic accident happened during the second act yesterday: the ship prop suddenly crashed onto the stage, burying some of the actors beneath it. Luckily, most of them were merely frightened and walked away without a scratch. Only the main actor, Karun Varani, was badly injured. He now lies in the temple of Peraine with several broken bones.
- His wife, Gylduria de Vries, is undoubtedly at his side.
- All performances are canceled, until further notice.
- Worn materials are the most likely reason for the accident. Even though patrician families like the Hortemanns donate money to the house, it is not enough, by far. It takes money to make art, but, since art rarely makes a profit, donations are quite low.

The Daughter

Sumudan's daughter, Gylduria, works as an illusionist at a theater called *King Khadan Hall*. She met her husband, the tenor Karun Varani, there. Naturally, she was present at last night's performance, during which Karun was injured in a tragic accident and broke multiple bones. He is now bedridden in the temple of Peraine.

King Khadan Hall

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Autumn rain falls in heavy drops from the overcast sky, blurring the poster exhibiting the likeness of a tanned, burly man, with a thin, twirled moustache and beaming smile, which advertises the opera The Flying Bornlander, featuring the famous tenor, Karun Varani. However, the building behind the poster does not look like a temple of the arts. The rectangular building is unadorned and rather boring—as if it were shoved between the ornate burghers' houses as an afterthought.

The heroes can already hear the loud sounds of saws and hammers from outside the building. A side-entrance to the event hall stands open. Two carpenters currently occupy the performance room, replacing damaged stage boards. *King Khadan Hall's* director, ♀ *Siranja Biret* (41; curly, brown hair; large spectacles; loose, flowing clothes;

In the Temple of Peraine

With its nave and high tower, the heroes can see the **Temple of Peraine (T10)** quite well from the river. While it makes a rather modest impression at first glance, they realize just how well-off the farmers here are as they get closer. The building, which stands in a small herb garden, is decorated with numerous wood carvings. Pious farmers hang floral wreaths both inside and out, and bring ears of corn and other crops as offerings. An annex houses a small infirmary.

Here, the heroes encounter ♀ *Karun Verani* (34; 6'3"; broad shoulders; massive chest; small, twirled moustache; tanned skin; curly, black hair; loves life on the stage; hates prejudices against him as a Zahori; needs rest to regain his strength; *Willpower* 7 (13/13/13), SPI 2; *Attitude* 5; loves his wife, ♀ *Gylduria de Vries*).

Gylduria de Vries

Brief Description: 25; petite; brown hair tied up into a bun; wears dark-colored mage's robes with golden, arcane symbols; competent illusionist; loves her husband; hates how her father wants to run her life; blames herself for having a fight with her father.

Function: A false lead, who might still provide valuable information to the heroes.

Rumors

The heroes likely want to gather information about Sumudan and the main murder suspects at some point during the adventure. The people they question can share the following rumors...

...about Sumudan de Vries

- “He was always a child of Phex. As a youth, he ran away from home with the dream of finding treasure and saving princesses. Well, it didn’t quite come to that, but he did pretty well, nonetheless.” (+)
- “He put all his money in his fleet’s first voyage to Uthuria. If it hadn’t returned, he would have been ruined. (+) But, that’s life: You’ve got to be ready to gamble everything on one card. Most lose, but Sumudan—he won a great fortune.” (+/-)
- “He has three children. Only his youngest, Milo, ever amounted to anything. He manages the fleet, and he’ll inherit the trade house some day. The other children are disgraces; the poor man.” (+/-)
- “A commendable merchant: He donates much and lives humbly. I wish all city council members had his integrity.” (+/-) (Actually, Sumudan only kept up appearances. He was in debt and needed the profits from the second voyage to become solvent again.)
- “Business is great. The Northland Bank wants to buy his entire company.” (-) (In truth, the bank requested their first loan payment and Sumudan had to ask for a deferment, as he could not pay it.)
- “The merchant loves the sea. (Anyone’s guess.) One of his daily rituals is to walk along the port. (+) He just stands there, looking longingly out to sea.” (+/-)

...about Gylduria de Vries

- “The merchant was disappointed his second-born had Mada’s gift.” (-)
- “Instead of a merchant, she became a carnival sorceress who entertains the masses with her colorful displays. At least she found permanent employment at the King Khadan Hall.” (+)
- “They are all devious Zahori there! (-) They immediately turned her head, especially that Karun Varani. She even married him (+), probably because she already has a child on the way. (-) Well, what they say about the Zahori is true.” (depends)
- “All that, after her father arranged a marriage for her (+) with a prince from the south. (-) And she goes and marries this artist in a fit of passion and a moonlight ceremony, even though the groom had already arrived! (+) How could you humiliate your own father like that?”
- “The wedding was about three weeks ago. They haven’t spoken a single word to each other since. (+) It is said Sumudan even disinherited her.” (-)

...about Thuan de Vries

- “He’s a drunkard and a thief, twisted and rotten! (+) His wife probably tried to pass somebody else’s child as his.” (-)
- “He’s a gambler, just like his father. The old man just doesn’t want to admit it.” (+/-)
- “He basically lives in the city’s gambling dens. I don’t want to know how much his bad habits have cost his father.” (+)
- “Thuan is Sumudan’s first-born son. His father wished for nothing more than his son to follow in his footsteps. (+) But, if you ask me, the lad lost his way.” (possible)
- “How can he torture his poor father like that? Thuan made his father the laughing-stock of the city. (+/-) No one else in the city’s history has stood before a judge more often than Thuan de Vries. (+/-) Theft, burglary, dealing in stolen goods, ownership of intoxicating herbs... I’ll tell you what, he won’t get off with just a fine next time.” (+)
- “The lad’s going to have quite a problem paying his fines, now that his father is gone. It is said that Thuan is up to his ears in debt. And not all his creditors are as patient as the elder de Vries.” (+)
- “He once confronted his father on the square in front of the town hall. Shortly afterward, they could be heard yelling across the square—in front of the councilors, no less! How shameful.” (+)

...about Svealinja Watergaard

- “She grew rich in the glass and crystal trade. She has connections with the Phecano Forest dwarves.” (+)
- “Sumudan cheated her out of a hefty sum of money last year. (-) Her incredible economic losses cost her seat on the city council.” (+)
- “She’s an ice-cold businesswoman. She never forgets a thing. (+) Something to keep in mind, when one considers the fact that she has connections to the criminal underworld...” (-)

...about Torvon Snakkeling

- “He started working in the storehouse two years ago. He is strong and can lift heavy objects, but he’s about as smart as sourbread.” (+/-)
- “Sumudan de Vries had him beaten in front of the other workers, then chased him away like a dog. (+) Caught him with his hand in the till, I heard.” (+/-) (Strictly speaking, Snakkeling was stealing goods, not money)
- “Snakkeling cursed bitterly and vowed revenge on Sumudan.” (+)
- “Snakkeling has seven children. He stole the money because he desperately needed it.” (+/-)
- “He’s been an Ironjaw[◊] since he was child. He only took the job with Sumudan so he could rob his storehouse.” (+)

◊ This is a reference to Bram Ironjaw. See Encounter with the Brekker Band on page 33



Background: After her father realized his mage daughter would probably not take over the merchant house, he shrewdly tried to marry her off. He chose *Enrisco Nirranor*, bastard son of the Brabakan shipping company dynasty, *Geraucis*. The marriage would allow the de Vries family a basis for their ships in the south. But Gylduria refused to sacrifice her freedom for family politics and married her lover Karun on short notice, instead. This led to a loud argument with her father, and the two have not spoken since.

She does not know her father is dead. If she learns about his death, she bursts into unrestrained tears and the heroes must calm her down before they can ask her questions.

Alibi: As an illusionist, she was working during the performance—until the accident happened. Afterward, she accompanied her husband to the temple of *Peraine* and has not left his side since.

Attitude: 6

Portrayal Tips: Act dismissive toward the heroes. You currently cannot worry about anything other than Karun's condition. Act distressed and hysterical once you learn about the death of your father.

Important Stats: *Willpower* 9 (14/13/14), SPI 2

If asked, Gylduria can rule out anyone seeing her at the counting house—after all, she was at Karun's side the whole time. Whomever thinks they saw her there is mistaken.

She cannot imagine why anyone would want to murder her father. She rules out her brother—despite his rebellion, Thuan knew his father meant well and would always support him. However, she can give the heroes Thuan's address.

If the heroes press her for an opinion about who the perpetrator could be, she is very cautious; but, she eventually admits *Svealinja Watergaard* was quite upset when Sumudan turned some of her financiers away from her.

The Rival

The merchant ♀ *Svealinja Watergaard* lost a lot of money and her seat on the city council because of Sumudan's actions last year. She is not happy about it.

The heroes won't encounter her at the **Watergaard counting house (A05)**, but rather at the **Watergaard storehouse (A06)** in the Newhaven district.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

A tall, picket fence surrounds the yard where the brick storehouse stands. A large crane hoists heavy crates from a ship's hold to the wharf; from there, employees with handcarts and packhorses

bring the goods into the storehouse. Now and then, you see guards patrolling with massive dogs.



The heroes find *Svealinja* in the storehouse, where several employees with long lists walk among the shelves, taking inventory. It would seem a window in the roof recently broke; even as one person sweeps up the broken pieces, another hastily boards up the hole.

Svealinja Watergaard

Brief Description: late-40s; blonde-gray hair, tied up in an austere hairdo; dark, modest, crushed-velvet clothes; lace collar; thin glasses; masterly merchant.

Function: A false lead with a cross-reference to Thuan de Vries.

Background: *Svealinja* primarily deals in glass and crystal goods. Because Sumudan seduced some of her financiers from her, who decided they'd rather invest in his *Uthuria* venture, she lost her city council seat. Some might see that as reason enough to declare him an enemy. Nevertheless, she sees herself as an honorable merchant and would never act otherwise. Last night, someone broke into her storehouse. She does not yet know what exactly was stolen.

Alibi: She was at a meeting in the *Wheel and Cup* casino, socializing with patricians and merchants (including the Master of the City—*Gwynn Willforth*, and Director of the HPNC—*Alricilian Sandfort*). She learned about the break-in after midnight, which is when she left to come straight to her storehouse.

Attitude: 3—the heroes are a nuisance to her

Portrayal Tips: Act dismissive and cold: your current matters are more important and occupy all your time. Sumudan's fate is certainly a tragedy, but it does not really interest you. React angrily if anyone suggests you were involved.

Important Stats: *Commerce* 13 (16/14/13), *Willpower* 10 (16/14/13), SPI 2

It seems someone snuck past the guard last night, broke into the storehouse through the window in the roof, and stole a yet unknown number of goods. The thief went undetected until attempting to make his escape—that's when the dog, *Bello* (Warhome bloodhound; blood encrusted head injury; SPI -1) grabbed the thief's leg. The thief fought back, broke a crystal decanter on *Bello*'s head, and ran away. The guard, ♀ *Yulag* (26; full beard; black teeth; frizzy hair; loves dice games; hates the nightshift; hides that he fell asleep at first; feels terrible about *poor Bello*'s injury; *Willpower* 3 (12/11/11), SPI 1; *Attitude* 4), describes the perpetrator in an unhelpful manner as a man about the same age as him with wild, black hair, pale skin, dark clothes, and a brown leather backpack. He says

the thief escaped down the canal in a boat. If the heroes pressure him, he quickly admits he fell asleep and woke up only after Bello was already chasing the thief.

The nighttime intruder was Thuan de Vries, who plans to pay his debts with the loot from the robbery (see page 37).



The Employee

The storehouse worker, *Torvon Snakkeling*, had been stealing goods from Sumudan for months. Sumudan subsequently fired him last week, after having Torvon publicly beaten. Torvon vowed revenge. The reason Sumudan noticed the theft was because numerous goods—many from the first journey to Uthuria—disappeared suddenly from his storehouse.

- 2 crates of coffee
- 10 sacks of peanuts
- 20 ounces amber
- 3 sacks cacao beans

The counting house supervisor, Nevinia Vardeen (see page 24), can describe Torvon (large; broad shoulders; bald; earring in his left earlobe; tattooed upper arms). She knows Torvon lives in Sudertown, but does not know exactly where.

Torvon's House

The heroes must find their way to Torvon, which requires an *Asking Around* check. The check receives a penalty of -2 without Nevinia's information. The check interval is 3 hours.

• If you want to shorten this episode, the check receives a penalty of -3 (or -1 with Nevinia's information) and has a 6-hour interval. In this case, the heroes' question, "Where can I find Torvon Snakkeling," leads them directly to the scene *In the Dragon Pit*, on page 32.



The following scene starts late in the afternoon and ends at night. If your heroes are looking for Torvon at a different time, you might need to adapt the scene. Or, you can change the *Asking Around* check interval, so the heroes arrive at **Torvon's apartment (A07)** early in the evening.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The murky, bubbling water sits in narrow waats, over which wash lines hang like thick foliage. The sandy underground has partly swallowed the houses, causing them to lean dangerously toward each other. Children wearing tattered clothes play in the alleys, where the smothering smells of garbage, fish, and tar fill the air. Sudertown is a desolate place, full of abandoned hopes and broken dreams.



Torvon Snakkeling and his family live on the fifth floor of a tall, narrow apartment building. The heroes climb the worn steps of the rickety stairway to find a rundown den full of four screaming children and the overworked **Zerline Snakkeling** (26; brown, stringy hair; swollen skin; loves tobacco; hates her drunk, good-for-nothing husband; needs a new perspective; *Willpower* 6 (13/12/13), *SPI* 2; *Attitude* 4). She, too, would love to know where her husband is; she suspects he's probably boozing away money they don't have in the *Seven Winds* tavern.

The Seven Winds Tavern

The *Seven Winds* (Q2/P1/-) is a dark, dilapidated tavern at Newhaven's edge. Seafarers and stevedores meet here at the end of the workday and drink away their meagre salaries. The furnishings are sparse and the beer watery. Still, more than a dozen sullen men turn their heads questioningly when the heroes enter the tap room.

The men in the tavern immediately treat heroes with a social status of 2 or higher, who do not have the advantage *Socially Adaptable*, with distrust. They voice quite unmistakably that they want nothing to do with such folks here. Even the innkeeper, **Abelmir Sindern** (72; curly, white hair; weather-beaten skin; crystal-blue eyes; loves sailors' tales; hates bill-dodgers; needs someone to remind Torvon to pay his tab; *Willpower* 7 (14/15/13), *SPI* 2; *Attitude* 4), is aloof and dismissive.

There are many bald men with tattoos here, but none fit Torvon's description. The heroes can hear further rumors about Torvon here (see page 29) and finally learn his whereabouts: Torvon just left; he was headed toward the **Dragon Pit (A08)** (see page 32). But first, they must convince the sailors to reveal this information. Heroes who make *Seduction*, *Fast-Talk*, and *Intimidation* checks receive a penalty of -1 for each of their status levels above *Not Free* (the sailors' base attitude levels are 5). Each hero who wishes to engage with the tavern-goers must make a cumulative check using one of these skills (2 minutes, 5 attempts). A failed check causes the opposite party's attitude to decrease by 1 level. If their attitude sinks to 2 or less,

the men chase off the heroes or a tavern brawl ensues (use the Brekker Band stats from page 35 for the sailors).



In the Dragon Pit

Torvon's trail leads the heroes to an isolated storehouse in Newhaven, where illegal fights take place. Grangor's secret crime lord, *Sylvin Brekker*, is the proprietor; the heroes encounter his right-hand man, *Bram Ironjaw*, here.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Here, at the tip of a narrow peninsula, stands storehouse after storehouse. Evening now lies over the quarter, and signs of life on the piers has come to almost a standstill. Occasionally, you encounter prostitutes who await their customers in the half-light of doorways. From afar, you can hear what sounds like dockworkers loading a ship. A beacon on a sandbank provides sparse light.



You approach a run-down storehouse, its door illuminated by a fire burning agitatedly in a metal basket. You can see two brawny watchmen from a distance, and hear loud jeers from inside.

Heroes with a level 2 social status or less get past the doormen without trouble. However, they eye heroes with higher statuses suspiciously; the heroes should at least be able to explain why they are there. This requires a *Persuasion*, *Fast-Talk*, *Seduction*, or *Disguise* check with a penalty of -1 for each social status level above 2. The doormen have *Perception* 5 (9/11/11), *Willpower* 4 (12/11/10), and *SPI* 0. Their attitude toward people with a social status of 2 or less is level 5; for each social status level above 2, their attitude sinks by 1. If all else fails, the heroes can climb the wall outside the storehouse and enter through a window about 20 feet above street level.

Once the heroes pass through the door, they enter a hall where a ring is set up. A muscular woman with an eye-patch actively beats on a man bleeding from multiple lacerations. More than a hundred people fill the room. Some stand tightly packed around the ring, and the rest occupy a platform about 13 feet above. All cheer loudly for their favorite contender.

It is rather obvious they conduct bloody boxing matches here, with bets taken before and during the fight. The fight ends only when one of the opponents gives up or is no longer able to fight.

Use the *Brawling Points* rules from *In the Dragon Pit* for the tavern brawl.



Torvon is somewhere in the crowd. The heroes must make a cumulative group check (*Perception (Search)* -3 (5 minutes, any number of attempts), to find him. If successful, they spot him just as he is about to leave through a back door with three friends.

The heroes must try to squeeze through the crowd to catch Torvon before he leaves. To do so, each hero must make a successful cumulative check using *Body Control (Squirm)* -2 (5 attempts). Otherwise, by the time they reach the door through which Torvon and his companions left, it is locked, and they must reopen it before they can follow him. This requires a cumulative check using *Pick Locks (Bit Locks)* +1 (any number of attempts). If the remaining heroes shield the one picking the lock, no one in the hall notices what they're doing.

If the heroes intercept Torvon and his three companions before they walk through the door, a scuffle ensues, as Torvon doesn't like being stopped by strangers (see Torvon's description on page 35). With the excitement of the spectators around them, it is quite likely non-participants end up involved in what turns into a large brawl (see *Brawling Points* rules, below).

Encounter with the Brekker Band

Through the door, the heroes gain access to the back of the storehouse. As they search the abandoned storehouse, they find a few open crates—the contents of which are probably used to run the fights in the front hall—and come across writing rooms and supervisors' offices. The heroes can access the gallery via a ladder. Another door leads through a paneled wall, into an area rather obviously added on to the side of the storehouse that faces the water. *Perception (Spot)* checks receive a -2 penalty and *Stealth* checks receive a +2 bonus, due to the noise.

When the heroes reach the back of the hall, the following scene unfolds before their eyes.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Lanterns illuminate the back section of the storehouse, where a dozen rough-looking men cast long shadows on the walls. With their arms folded in front of their chests, they contemptuously glare at a bound, frail-looking man in rags whom Torvon

Brawling Rules

Optional Rule

The *Core Rules* do not differentiate between an opponent killed by a weapon and one killed by a series of blows, kicks, and head-butts in unarmed combat. Although the damage received in a bar fight is typically not as serious as that from a swordfight, participants may still reach 0 LP or lower at some point. This optional rule is meant to simulate an exciting and action-packed bar fight, not lead to anyone's death—so, bar fights using these rules are rarely fatal. It is far more likely for someone to get knocked unconscious or lose a few teeth instead. Therefore, these rules deliver less damage than the standard combat rules.

- ☞ Characters suffer *Brawling Points* (BP) from successful attacks. BP function basically the same way as DP, but at the end of a brawl, only a fraction of the DP turn out to be real. The majority are regained immediately after the fight ends.
- ☞ After the fight ends, participants make an *Injuries* roll (see the *Injuries Table*, below) to determine the actual LP they lose from the brawl.
- ☞ Instead of receiving *Pain* at each LP threshold, participants receive *Stupor* (one level of *Stupor* each at three-quarters, one-half, one-quarter, and 5 or less LP). Those who gain the state *incapacitated* due to too many levels of *Stupor* are effectively removed from the brawl.
- ☞ Calculate the percentage of LP regained at the end of the fight, as well as the threshold values of *Stupor* levels, from each participant's *current LP* (NOT maximum LP) at the start of the brawl.

Example: A participant with a maximum LP of 32 has 20 LP when the brawl starts, and therefore receives Stupor levels at 15, 10, and 5 LP. After the brawl, a roll of 4 on 2D6 on the Injuries Table indicates an actual loss of only 10% of the LP. Remember to calculate this loss from the LP (20, in this case) at the start of the brawl. Therefore, the participant loses 2 LP (10% of 20), and not 3 LP (10% of 32, rounded down to 3).

Snakkeling and a grim-looking woman just brought down a flight of stairs from the floor above. The man falls to his knees in front of a bull-necked giant of a man with a square head—pleading for mercy—but the man meets his pleas with scornful laughter. “You know what happens to traitors!” he says, his deep, bass voice drowning out the jeers from the neighboring room. Two of his men place a thick mooring rope around the man. A third brings over a swinging crane hook while someone slides open the storehouse's back wall. Beyond it, you see the waters of the Yellow Phecadi mirroring the moonlight; a solitary rowboat bobs up and down on the river.



Injuries

Most brawls end only after one side has won; consequently, nearly everyone involved receives some minor injuries. Use the following table to randomly determine what happens to each participant. The percentage refers to the participants' LP at the start of the brawl and determines how many actual LP each participant loses.

| 2D6 | Injury (Total Loss of LP in %) |
|-----|---|
| 2 | Abrasion (10%) |
| 3 | Bloody Nose (10%) |
| 4 | Sprained Hand (10%) |
| 5 | Bruise (20%) |
| 6 | Scratch (20%) |
| 7 | One Black Eye (20%) |
| 8 | Two Black Eyes (25%) |
| 9 | Laceration (25%) |
| 10 | Multiple Lacerations (33%) |
| 11 | Dislocated Finger / Broken Toe (33%) |
| 12 | Lost Tooth / Hair Torn Out / Gash (50%) |

Participating in the Boxing Match

If your players enjoy proving themselves in combat, you can let the heroes participate in the boxing matches. The rules are simple and few: magic and weapons are prohibited; everything else goes. The match lasts until one contender concedes or becomes incapacitated. A hero must win three fights to collect the prize money (10 ducats). Use burgher or bandit stats from the *Aventuria Almanac* (pages 252-253) or those of *Bram Ironjaw's* thugs (page 35) for opponents. In later rounds, opponents should have fewer LP and higher condition levels.

The giant man is the dreaded **B** *Bram Ironjaw* (42; 6'5"; square, shaved head; covered in scars; left earlobe missing; brutal and cunning; hunted by the city guard, but never caught; the Brekker Band's enforcer; presumed leader and successor of *Black Brekker*, but in reality, only the right-hand man to Black's son, *Sylvin Brekker*, who acts silently from the shadows; loves his moustache; hates resistance; needs someone to stop him when he's in a rage), and the heroes are about to witness how the feared Brekker Band treats traitors. The victim, **M** *Merago* (34, but looks 50; gray, shaggy hair; wrinkled skin; wispy; smells of sweat and urine; *Willpower* 5 (13/13/13), SPI 2), is a beggar who made the mistake of accepting payment to reveal the thugs' secrets to the guards.

If the heroes don't act, the men chain Merago to the crane hook, lift him up, and swing him out over the river. They torture him by dunking him in the water a few times before finally sending him to *sleep with the fishes*, as they say—submerging him deep into the canal and leaving him there. By the time they come back for these victims' bodies (if anyone does come back), the hook is usually empty thanks to the hungry fish and crabs that live in the harbor.

After they sink Merago, the gang disperses. Bram Ironjaw and four of his men leave via boat; the rest (six people, including Torvon) leave the storehouse through the front entrance.

Combat

It is safest for the heroes to wait while the scene unfolds, then follow Torvon and ambush him when he is alone (the ambush requires a successful competitive *Stealth (Sneak/Hide)* check against Torvon's *Perception*; the thug surrenders when he realizes he is outnumbered). However, few heroes can watch a murder occur in front of their eyes without intervening. So, they must act. The eleven gang members plan to stick around until the beggar drowns, which means the heroes must fight them all at once to save him.

Two men operate the crane, which requires strenuous lifting, while the rest watch. Then, the men turn a crank to lower Merago into the water. The gang forgets about the beggar if the heroes attack. If the heroes don't pull him out of the water within 15 CR, he drowns.

This scene shows the heroes who has control over Grangor's underworld, and how they deal with bothersome traitors.

The heroes technically don't have to save Merago to solve the mystery, but if they do nothing, they would be complicit in his murder. They should succeed if they devise a good plan, if they don't mind Torvon escaping, or if the dice are on their side. If they succeed, Merago might be able to provide additional information about Torvon so they can find him again. However, they also may want to steer clear of the rest of the Brekker Band.



The Heroes' Options

- **Attack:** Since the crane only requires two thugs to operate it, the other nine thugs fight back, immediately. The crane operators join the fight after 2 CR. If the thugs don't gain the upper hand within 5 CR, four of them make sure Bram escapes on one of the boats. The thugs flee when they are at or below 50% of their LP, or when at least half of them have already fled. Bram and four others flee on the boat; the rest attempt to exit through the boxing hall. If this path is blocked, they dash upstairs, jump out the 20-foot high window into the river, and swim away.
- **Ambush:** An ambush forces the thugs to take cover. They can't fight back if they don't know where the attack is coming from, so they try to flee, instead.
- **Spells and Liturgical Chants:** Much like an ambush, spells and liturgical chants surprise the thugs. If the heroes use spells that cause the condition *Fear II* or higher, the thugs try to escape.
- **Try to Capture Torvon:** Torvon fights like the others. When fleeing, he first tries to exit through the main hall; if that fails, he sprints up the stairs and jumps into the river from a 20-foot high window.
- **Operate the Crane:** When the fighting begins, Merago hangs from the crane over the water. The thugs want to prevent him from giving the heroes any information, so they drop him into the river as soon as they can. If the heroes don't defeat both operators simultaneously, they manage to submerge Merago in the water. To raise the beggar back up to the surface, the heroes must make a cumulative group check (*Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* -2 (1 CR, two people, any number of attempts) to operate the crank. The heroes must achieve at least 6 QL within 1D6+5 CR, otherwise the current sweeps Merago further away. Note that they need 10 QL to raise Merago up far enough to breathe again. If they do not garner 10 QL within 15 CR, he drowns.

The thugs try to keep the heroes away from the crane. If the thugs somehow manage to interrupt a *Feat of Strength* check, the heroes may continue where they left off with their attempt to garner the required QL.

Brekker Band Thug

COU 14 SGC 12 INT 13 CHA 12

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 14 STR 14

LP 36 AE - KP - INI 14+1D6

SPI 2 DO 8 TOU 2 MOV 8

Unarmed: AT 14 PA 8 DP 1D6 RE short

Brass Knuckles: AT 14 PA 8 DP 1D6+1 RE short

PRO/ENC: 0/0

Disadvantage: Negative Trait (Quick Temper)

Special Abilities: Alertness, Feint I, Forceful Blow I, Improved Dodge I

Skills: *Body Control* 7, *Feat of Strength* 7, *Intimidation* 10, *Perception* 6, *Sailing* 7, *Self-Control* 8, *Stealth* 9, *Swimming* 7, *Willpower* 6

Combat Behavior: The Brekker Band thugs like to alternate their combat SA when they fight.

Escape: After suffering *Pain II*, or when at least half of them have already fled

Pain +1 at: 27 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP or less

Special: Bram Ironjaw has AGI 16, CON 18, and STR 16; LP 43, AT 12, PA 10; causes +2 DP when Unarmed, +1 DP with Brass Knuckles

Skills: *Feat of Strength* 12, *Intimidation* 14, *Self-Control* 16

If the heroes concentrate on saving Merago, Torvon escapes.

If the heroes manage to capture **Torvon Snakkeling** (31; 6'2"; broad shoulders; bald; earring in his left ear; tattooed upper arms; brawny, but dim-witted; loves his wife, but doesn't know how to show her; hates alcohol, but is addicted to it; wants honest work, but is beholden to the Brekker Band, *Willpower* 6 (14/13/12) SPI 2; *Attitude* 2), he is surprised to hear of Sumudan de Vries' death, and swears he had nothing to do with it (true). He spent the evening in question at the **Red Lotus (24)** brothel, a fact he wants to hide from his wife. The brothel employees can confirm his alibi.

Seek and You Shall Find



The Prodigal Son

Sooner or later, the heroes end up on the trail of Sumudan's wayward son, **Thuan de Vries**. **Thuan's apartment (A09)** is in a decrepit, half-timbered house on Kopp island. The heroes can learn this from his sister, Gylduria, or from a successful *Asking Around* check (9-hour interval).

Thuan had nothing to do with his father's death; but, unfortunately, he does not have an alibi he can share, because he was busy breaking into Svealinja Watergaard's storehouse. Her watchdog bit him in the leg, giving him a painful wound. He just barely got away, but not before the guard saw him. Thuan now fears the merchant's agents are on his tail—as if he needed more problems—and he believes the heroes are her agents.

Thuan broke in to the storehouse because he needs to find a way to pay his gambling debts to the dubious financier, *Stordian Goudtand*, who recently threatened to send the Brekker Band's debt collectors after Thuan. Two days ago, during a heated argument, Thuan's father said he would not pay Thuan's debts this time. So, Thuan decided to handle it on his own. While he was out, Arn Knochenbreker—sent by Odina—entered Thuan's apartment unseen and planted the misleading clues there.

Thuan didn't return to his apartment until morning, after selling the stolen goods to a fence. He planned to settle his debts with Goudtand later that day, after catching up on a bit of sleep, but was surprised to discover someone else already took care of it for him. Since he doesn't know his father is dead, he assumes Sumudan paid off his debts after all. He decided to praise Phex for his unexpected wealth by using it to gamble in the *Wheel and Cup*.

Depending on when the heroes decide to search for Thuan, they either meet him in his apartment or the casino. In either case, he makes a run for it, as he believes these strangers are Svealinja Watergaard's agents. Below is Thuan's description, followed by a description of his apartment and the *Wheel and Cup* (page 39). The chase begins on page 41.

1 Thuan de Vries

Brief Description: Sumudan's first-born son; 28; lousy merchant; competent troublemaker and drifter; has a problem with authority; currently limps on his right leg; wild black hair; pale skin; dark circles under his eyes; dark, practical leather clothes; a drunk with a strong preference for *Wild Novadi* (a Chababian brandy).

Motivation: (Subconscious) rebellion against his father and authority, in general; in search of thrills; often needs to avoid being hanged, which usually leads to an even worse situation.

Agenda: None—Thuan lives in the moment, with no thought of tomorrow.

Function: Scapegoat, intended to divert the heroes' attention from the true cause of Sumudan's death; the heroes likely find his behavior suspicious. They should first attempt to collect evidence proving his guilt, then discover they are following the wrong trail and attempt to prove Thuan's innocence.

Background: Thuan fell in with the wrong crowd when he rebelled against his father's strict education. He drinks, gambles, and steals. The guard apprehended him numerous times, and each time his father paid his fine to get him off the hook. Sometimes, Thuan allowed himself to be caught, merely to humiliate his father. His arrest record contributes to his seeming guilt, and nobody believes his story, even though he is innocent and had nothing to do with his father's death.

Alibi: He was home alone, where he drank a bottle of *Wild Novadi* and went to sleep. He limps because he twisted his ankle yesterday when he was walking up the stairs (This



is false; That night, Thuan broke into the Watergaard storehouse, where the watchdog bit his leg).

Attitude: Initially a 3, but can raise to 7 or 8 once Thuan notices the heroes believe him.

Portrayal Tips: Slouch in your chair, relax one arm on the table while you raise the other and pretend to drink a cup of brandy. Act cynical and bitter. Ignore outward appearances and judge everyone according to your opinion of them.

Special: He limps on his right leg. If the heroes search his apartment, they easily find a counting house key, the Uthuria log book, and the empty strongbox—the planted evidence was only half-heartedly hidden.

Important Stats: See stat block on page 42

Fate Points: 3

“Money, money, money! That’s all anyone in this city thinks about. They all think it sets them free—they don’t know how addicted they are...”

“You put on a uniform and think it gives you power, but it is all just a facade supported by people who wish to remain ignorant! Strip away the fine cloth and the pretention, however, and you always find a vulnerable soul underneath.”

Thuan's Apartment



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Kopp island is a simple, grounded quarter, where narrow, half-timbered houses lean toward each other for support. Clotheslines hang suspended above the waats, and the cobblestone streets echo with the mingled sounds of smiths hammering, carpenters sawing, and chickens clucking. You’d never expect someone as restless as Thuan de Vries to live here.



Thuan lives on the third floor of a narrow, half-timbered house—above a seamstress' workshop. A wooden flight of stairs outside the building leads up to his apartment. The unpleasant smell of feces and urine wafts up from the adjacent pigpen.

The front door is made from sturdy timber, and it is locked. The heroes must make a cumulative check (*Pick Locks* (*Bit Locks*) +2; 3 attempts) to open it. The stairs are visible from the street and from neighboring buildings; if the heroes fail the check, someone notices them breaking in. The same is true for the windows, covered by shutters, which are easily seen from the waat. To enter through them, the heroes must first make a *Climbing* (*Walls*) check and then a cumulative check using *Feat of Strength* (*all applications*)

+3 or *Pick Locks* +1. After three failed attempts, someone notices the activity.

Inside the Apartment

The heroes don't know what to expect inside Thuan's apartment. You can use this uncertainty to create tension by lowering your voice when you read the following text, if you choose. Continue to keep your voice low until Thuan runs or the heroes thoroughly explore the apartment.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Dim light peeks through the closed window shutters, throwing dark, striped patterns on the brightly painted walls. Dust dances in the stagnant air. You carefully make your way through discarded clothes, empty bottles, and crusty drinking cups, holding your breath with every step as the creaking floorboards threaten to reveal you.



Scenario A: Thuan is Home

Each player must make a *Stealth (Sneak)* check -2. For every failed check, Thuan makes a competitive *Perception (Spot)* check -5. Once he wakes, he immediately runs, jumps through a window that opens onto the waat, and swings across the canal on a clothesline. Thuan has the special ability, *Vigilance*. When *Surprised*, he spends one Fate Point to rid himself of the condition. He spends a second Fate Point to ensure he acts first, so he can escape.

The chase begins on page 41.

Scenario B: The Apartment is Deserted

The heroes enter the apartment while Thuan is not home (or, they return to explore it after he escapes). Thuan's apartment is a mess; it looks like someone else broke in already and searched the rooms. Finding anything of value in all this chaos will prove difficult. Doing so requires a cumulative group check (*Perception (Search/Spot)* -3; 15 minutes, any number of attempts), during which each hero may also make a one-time *Empathy* or *Streetwise* check.

The heroes can obtain the following information.

- **3 QL:** Thuan seems to be drinking too much. They find empty bottles and decanters all over the apartment, as well as empty cups that smell strongly of liquor (a successful *Perception (Spot)* check -1 reveals it is *Wild Novadi*, the same brandy in the other glass on Sumudan's desk).
- **6 QL:** The heroes discover a large, 4-inch long bit key, half-hidden under a discarded shirt. It is far too large to fit any of the locks in the apartment; it looks more

like it might open a barn door. The round grip has a ship's silhouette with billowing sails punched out of it (*Streetwise:* The picture resembles the merchant House de Vries' coat of arms; It is reasonable to assume the key unlocks the counting house doors.)

- **9 QL:** In a closed, unlocked chest, the heroes find a few personal items: an intricately carved pipe, a tinder box, a small box with a few gemstones (value: 3 ducats), and a skillfully bound duodecimo book, full of handwriting. Between the pages of writing are drawings of coastal regions (this is Captain Bredo Siegenström's log book, in which he describes the first passage to Uthuria ordered by Sumudan de Vries. A successful *Perception (Spot)* check -2 or *Pick Locks (Bit Locks)* check reveals damage to the wood around the chest's lock. It appears someone pried the chest open at some point).
- **10+ QL:** Also in the chest is a wooden strongbox with ivory inlays (it once held the day's earnings, which were stolen from the counting house). The heroes must open the fragile lock carefully with a *Pick Locks (Bit Locks)* check -3. The box is empty.

Asking Around in the Neighborhood

Something is Rotten in the City of Grangor

Of course, Arn Knockenbrecker planted this evidence in Thuan's apartment. But, your heroes don't need to discover that at this moment. Let them draw their own conclusions, and don't force the information on them. The adventure continues either way, and it doesn't matter if they suspect Thuan or start to doubt his guilt because the evidence seemed too easy to find.



A middle-class neighborhood is an observant neighborhood: few things go unnoticed here. The following people are the most likely candidates to share information, but you can come up with other neighbors, as well.

- **Lovisia Arkrohn** (37; master tailor; owns the shop on the first floor of Thuan's apartment building and lives on the second floor; Thuan's landlady; is disturbed by her renter's nightly activities, but would never throw him out because of his father's influence; *Willpower* 3 (13/13/13); SPI 2)
- **Simona Durenald** (74; white hair; wrinkled face; beady eyes; lives in the house opposite Thuan's apartment; loves to watch the street through her window; hates when there's nothing interesting to see; urgently needs exciting, new observations to gossip about with her friends; *Willpower* 4 (12/11/14), SPI 2)

Rumors About Thuan

The heroes can learn the following about Thuan from Lovisia, Simona, or both.

- ☞ *“That one is a rapsallion and scallywag, never did an honest days’ work in his life. But his father pays on time, that’s why he still lives here.” (+) (both)*
- ☞ *“If he isn’t here, then he’s probably squandering his money away in the Wheel and Cup. No idea where he gets the money—I guess it is probably better I don’t know.” (+) (both)*
- ☞ *“Tidiness? He doesn’t know the meaning of the word. That apartment is a pigsty.” (+) (Lovisia)*
- ☞ *“It can’t be any kind of respectable business that he does. He’s often up in the middle of the night and then sleeps long into the day.” (+) (both)*
- ☞ *“Just yesterday, he came back late and stumbled over his mess in the dark. Probably drunk again, the boozehound. Someday, he’s going to break his neck.” (-) (Lovisia; she unknowingly heard Arn Knoenbreeker breaking into Thuan’s apartment)*
- ☞ *“And then there’s all his strange friends. They come over late at night, they’re loud, and they wake the whole neighborhood when they leave. Scoundrels, all of them—if you ask me.” (+/-) (both)*
- ☞ *“If you ask me, he’s selling intoxicating herbs or some such. That’s the reason so many people come by at odd hours.” (-) (both)*
- ☞ *“Just last night, someone was at his door. Looked like a doorman or dockworker; I sure wouldn’t want to meet his sort at night. We really put up with a lot, having a neighbor like Thuan.” (+/-) (Simona; she saw Arn during the break-in. Since she could only make out his silhouette, she could not see Arn meddling with the lock. From her point of view, Thuan let him in at some point.)*

In the Wheel and Cup Casino

It is easy for the heroes to learn that Thuan visits the *Wheel and Cup* casino almost every day. Thuan’s sister and neighbors freely give them this information, as do most other people they ask.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Not far from the temple of Phex, and directly on the Longwaat, lies the famous Wheel and Cup casino. Pageboys in red velvet uniforms receive affluent guests on the landing of a flight of stairs covered with red carpets, or directly at the waat on a landing stage illuminated by numerous lanterns. The drawn curtains keep anyone from peeking inside through the high glass windows, protecting the guests’ privacy. The only time you might be able to steal a quick look at the establishment’s palazzi-like interior is when the large, swinging door opens to let a fortune-seeker in or out.

The *Wheel and Cup* (Q5/P5/-) is a fancy casino, primarily visited by traveling nobles and merchants. Local merchants and patricians also use the house for business meetings and to celebrate business deals. Several pageboys guard the entrance to guarantee no riffraff enters. If needed, they request aid from several more finely dressed protectors, who treat troublemakers in a far less noble manner.

Inside the Casino

Fine Feathers Make Fine Birds

Wearing the right sort of clothes is the basic requirement for entry here. The heroes should at least dress like lesser nobles (see *Core Rules*, page 375) and act in such manner, as well. Every hero with a social status below 3 (see *Core Rules*, page 338) must first make an *Etiquette (Fashion)* check to determine how to dress. They receive a QL/2 bonus to their subsequent *Disguise (Costuming)* check, which receives a penalty of -1 for each status level below 3 the hero must overcome. Heroes can assist their companions in the same way.

The pageboys at the entrance scrutinize every unfamiliar guest with a critical eye (*Perception* 5 (11/12/12)). If they have reason to distrust the heroes, they ask questions about their names and origins. Only a successful *Etiquette (Manners)* check, with a penalty of -1 for every level of social status below 3, helps here. However, if the characters think to try it, this check receives a QL/2 bonus from a competitive *Fast-Talk (Manipulation)* check against the pageboys’ *Willpower* (SR 4, (11/12/10)).

Heroes with a social status of 3 or higher do not need to make an *Etiquette* check unless they want to help *Disguise* others, in which case, their *Disguise* check receives a QL/2 bonus from their routine *Etiquette* check.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Hundreds of candles and lights bathe the room’s golden fabric wallpaper with a dim, festive glow. The dark red carpet swallows the sounds of pageboys running here and there, and emphasizes the abrupt jumping and clattering of ivory balls rolling around inside a bronze cauldron. From time to time, loud cheers of joy break the tense silence.

The heroes enter a festive hall with various games of chance going on at numerous tables. At one table, a casino employee tosses a ball into a spinning wheel of fortune at regular intervals; meanwhile, the players place their bets on which number they believe the ball will land. The casino also offers assorted card games, including several variants of boltan, and dice games.

Inside the casino, it is equally important the heroes don't draw attention to themselves by behaving improperly—though, often, the deeper the person in question's coin purse, the better tolerated their antics. Heroes with a

A Friendly Game Won't Do Any Harm...

Though the heroes came to the *Wheel and Cup* for an entirely different reason, they have the rare opportunity to increase their wealth here... or gamble it away. To play a game, the heroes must first exchange their money for chips at the rate of 1 silverthaler per chip (the basic stake for every game). Then, they can choose where they want to spend their chips.

If your group prefers to play out games of chance at the table instead of simulating them with checks, you can use Poker cards to simulate boltan, or play some of your favorite dice games. (Starting on page 23 of *The Dark Eye: Inns & Taverns* supplement, we introduce several dice games you can play directly at the gaming table).

Otherwise, use the following rules for dice and card games.

To play a dice game, participants each roll a *Gambling (Dice Games)* check (10-minute interval). After a pre-determined number of rounds, they compare their results to those of the other participants. Whoever has the highest QL wins all the other players' stakes. In the case of one or more ties, whoever rolls highest on 1D6 wins.

Card games require a cumulative *Gambling (Card Games)* check (1 minute, number of players depends on game (11 for boltan)). Players roll simultaneously, and raise the stakes after each partial check (the players continue to raise until they fold or agree to a new stake). If more than one player achieves 10 QL in the same round, the player with the highest total QL wins.

Due to the enormous temptation, heroes with *Negative Trait (Gambling Addiction)* must make a *Willpower* check -3 to stop gambling.

social status of 1 or 2 should make regular *Etiquette (Manners)* checks.



The Moneylender

Wherever people gather to gamble, others will try to take advantage of them. Private and professional money lenders in the *Wheel and Cup* gladly help guests who find themselves without enough kreutzers by giving them generous credits—at hefty interest rates. The more reputable among them—such as ♀ *Helaria* from the *Stipenbrink* family, and employees of the Northland Bank—ask for collateral. But others, such as ♀ *Stordian Goudtand* (38; shoulder-length, stringy hair; narrow, sunken-in face; gold incisors; charming smile; loves to make deals—with interest; hates people who speak badly about his business; always on the lookout for new debtors; *Commerce* 8 (13/13/13), *Gambling* 10 (13/13/13), *Willpower* 6 (13/13/13); SPI 2), willingly provide loans without collateral. It is said, however, that the money Goudtand lends belongs to the Brekker Band, not himself—and the Brekker Band collects by hook or by crook, regardless of whether the borrower can pay the usurious interest.

Typical Guests

The heroes can encounter the following guests in the casino. These are only suggestions—you may add to this list as you like.

♀ *Adalida Melior* (46; dark hair; piercing, blue eyes; merchant and passionate boltan player; calm and inscrutable; *Gambling* 10 (13/13/14); *Attitude* 5)

♀ *Faizal ibn Rizwan* (34; black hair; dark skin; black moustache; long-distance trader from Khunchom; spends his money hand over fist; passionate gambler with the courage to take high risks; does not speak Garethi well; often receives annoyed looks due to his enthusiasm, but most overlook it—along with his occasional rudeness—because he's wealthy; *Gambling* 12 (11/11/9); *Attitude* 4)

♀ *Gardean Gazpacho* (22; dark, blond hair; soft facial features; mischievous smile; hails from Kuslik; not as interested in gambling as he is in finding a rich benefactor; *Gambling* 4 (10/10/12), *Seduction* 8 (13/14/14); *Attitude* 5)

♀ *Lutea Slagerbeek* (28; black hair; scar on her cheek; nice clothes, though they are worn and old; broad shoulders; brawny; former imman player who now gambles away her modest fortune, daily; addicted to gambling—the more aggressively she plays, the more she loses; particularly enjoys dice games; *Gambling* 6 (10/10/9); *Attitude* 4)

Scenes in the Wheel and Cup

You may introduce the following while the heroes are in the casino.

🔊 A loud scream suddenly pierces the air, and everyone

stops in their tracks, shocked. *Faizal ibn Rizwan* just won a large sum of money. Exuberantly, he hugs the perplexed employees, kisses some of them on their cheeks, and thanks them profusely in broken Garethi. Afterward, the house treats all of the guests to a free drink.

- ☞ (Only if Thuan is not present): *Adalida Melior* argues with an employee at the till. She wishes to exchange a de Vries share certificate worth more than 50 ducats for more chips. Exchanging share certificates in this manner has never been questioned before; but now, when she has no other money on her, they refuse. The de Vries' shares are currently experiencing great fluctuations, but she continues trying to find someone in the casino willing to exchange chips for it...

Option A: Thuan is Not Here

Rumors About Thuan

Thuan is a frequent *Wheel and Cup* visitor; the heroes can learn quite a bit about him while he's not around (for further rumors about Thuan, see page 29).

- ☞ "You must be really unlucky, to not find Thuan here. He's here all the time." (+)
- ☞ "His father gives him a handsome sum, and he'll gamble here instead of getting into mischief elsewhere." (-)
- ☞ "Thuan's father doesn't approve of gambling and won't give him one kreutzer for it. Everyone here knows it—that's why none of the reputable moneylenders will give him credit." (+)
- ☞ "Only Stordian loans money to Thuan. But I'd stay away from that fellow; he lends dirty money. And the methods he employs to get it back are criminal. It is a miracle Thuan still has all his fingernails." (+)
- ☞ "Thuan is deeply in debt to Stordian. No wonder he doesn't dare show his face here. If Stordian finds him, even Thuan's handsome smile won't help this time." (+/-)

Option B: Thuan is Present

Thuan is completely caught up in a game of boltan when the heroes enter the casino. How the scene unfolds depends on the heroes' instincts. Even though Thuan is distracted (his *Perception* checks receive a penalty of -2), he does not feel entirely safe—especially after the burglary last night almost failed. He keeps an eye out during his game, and if he notices a large group of people looking around the casino or watching him, he becomes suspicious and tries to get away.

The heroes must use their skills wisely: if they remain inconspicuous, split up, and avoid asking suspicious questions, Thuan's checks receive a penalty of -4. The heroes might even take advantage of the casino's dim light when using *Stealth*. On the other hand, it is easier for Thuan to escape when fighting a single hero rather than a whole group of them.

Paid in Full

If the heroes ask Stordian about Thuan's debts, they learn the debts were paid that morning. A courier brought him a Northland Bank promissory note for 108 ducats and 3 silverthalers to repay Thuan's debts. Stordian assumes Thuan's father paid off the debts—after all, "*Daddy always pays*"—and he's pleased with the profit, as Thuan's debts only amounted to 89 ducats. The heroes might notice the sum Stordian received roughly corresponds to the stolen day's earnings, making it look like Thuan killed his father to pay Stordian the money. They may be even more suspicious if they found the empty strongbox in Thuan's apartment.

However, they should find it strange that Thuan paid Stordian the entire amount, when he could have kept about 20 ducats for himself. Naturally, Odina is behind this—she wanted to direct suspicion toward Thuan, but did not know exactly how much he owed Stordian.

If the heroes want to investigate the origin of the promissory note, they must visit the Northland Bank (page 57).



The heroes should avoid attempting to grab Thuan inside the casino without first informing the staff of their intentions and convincing them their actions are justified. Thuan is a regular visitor, and the proprietors feel responsible for their guests. This could quickly lead to a situation in which the heroes must face the casino's bouncers (for stats, see *Brekker Band Thugs* on page 35) while Thuan escapes.

You can resolve this scene with roleplaying or let your players make a cumulative group check with *Perception* (*Search*) -2 (they may also use *Stealth* instead of *Perception*). If they achieve 6 QL, they locate Thuan and must simply make their way toward him without being noticed. Thuan makes one *Perception* check -2 (SR 8, (13/13/13)) for each check made by the group of heroes. If successful, Thuan spots them and runs away.

On the Run

Once the heroes find Thuan, a fast-paced chase is inevitable. The troublemaker believes the heroes are Svealinja Watergaard's agents, and he is afraid he'll be brought to justice for his burglary last night.

While on the run, Thuan tries to do anything *but* run, since the watchdog's bite from the burglary reduces his movement (MOV 7). To make up for this, he avoids open terrain and instead chooses a route where his low MOV doesn't have as much impact.

In-Game Chase Mechanics

This chase basically follows the procedure described in the *Core Rules*, page 349, except that, during the chase, the heroes must use the skill corresponding to the current movement type—such as *Climbing*, *Sailing*, or *Swimming*. The checks for these skills replace the *Body Control (Running)* checks normally used in a chase.

Furthermore, the chase takes place in a crowded city, not an open space. This means the heroes frequently meet obstacles they must overcome or avoid, which costs them time and limits their movement. Modify their checks according to each obstacle.

Instead of the usual 5 CR, the chase lasts longer—how much longer depends on the obstacle(s). After at least 5 CR, change the required movement type by introducing new scenery. The chase ends when the heroes corner Thuan, though he succeeds in coming out of the last stretch of the hunt unharmed, as there are more than 80 feet between him and the heroes.



Option A: Thuan Flees from His Apartment

Escape from the Apartment Out the Window (1 CR)

If Thuan realizes the heroes are in his apartment, he doesn't hesitate to open the shutters and jump out a window, then use a clothesline to climb over the canal.

- The initial distance between Thuan and the heroes is 30 feet. Everyone makes *Body Control (Running)* checks; however, because of the mess in the apartment, the heroes may add only MOV x 0.75 to their SR.

Thuan de Vries

COU 13 SGC 13 INT 13 CHA 13

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 12 STR 13

LP 30 AE - KP - INI 13+1D6

SPI 2 DO 7 TOU 1 MOV 8

Fate Points 3

Social Status: Free

Languages: Native tongue Garethi III,
Thorwalian I

Scripts: Kuslik Signs

Advantages: Good Looks I

Disadvantages: Negative Trait (Curiosity, Gambling
Addiction), Personality Flaw (Spoiled)

Special Abilities: Feint I, Vigilance

Combat Techniques: Brawling 12

Unarmed: AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

Dagger: AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+1 RE short

PRO/ENC 0/0

Skills

Physical: *Body Control* 6, *Carousing* 9, *Climbing* 6, *Feat of Strength* 5, *Stealth* 10

Social: *Disguise* 6, *Empathy* 4, *Etiquette* 6, *Fast-Talk* 7, *Persuasion* 5, *Seduction* 7, *Streetwise* 10, *Willpower* 6

Nature: *Orienting* 7

Knowledge: *Religions* 4

Craft: *Commerce* 6, *Driving* 7, *Sailing* 7

Equipment: Dagger

Combat Behavior: He attempts to avoid combat (Thuan isn't afraid to fight, but he would rather run and stay alive). If forced to fight, he uses his fists and feints; he uses the dagger only in an emergency.

Escape: At *Pain I*

Pain +1 at: 23 LP, 15 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less



- Thuan must make a *Feat of Strength* check +2 to throw open the window shutter. Otherwise, he loses 1 CR and the heroes apprehend him.

Over the Waat (3 CR)

Thuan swings hand-over-hand along a clothesline over the waat.

- Everyone makes a *Climbing* check +2 or an *Acrobatics (Balance)* check -2; MOV/2.
- The heroes must follow Thuan single-file, and have almost no time to decide the order in which they climb. If the players do not choose immediately, they act in INI order and Thuan gains a lead of 1 CR. Each subsequent hero to exit through the window follows Thuan at an additional 1 CR lag, unless they find an alternative way to chase him. *Swimming* or *Running* are possibilities. *Running* requires 5 *Body Control (Running)* checks. Every failed check must be repeated and costs an extra CR. Once successful, the hero stands on the other side of the waat, in front of the house Thuan is climbing toward.
- Heroes who fail a *Climbing* check don't fall into the water, they merely move slowly (MOV/4). Heroes only fall into the water if they botch.

On the Rooftops (5+1 CR)

Thuan climbs up to the roof so he can continue his flight on the city rooftops.

- To get onto the roof, the heroes must make a *Climbing (Walls)* check (this does not close the distance). If a hero fails a check, they must repeat it in the following CR.
- Heroes who swam or ran first must make two *Climbing (Walls)* checks to get onto the roof.
- Once on the roof, Thuan and the heroes alternate between running across steep roofs and jumping over gaping street openings for 5 CR. To do so, they must make alternating *Body Control (Balance)* checks +3 (MOV/2), and *Body Control (Jumping)* checks +2 (full MOV).
- If a hero fails a check, they fall, receive no MOV bonuses, and must spend the next CR getting back to their feet.
- A botch means the hero falls from a height of 10 yards (see *Core Rules*, page 340) and takes full damage. If the hero uses a Fate Point, they fall into a waat and sustain DP/4 (ignoring PRO). However, they also lose 3 CR because they must swim back to land and climb up to the roof again.

Through the Streets (5+1 CR)

In one fluid motion, Thuan slides down a drainpipe onto the street below (*Body Control (Acrobatics)* -2, no movement; fail = loss of 1 CR, botch = fall). Afterward, he runs down the street (5 CR).

- If the heroes want to follow him, they can either slide down the drainpipe, as well, or climb down the wall

(*Climbing (Walls)* check, no movement, 2 CR; fail = loss of 1 CR, botch = fall).

- While the heroes are on the ground, use the chase rules found in the *Core Rules*, page 349 for checks (*Body Control (Running)* + MOV).
- Thuan knocks over passersby (Heroes are at -2 MOV as they try to avoid stepping on people).
- Using *Feat of Strength*, Thuan drags passersby into the heroes' path (loss of 1 CR; Heroes can use *Feat of Strength (Pushing & Bending or Dragging & Pulling)* checks to try to move the people out of their way, but lose 1 CR).
- Thuan kicks out a market stall's legs (-2 MOV), and the vendor's fish suddenly cover the ground, turning it into a slippery mess (to avoid, heroes can use *Body Control (Jumping)* checks, but must long-jump at least four yards. Fail = stumble, make a *Body Control (Balance)* check to keep from falling; loss of 1 CR. Fail again = fall, loss of 2 CR).

On the Boat (1+5 CR)

Thuan tosses a gondolier into the water (*Feat of Strength*, 1 CR) and paddles out into the lagoon (*Sailing* +1; the boat has MOV 10).

- The heroes must first untie another boat (*Ropes (Knots)* check -1; one check/CR).
- After they get a boat untied, they can follow Thuan with a *Sailing (Chases)* check +1.
- If the heroes don't catch up with Thuan within 5 CR, he gets out of range and escapes.

Option B: Thuan Flees from the Casino

Flight from the Casino

If Thuan notices the heroes before they see him, the distance between them is 40 feet.

- Thuan overturns the gaming table (*Feat of Strength* -2) and the chips go flying. Nearby gamblers grab at them, greedily. The heroes have MOV/2 for their next three *Body Control (Running)* checks.
- The heroes must make five checks, total.

If Thuan notices the heroes only after they're right next to him, he uses two Fate Points to throw the hero closest to him into the boltan table (one Fate Point to act first, another for the competitive *Feat of Strength* check). The chips fly off the table and greedy gamblers grab at them, burying the hero (the hero must make a *Feat of Strength (Lifting)* or *Body Control (Squirm)* check -1, 1 check/CR, to get free). The other heroes are 1D6+2 yards away from Thuan. They must make a *Body Control (Jumping)* check to sidestep the gamblers (-2 MOV; Fail = loss of 1 CR).

- This part of the chase lasts a total of 5 CR, meaning Thuan has 5 *Body Control* checks to get some distance between him and the heroes.

On the Boat (1+5 CR)

Thuan tries to steal a boat from the casino's landing stage. To do so, he must make a successful *Ropes (Knots)* check (1 check/CR). Afterward, he has 5 CR to try to escape the heroes (*Sailing* +2). The boat has base MOV 10; in quiet waters, it has MOV 15.

- The heroes can follow Thuan in another boat (they must first make a *Ropes (Knots)* check, 1 check/CR) using *Sailing (Chases)* +2.
- They can also choose to follow Thuan on land using *Body Control (Running)* checks. The heroes must overtake Thuan and jump onto his boat from a bridge (free action, *Body Control (Jumping)* check -1; Fail = fall into the water) or lower themselves from a bridge and pull him off the boat (to do this, they must have enough of a head start to use 1 CR for a *Body Control (Acrobatics)* check. Afterward, they must lift Thuan up with a competitive *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* check. If they fail, Thuan falls into the water and they must continue the chase while swimming).
- The heroes can also swim to follow Thuan. This requires a *Swimming (Chases)* check (1 check/CR). In the still waters of the waats, the heroes have MOV x 1.5.

On the Rooftops

If he cannot escape in the boat, Thuan leaves the boat and climbs up the wall of a house. This requires two successful *Climbing (Walls)* checks (1 check/CR).

- After the first check, Thuan is no longer in range of his pursuers on the water. They must follow him onto the rooftops to catch him.
- Heroes who followed Thuan on land can catch up with him here. After a successful check, they are in the same CR as Thuan. They need only a successful *Climbing (Walls)* check to follow him onto the roof. They can also try to circumvent his rooftop escape by making a competitive *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* check against Thuan's *Body Control (Squirm)* check, both of which cost 1 CR.
- If Thuan makes it to the roof, continue the chase using the content in the option *On the Rooftops* on page 43.

Got You, Knave!

After the heroes catch Thuan, they'll likely interrogate him and confront him with their evidence. • ○

Thuan's alibi and attitude toward the heroes is listed on page 37. If the heroes met with Svealinja Watergaard, they should notice the similarities between Thuan and the description of her burglar at some point during their interrogation. If they discover the truth, it exonerates him, as Thuan could not rob the merchant's storehouse and murder his father in the counting house at the same time.

Naturally, Thuan sticks to his version of the story (see his alibi) and denies every claim. You can play this scene through or resolve it via competitive checks. Depending on whether Thuan speaks truth or lies, use *Persuasion* or *Fast-Talk (Manipulation or Subterfuge)* checks for him. The heroes can try to determine whether he is lying with *Empathy (Sense Deception)* checks. Alternatively, the heroes can attempt to use *Fast-Talk, Intimidation (Interrogation or Threats), Persuasion, or Seduction* to convince Thuan to confess or tell the truth (which is not the same thing, in this case). Thuan reacts with momentary surprise if the heroes confront him with the evidence from his apartment (an *Empathy* check shows his surprise), but he tries not to let it deter him. He believes the heroes are bluffing with their accusations, and accuses them of lying. If the heroes insist the evidence is real, Thuan claims someone planted it on him.

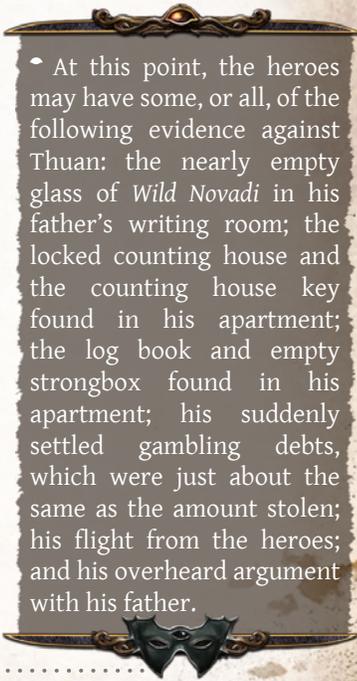
Thuan acts even more surprised if the heroes mention his father's death, and must make a successful *Self-Control* check to keep his composure. Even if he succeeds, the heroes notice his surprise with an *Empathy* check +1. He was unaware of the event until this moment.

It makes no difference to the plot whether the heroes believe Thuan, but if your gaming group typically uses such rules, you can use *Roleplaying Social Conflicts* (see page 8) against them at this point to convince them of Thuan's innocence.

The Lad Speaks the Truth!

If the heroes believe Thuan, they are faced with a problem. Their entire investigation up to this point focused on Thuan de Vries as the guilty party. If they now believe he is innocent, they must start over completely and build a new case. Apparently, someone else was involved; that's the only explanation for how evidence from the crime scene found its way into Thuan's apartment. And who paid off Thuan's debts from the counting house's earnings? It appears someone wanted to frame him.

The heroes can revisit Stordian Goudtand (page 40) or Thuan's neighbors (page 38) for clarification. Before they embark on another wild goose chase, you should continue with *The Dead Man from the Waat*, on page 49, which might set them on a new trail.



- At this point, the heroes may have some, or all, of the following evidence against Thuan: the nearly empty glass of *Wild Novadi* in his father's writing room; the locked counting house and the counting house key found in his apartment; the log book and empty strongbox found in his apartment; his suddenly settled gambling debts, which were just about the same as the amount stolen; his flight from the heroes; and his overheard argument with his father.

Or, perhaps the heroes remember their promise to inform Odina about any new developments (see *On the Culprit's Trail*, on page 46).

Thuan is thankful the heroes believe him, and supports them in any way he can. Thuan is no stranger to Grangor or its criminal underworld. From now on, the heroes receive a +2 bonus whenever they *Ask Around* in the city.

Tell It to the Judge!

If the heroes don't believe Thuan, a *Law (Horasian Empire)* check +4 tells them they must hand Thuan over to the guard, since he is a murder suspect.

In the **guard's garrison (26)**, a sinister-looking building with Garetian-style lancet windows, they meet up with Adaon Makkelijk and Gilmon de Traach (see page 23) once more. They find the guards resting their feet on their desks, telling each other dirty jokes, and consuming yet more coffee.

Both guards still believe Sumudan's death was clearly a suicide and regard the heroes' tenacity as a nuisance. They know Thuan quite well; and, while they would love to have locked him up for several offenses long ago, they don't believe he has it in him to murder his father. The know-it-all heroes presenting Thuan as the most likely murder suspect greatly amuses them. Their amusement quickly turns to anger, though, if the heroes refuse to amend their report—even after the guards' rebuke. Convincing the guards requires a bit of persuasion.

It is best to play out this scene by exchanging arguments with your players. Let your players explain why they believe Thuan murdered his father—his motivation for doing so and the incriminating evidence they found. This way, you can find out which information is still fresh in their minds and pose questions about irregularities for which they do not yet have answers—for instance, who paid Thuan's debts, since he says he didn't—making them rethink their position.

This scene's outcome is entirely open; so, if you prefer, you can decide it with checks. You can do this after a bit of discussion to end the scene in a friendly manner—neither the heroes nor the guards could sway one another—or, you can skip the discussion and jump straight to the checks.

Have the heroes make a cumulative group check (*Persuasion (Debate)* -4; 2 minutes, 3 heroes, any number of attempts) against Adaon and Gilmon's cumulative group check (*Willpower (Resist Persuasion)*; 2 minutes, any number of attempts). The first group to reach 10 QL, wins.

The guards' attitudes toward the heroes start at 3, and can either be negatively or positively affected by the quality of the heroes' arguments. To change their attitudes, each hero participating in the check can choose to suspend the check for one round and try instead to improve the guards' attitudes with a one-time check, using *Fast-Talk (Manipulation or Sweet-Talk)* -2 or *Seduction (Flirting)* -2. This distracts the guards, keeping them from making their competitive check for that round. However, their attitude only increases by 1, and the heroes cannot increase their attitude level beyond 5 in this manner.

For every argument they present that emphasizes Thuan's guilt, the heroes receive a +1 bonus to their check. Thus, the more evidence they present against him, the easier it should be to convince the guards of his guilt.

If the Heroes Succeed: The guards lock Thuan in the **city prison (27)**, and the townspeople—full of admiration—openly praise the heroes. Even the guards abandon their initial arrogance and show the heroes some respect. The Grangorers are pleased the heroes solved the case so quickly; and, since the evidence against Thuan is compelling, they hope to have a verdict in just a few days. This can mean only one thing: Thuan will die by drowning in the Hangmanwaat.

If the Heroes Fail: If they are unable to convince Adaon and Gilmon of Thuan's guilt, and the guards set Thuan free and recommend the heroes keep their noses out of guard business from now on, as they clearly have no idea what true detective work entails. Thuan goes into hiding and uses his contacts to make the heroes' lives difficult. Many local scoundrels' attitudes toward the heroes decrease by 1, and the heroes' *Asking Around* checks in the city receive a -1 penalty from now on.

• A quick verdict creates tension for the heroes. They have barely left the garrison when they realize they may have suspected the wrong person. But the guards won't believe Thuan's innocence now, not after all the effort the heroes expended to convince them otherwise. If the heroes want to make up for their mistake, they need to find proof of Thuan's innocence, and must do so quickly. The clock is ticking. Adjust the execution time to the heroes' progress so they can prevent Thuan's death just in the nick of time.



On the Culprit's Trail

Whether the heroes suspect they were on the wrong trail all along, or smugly believe justice was served, they likely end up talking to Odina Hortemann—Sumudan's old friend who asked them to give her and the other shareholders a report the following day (see page 27). If needed, you can remind your heroes of their promise.

Should they decide not to go see Odina and the shareholders for any reason, *The Dead Man from the Waat* (page 49) should give them a new trail to follow—continuing the adventure before your players get bored with fruitless investigations.

The Shareholders

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Embedded in a row of noble, burgher houses, lies the quite unremarkable House of the Traveling Salesman—the local temple of Phex. It is a tall, sandstone building, with a peaked roof and nine steps leading up to decorative columns.

As you enter the building, the wild disorder of excited shouts from multiple voices and the hectic ringing of a bell greets you. Dozens of men and women gather around an enclosed plateau, wildly flailing papers about and yelling seemingly arbitrary numbers to the Blessed Ones in gray robes up on the plateau. With great composure, the Blessed Ones listen to the numbers, then motion to the crowd to accept additional offers. Then, they ring a large hand bell and exchange the owner's papers for other papers or heavy bags. In the background, a novice climbs a large ladder to a chalkboard containing an oversized chart, to which he adds another number to an already lengthy list.

It is so loud in here, you can hardly hear your own voices.



The heroes enter the heart of the temple of Phex, the large trading hall in which numerous businesses and shipping companies conduct daily trade from one hour of Phex to the other (9am to 9pm). The Blessed Ones of Phex on the plateau calmly take the merchants' offers and auction them off to the highest bidder. If no higher offer is made after a brief time, they ring the bell—sealing the deal. Afterward, one of the novices writes the purchase price on the large table and the new stock price is set.

Commerce or Math check

QL 1: People trade a lot of property documents here. The board shows each share's price for the last seven days. Many shares' prices seem to remain quite constant, while the prices of others fluctuate greatly.

QL 2: The board shows de Vries' name. It looks like his shares were steadily increasing in price, then fell suddenly the day the news of Sumudan's death broke. Since then, the share price seems subject to unpredictable jumps.

QL 3+: The share price fluctuations seem to directly relate to the share's credibility. The riskier the property document, the higher the fluctuations—and the potential profit a person can make. *Cunda*—the Grangoran merchant house—seems to have more stable property documents than long-distance trade companies, even though an entity the size of HPNC promises a certain amount of loss insurance.



The Great Con

Odina's agents (♠ the albino, *Tristoban Goldstick*; ♠ *Alborn Patara*, the man with the red beard; and ♠ *Remira ter Haien*, the bald woman) are here, attempting to sell her share certificates a few at a time. While Tristoban acts as her seller, the other two prevent a collapse in the stock's value by making offers slightly above the starting price—and buying the certificates if need be. The following day, Tristoban offers the same shares back to the market at asking price—a minor loss Odina gladly accepts. They repeat this process every day.

The heroes should notice this process during the scene, but they may not find it strange. However, even the observation can lead them to suspect something and they may decide to tail the three. Of course, Odina's agents are prepared to ward off suspicion—they're staying in three different inns: Tristoban stays in the **Vinsalter Court (A10)** inn (Q6/P6/B40), Alborn in the **Blue Phecadi (A02)** hotel (Q5/P5/B35), and Remira in **The Corner (A11)** hotel (Q4/P5/B18).

If the heroes want to follow one of Odina's agents, they must first make a competitive *Stealth (Hide)* check against the agent's *Perception (Spot)* (SR 6, (11/13/13)). Afterward, a form of passive chase ensues (see *Core Rules*, page 349) using *Streetwise (Shadowing)* instead of *Body Control (Running)*. The distance between the heroes and the agent at the beginning of the chase is 10 yards. If the distance increases to more than 18 yards over 5 CR, the heroes lose track of the agent they are pursuing. In addition to their *Streetwise (Shadowing)* check, the agents make a *Perception (Spot)* check (SR 6, (11/13/10)) each CR, with a bonus of +1 for their *Area Knowledge*. If they notice their pursuers, they begin to purposefully hide in dark corners or crowds of people to try to lose the heroes. Once an agent notices the heroes, every check the heroes make receives a penalty of -1 for the remainder of the chase.

A hero ready to invest about 6 hours shadowing the agents can discover Tristoban meeting with the others to retrieve the shares. If the heroes achieve a net QL of at least 2 using relevant Social skills against the agents' *Willpower* (SR 7, (12/13/10), SPI 2), the three divulge their employer and her motivation.



Perception (Spot) check

QL 1: Arn Knokenbreeker, Odina's brawny bodyguard, stands back a bit from the traders, in a corridor. He watches the business transactions with a stony gaze; it seems he is waiting for someone or something.

QL 2: Up front, at the plateau, you hear them call out the name *de Vries*. A wealthy-looking man with conspicuous white hair and light eyes (an albino) offers an entire stack of share certificates—worth well over the 100-ducat value being asked. Initially, no one seems to want to purchase them; you hear whispers about it being too risky. Just when it seems like the shares may sell at that price, a man with a red beard speaks up and offers 110 ducats: “*The fleet arrives soon... these shares will be worth five times that.*” A bald woman also enters the bidding, and the price of the shares swiftly rises until they sell for 188 ducats.

QL 3+: Neither the man with the red beard nor the bald woman win the bid. After their initial bids, they withdrew from the bidding competition.

Crisis Meeting

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Odina Hortemann and the other shareholders meet in a luxuriously-furnished side hall to discuss their current situation. About two dozen merchants—both patricians and simple craftsmen who spent their entire life's savings on a share of Sumudan de Vries' venture—sit around a large table, practically fuming as they listen intently to Odina's attempts to appease them.

“Please, ladies and gentlemen!” *Odina* says, “Considering the current situation, I understand you're all thinking about selling your shares as quickly as possible. But, let

me emphasize how devastating that would be for all of us. Panicked selling will ruin the stock price, causing not only the seller, but the rest of us to lose our money. We must remain calm. Lord Boron has called Sumudan to his side, but Sumudan's legacy is still on its way to us. Soon, it will reach Grangor and reward those guided by reason instead of their feelings.”

A murmur runs through the hall. It seems the patrician's words do not convince everyone. Quite a few here fear they will lose everything if they hold onto their shares much longer.



Arguments in Favor of Selling the Shares

- “How do we know there's not a connection between Sumudan's death and the venture?”
- “Has anyone heard from the fleet recently? What if it doesn't return, after all?”
- “We have the month of Efferd. Soon, the winter storms will start. I may wait another week, but I'm starting to lose hope these ships will ever arrive in Grangor intact.”

From Odina's perspective, the heroes enter the room just in time. She interrupts the murmuring doubters and introduces the heroes to the shareholders. She tells them she asked the heroes to shed light on the circumstances surrounding Sumudan's death. All eyes are now on the heroes, as Odina asks them to share the progress they've made in their investigation.

Example Shareholders

♠ *Murak Kaarstett* (62; gray hair; bulging stomach; expensive, velvet clothes; heavy breath; sweaty forehead;



merchant) is nervous, but hesitant—he’s afraid to lose his money, so he tries to persuade himself and others that there are good reasons not to sell their shares immediately. He does not dare take the first step, though, as he does not want to be the only one to suffer losses. *Willpower* 5 (11/13/14), SPI 2

👤 *Othonia ter Brook* (37; long, black hair; icy gaze; patrician daughter from a wealthy shipping company dynasty; the de Vries fleet sailed alongside ships belonging to her family) fears the loss of her family’s ships. She insists Sumudan’s death cannot be related in any way to the Uthuria fleet. The fleet will return soon—it must. *Willpower* 8 (14/13/13), SPI 2

👤 *Rahyanis Laevigata* (44; blonde hair; determined; mage) invested a considerable amount of her wealth in de Vries’ shares. Despite this, she is in favor of selling them. Her fatalistic attitude is, “If the ship you’re sailing on has a leak, you’d better get off the ship!” *Willpower* 10 (14/14/14), SPI 2

👤 *Vero Finesmith* (52; short, salt-and-pepper hair, moustache; leather apron; pale face, with beads of sweat on his forehead; master carpenter; guided by options, sways between extremes) took out a loan against his workshop for the chance to gain a fortune. He’ll be bankrupt if the shares lose their worth. *Willpower* 4 (11/12/12), SPI 1

◦ Since other shareholders also are quite surprised to hear someone is trying to frame Thuan for his father’s murder, you should not allow your players to make an *Empathy* check to detect Odina’s surprise. This would mark her surprise as something unusual, raising suspicion.

Odina hopes the heroes followed the trail she laid out and have arrived to proclaim the verdict in the de Vries’ murder case. If the shareholders discover the merchant’s death was because of a tragic turn within his own family, she believes they’ll be reassured and hold on to their shares.

She does not expect the possibility the heroes could doubt this theory and suspect someone is trying to frame Thuan. If the heroes announce their theory here, thereby publicly stabbing her in the back, she is all the more surprised. ◦ On the other hand, the heroes’ doubts arouse the shareholders’ interest, and they barrage the heroes with detailed questions about their evidence and their theories. After all, there may be a clue in all this information as to whether they should keep or sell their shares. Play out this scene much like the scene with the guards: quizzing your players about their theories and knowledge and posing questions to which they don’t yet have answers.

Two options are likely here, as follows.

If the heroes believe Thuan is guilty: This pleases Odina. The other shareholders want to hear more about how Thuan accomplished this deed (this is a good opportunity to plant doubts in your players’ theories). The shareholders then say a joyous goodbye to the heroes, and Odina gratefully rewards them with 10 ducats each (which she insidiously pays them in de Vries share certificates).

If the heroes doubt Thuan is guilty: This surprises the shareholders, who become even more interested in solving the circumstances surrounding this case. They offer to pay the heroes 10 ducats each if the heroes solve the case on their behalf. Until the heroes resolve this crisis, the shareholders promise to meet here daily so the heroes always know where to find them.

The Dead Man from the Waat

Location: South Grangor, Sudertown, or Newhaven

This scene marks the adventure's decisive turning point. Whether the heroes believe Thuan is guilty up to this point or have already begun to look for another suspect, the sudden reappearance of *Darion Pekhebbor's* body sets the heroes (back) on the right track.

Ordinarily, this event would occur shortly after the heroes give their report to the shareholders. However, you may also use this event to put your heroes back on the right track and prevent frustration if they get sidetracked earlier and do not know how to continue.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

People in the street suddenly begin to speak in hushed tones and push toward the canal bank closest to you, where a large crowd is already forming. Many gasp and cover their mouths; others mutter, uneasily.

Then, you see the bloated corpse—and the man attempting to fish it from the canal. The dead man has thick mooring ropes wrapped around his arms and hips. Clearly, he had no chance to escape his wet grave. His black jacket—with bronze buttons and a ship with bloated sails in front of a rising sun embroidered on the left side—is quite striking against his pale skin.



The players likely recall seeing a similar jacket numerous times before—for example, on the de Vries' counting house manager, Tadeo Agtstone. The merchant house's freight boxes also display this symbol, as did the box they found in Thuan's apartment. If the heroes don't remember it on their own, have them make a check using *Perception (Spot)* +3 or *Streetwise (Asking Around or Judging Location)* +3. If they succeed, they remember where they saw the symbol before. Alternatively, the heroes overhear someone in the crowd say in hushed tones that the symbol on his jacket means this man worked for the merchant house de Vries.

It seems **▲ Nesro Aicher**, the fisherman at the canal bank, just pulled a merchant house officer's body from the water. If the heroes question him, he points to his fishing boat and tells them he noticed an unusual resistance while trying to raise anchor. When he tugged on the anchor chain, the body floated up in front of him.

Examining the Body

The officer's body is strangely deformed and has taken on a faint, blue color. His arms are tied to his upper body with a mooring rope, expertly knotted. Apparently, he did not land in the canal by accident.

Ropes check +3

QL 1: The mooring rope's end is frayed and hangs down, loosely.

QL 2: It seems the rope ripped apart here.

QL 3+: A heavy object tied to the rope probably pulled the dead man underwater. When the fisherman raised his anchor, he tore the rope and pulled the body back to the surface.



Treat Wounds check

QL 1: The dead man's skin is pale blue and bloated. There are many darker blue spots below the skin's surface and on his face, which is noticeably swollen. He also has blood encrusted in several places.

QL 2: The body shows signs of trauma. His many bruises indicate the man was beaten with bare fists or a blunt object before he died. Also, his incisors are missing.

QL 3: If a hero examines the body more closely, smaller fractures and chipped bones become apparent, particularly in the man's face. It is uncertain, however, whether the man was already dead when he entered the waat.

QL 4+: No water issues from the man's body when someone presses on his stomach and chest multiple times. This means he was already dead and no longer breathing when he entered the water.

In this case, for once, the Brekker Band is not involved. This trail is a red herring, which the heroes soon find out if they follow up on it. Following this trail leads them to the optional scene *The Brekker Band* (see page 33), in which the heroes can foil the thugs' plans, but not get any closer to the truth.

In fact, Arn Knoenbreeker killed Darion Pekhebbber and tried to make the murder look like the Brekker Band's work. However, unlike their victims, Pekhebbber was dead before he was dumped into the waat. With a bit of effort, the heroes can discover this is an attempt to frame the Brekker Band, provided they are not blinded by their first impressions.



A New, Hot Trail?

If they played through *The Employee* (page 31) plot line, the heroes may draw parallels to Bram Ironjaw and the Brekker Band. After all, those thugs wanted to (or did) bury poor Merago in the waat. But, even if you didn't play this plot line, or if your heroes don't recall it, it is by no means secret knowledge hidden from them for long. Even while they stand around the body, the onlookers begin to whisper fearfully. Everyone knows how the Brekker Band deals with traitors and enemies.

The avenue down which the adventure continues depends on which trail your heroes pursue, as follows.

- The heroes can investigate the Brekker Band (see page 33).
- They can attempt to reconstruct Darion Pekhebbber's last night alive (see page 51).

The way in which the murderer disposed of Darion's body is not the only obvious trail the heroes can follow. The officer's jacket is much more conspicuous, as it leads to the merchant house de Vries. The counting house manager, Tadeo Agtstone, can identify the dead man; much to his surprise, it is Darion Pekhebbber—an officer with the Uthuria fleet! If he is in Grangor, the fleet should be here, as well.

The Brekker Band

Optional Content

After Aicher pulls the dead Pekhebbber from the waat, eye-witnesses conclude the Brekker Band must be behind the murder. It is possible the heroes already witnessed how Bram Ironjaw and his henchmen deal with their enemies; therefore, they may want to pay these thugs another visit. To discover more, they have two options: they can visit their old friend, Torvon Snakkeling, or return to the *Dragon Pit*.

If you want to shorten the following section, you can have your heroes make a few *Asking Around* checks and provide them the same information they would learn in these next two scenes.

Well, If It Isn't Our Old Friend!

Depending on the time of day, the heroes find Torvon (see page 35) in his apartment or the *Seven Winds* tavern (page 32). His current attitude level toward the heroes and willingness to help depends on the outcome of their previous encounter.

Have the heroes make a cumulative group check using *Fast-Talk*, *Intimidation*, *Persuasion*, or *Seduction* (2 minutes, 7 attempts, up to 3 heroes) against Torvon's cumulative *Willpower* check (SR 6; see page 35 for further stats). Whenever the heroes achieve more QL than Torvon, share one of the following pieces of information.

- Torvon doesn't know anything about Bram Ironjaw killing one of Sumudan de Vries' officers: "But, even if I did, you've seen how they deal with traitors."
- He recommends the heroes steer clear of Bram Ironjaw and not get mixed up in his business: "There's a reason the guards haven't caught him, despite all the bounties on his head."

Back in the Dragon Pit

The *Dragon Pit* (see page 32) is always crowded in the evening. To find anything or anyone in here, the heroes must make a cumulative group check using *Streetwise (Asking Around)* (10 minutes, 7 attempts, any number of heroes). The check receives a penalty of -1 for each participating hero with a social status higher than 2, and a bonus of +1 for each participating hero with a social status of 1. Each hero can replace *Streetwise* with either *Empathy*, *Fast-Talk*, *Intimidation*,

Persuasion, or *Seduction* once during the cumulative check. A botch turns the mood in the *Dragon Pit* abruptly foul, and any hero who failed the check ends up in the middle of a vicious brawl (use the *Brawling Points* rules on page 33 and the *Brekker Band Thug* stats on page 35).

The heroes can learn the following information about Darion in the *Dragon Pit*.

QL 4: "I heard the dead man was an officer with de Vries."

QL 5: "He came back from Uthuria and went to the Red Lotus first thing to find a prostitute. Apparently, they have ugly women in Uthuria."

QL 6: "From Uthuria, really? I heard he came from Brabak. Must have been shipwrecked or something. Poor bastard!"

QL 7: "I don't know what he has to do with the Brekker Band... He paid for the prostitute, in any case."

QL 8: "He smelled like booze and was so depressing, he even made the prostitutes cranky."

QL 9: "I'm sure he went drinking again, afterward."

QL 10: "I'll be surprised if Ironjaw had something to do with his death. He sends only his own people to sleep with the fishes."

Darion's Last Night

To find Darion Pekhebbber's true killer, the heroes must succeed at reconstructing the last few hours of the officer's life. As they only have a few bits of information, they probably won't have much choice but to do things the hard way and *Ask Around* in the city. The heroes are also pressed for time if they made sure Thuan is going to meet the hangman in a few days.

The heroes quickly ascertain the man's identity, as they have a reliable point of reference in his jacket. Thus, their *Asking Around* checks receive a +5 bonus (1-hour interval). The question of Darion's last known location, however, is more difficult to establish. The heroes can try giving Darion's description when they *Ask Around* to find out who last saw him. There is no penalty to such a check, but it has an 9-hour interval and provides the following information.

QL 2: Darion arrived in Grangor the day before Sumudan's death.

QL 3: He arrived on a ship from Brabak.

QL 6: A gondolier took him to Old Grangor—close to the de Vries counting house—and then to South Grangor.

QL 10: Someone saw Darion in the *Murder Him* tavern the evening before Sumudan's death.

The Favorite Tavern

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Tall apartment buildings throw long shadows onto a crooked brickhouse built right next to the river. Listless waves wash against the wooden landing pier with a smack, greedily licking at the soggy beams on which the tavern was built. Light pours through the slats of the closed shutters and you hear the echoes of crude jeering inside.

A warm haze of sweat and beer greets you as you step into the notorious tavern. A dozen or so pairs of eyes turn to scrutinize you, silently asking what you want here.

In the tavern named for a famous imman exclamation, a rough, hostile mood greets the heroes. They do not like strangers in the *Murder Him*. No, the *Eagles* players and their most faithful fans much prefer to be among their own, so they are free to drown their frustrations about the increasingly rare games with cheap booze and relive stories about the *good old days*. This is evident by the interior decorations, as well: pennants and banners with the *Grangor Eagles* emblem decorate the sparse walls next to shelves containing trophies in all shapes and sizes. Imman sticks made from sturdy ash wood also hang on the walls, crossed like sabers, and old goalpost nets hang from the ceiling. The tables and chairs are made from plain timber; closer looks reveal they were not all made by the same carpenter. It seems one or two were replaced at some point.

Typical Patrons

The heroes don't encounter Arn Knokenbreeker here, but other patrons are present.

♣ *Lip-Lente* (27; broad shoulders; muscular upper body; arms like a young birch tree; thick, scarred upper lip; former imman player; loves the game; hates her dreary life; desperately needs someone to keep *Rahja-Raime* away from her; *Willpower* 5 (14/13/13), SPI 1)

♣ *Rahja-Raime* (called Rimaldo; 36; shoulder-length, curly hair; beer belly that always pokes out the bottom of his greasy shirt; never without a beer stein in hand; alcoholic day laborer whose life is all about imman; knows the final score of every game by heart and worships the players like gods, especially *Lente*—with whom he is smitten; *Willpower* 4 (13/13/13), SPI 2)

♣ *Silent Silvio* (52; unkempt; smells of sweat; limps; out-of-work drunkard who comes here to try to forget his life. Not interested in imman, or anything, really; only wants some peace and quiet)

Heroes with a social status of 1 or 2 who enter the bar must earn the trust of those present (*Attitude* 3); if their social status is at least 3, the bargoers treat them with awkward politeness (*Etiquette (Manners)*; SR 2 (9/11/10); *Attitude* 7), hoping to gain lucrative employment as a bodyguard. Otherwise, they keep away from such people—their worlds are too different, and they do not like pushy behavior here (*Attitude* 3).



Shorten this process by having the mood turn sour before the players make the check.



To help avoid the brawl, increase the players' number of attempts to succeed on the cumulative check.

C'mon, Spit it Out! What the Patrons Know

The patrons know enough to set the heroes on the right trail. However, they won't readily disclose it to strangers. They get annoyed quickly and meet persistent questioning with brute force.

Have the players make a cumulative group check using *Fast-Talk* (5 minutes, any number of heroes, 3 attempts), which receives a +2 bonus or a -2 penalty, depending on the patrons' initial attitudes toward the heroes (see above). Once, during the cumulative check, a hero can replace *Fast-Talk* with another appropriate skill. After three attempts, the mood turns sour and the heroes find themselves in a rough tavern brawl, unless they are content to leave with the information they already possess.

Result

QL 2: Many of those present remember the officer, who came here that evening to drown his sorrows in alcohol—they always remember unfamiliar faces here.

QL 4: No one really paid much attention to him, but they remember that Arn Knochenbreeker, the *Eagles'* captain, sat next to him for a while.

QL 6: The officer might have said something about a shipwreck. He seemed like he'd been through a lot.

QL 8: The officer's yammering seemed to annoy Arn, who looked momentarily as though he might punch the officer.

QL 9: The innkeeper,  *Ulanio* (63; white curly hair; moustache; tattooed, hairy arms; eye-patch; *Willpower* 6 (12/13/14), *SPI* 2) is still angry. The officer left at some point to relieve himself and never returned, even though he owed the innkeeper more than a ducat for his drinks.

QL 10: Arn left shortly afterward and also didn't return.

• The intent is for the heroes' fists to do the talking. After the brawl, they receive the missing pieces of information from their overwhelmed opponents.

Rumors About Arn

• “Arn used to be a wild bull; now he's just a tame ox. That odious patrician now controls his leash.” (+)

• “Really? You've never heard of Arn Knochenbreeker? The best captain the *Eagles* ever had! It is a real shame you don't see him playing anymore.” (matter of opinion)

• “He used to come in here every day; but now, working for the Hortemann woman takes up most of his time.” (+)

• “That wretched traitor! He can get lost! Suddenly we're no longer good enough for him? He's mooning about with that vile patrician. I think he honestly believes she'll marry him one day.” (+/-)

• “The officer seemed to spoil Arn's mood. He became quiet and restless and left the tavern right after the stranger.” (+/-)

Bar Fight!

At some point, the mood turns sour and the heroes find themselves in a rowdy brawl—during which no single piece of furniture remains intact. Encourage the heroes to make use of items in their environment—they can throw dishes and hit their opponents over the head with chairs. Naturally, it won't be long before the bargoers grab the imman sticks from the wall, as they know how to use them quite well.

The heroes face (12 minus the QL from their cumulative group check) enemies. The rest of the bar patrons either

Imman Players and Fans

COU 14 SGC 12 INT 13 CHA 11

DEX 12 AGI 14 CON 14 STR 14

LP 36 AE - KP - INI 14+1D6

SPI 2 TOU 2 DO 8 MOV 8

Unarmed: AT 14 PA 8 DP 1D6 RE short

Imman Stick (Cudgel): AT 14 PA 6 DP 1D6+1 RE short

PRO/ENC: 0/0

Advantages/Disadvantages: Negative Trait (Short Temper)

Special Abilities: Alertness, Feint I, Forceful Blow I, Improved Dodge I

Skills: *Body Control* 8, *Feat of Strength* 9, *Intimidation* 10, *Perception* 5 *Sailing* 4, *Self-Control* 7, *Stealth* 5, *Swimming* 4, *Willpower* 6

Combat Behavior: The imman players and their fans prefer to attack a single opponent in greater numbers. They use whatever weapons they can find, such as chairs and beer steins, and prefer to attack from behind.

Escape: After losing 50% LP; or, not at all, if using BP

Pain +1 at: 27 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP and less

run away or watch from the sidelines and bet on the fight's outcome. The brawl ends when the heroes defeat all their opponents, or the opponents run away. The heroes earn so much respect during the fight, the other bargoers (or their defeated opponents) answer any remaining questions they have.



If you want to make the fight more difficult for your players, involve more patrons.



Instead of using actual LP, you can use the *Brawling Points* rules from page 33. This way, combat causes only partial damage and won't weaken the heroes too much before the final showdown.

The items in the list below are everyday items that are quite unsuitable as weapons. They follow improvised weapons rules (improvised ranged weapons follow the same rules as improvised close-combat weapons, but whereas close-combat weapons botch on an AT or PA roll of 19-20, ranged weapons botch on an RC roll of 19-20).

Improvised Close-Combat Weapon Rules

| Name | Combat Technique | DP | P+T | AT/PA mod | RE |
|--|------------------|-------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Bottle (i) | Impact Weapons | 1D6+1 | STR 16 | -1/-3 | short |
| Note: Cracks after one attack, causing +1 DP and -1 PA thereafter | | | | | |
| Chair (i) | Impact Weapons | 1D6+3 | STR 15 | -2/-2 | medium |
| Note: Breaks after one attack | | | | | |
| Chair Leg (i) | Impact Weapons | 1D6+2 | STR 14 | -1/-3 | medium |
| Table (i) | Impact Weapons | 1D6+4 | STR 17 | -4/-1 | medium |
| Note: Breaks after one attack; Prerequisite: Strength 14 | | | | | |

Improvised Ranged Weapon Rules

| Name | Combat Technique | DP | Reload Time | RA |
|--|------------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Apple / Small Stone (i) | Thrown Weapons | 1D3 | 1 action | 2/4/8 |
| Beer Stein (i) | Thrown Weapons | 1D3+1 | 1 action | 2/4/8 |
| Note: Shatters after one attack | | | | |
| Crockery (i) | Thrown Weapons | 1D3+1 | 1 action | 2/4/8 |
| Note: Shatters after one attack | | | | |
| Vase (i) | Thrown Weapons | 1D3+1 | 1 action | 2/4/8 |
| Note: Shatters after one attack | | | | |



No Plaintiff, No Judge



After the brawl in the *Murder Him*, the heroes hit the adventure's home stretch. They learn the following facts from tracing the murdered officer Pekhebbber's trail to the imman tavern.

- Pekhebbber had an encounter with Arn Knochenbrecker in the *Murder Him*.
- Shortly after Pekhebbber left the tavern, Knochenbrecker left, as well.
- Arn Knochenbrecker happens to be Odina Hortemann's bodyguard.
- Pekhebbber was part of Sumudan de Vries' second fleet to Uthuria, whose return the Grangorers eagerly await. The fleet has not yet arrived in Grangor.
- No one in the counting house knew Pekhebbber was in town.
- Pekhebbber took a gondola to the de Vries counting house or its vicinity.
- Pekhebbber drank a lot of alcohol and seemed quite depressed.
- Pekhebbber arrived in Grangor on a ship from Brabak.

Arn Knochenbrecker should now be the heroes' most likely suspect for Pekhebbber's murder. He was angrily talking with Pekhebbber and the two of them left the tavern almost simultaneously. The fact that he is Odina Hortemann's bodyguard, who never leaves her side, should seem odd to the heroes, as it means he is connected to Sumudan de Vries' death, as well.

Odina Hortemann and Arn Knochenbrecker should now become the focus of the heroes' investigation. They have a concrete suspicion, but they must still prove their theory, which happens in the section *The Prime Suspect*, on page 55.

The fact that Pekhebbber was in Grangor should also cause the heroes to pause and think. Why would a member of the Uthuria fleet reach Grangor ahead of the fleet's return, and why would he allegedly come from Brabak? For now, the heroes must speculate about these clues; and their speculation is likely to become even more passionate in the next scene.

The Market Crier

The next time the heroes travel through the city, perhaps in search of Odina or Arn, play through the following scene.

A young merchant,  *Horun Goldstick* (24; short, blond hair; artificial smile; has a salesman's charm; *Attitude* 5), rings a hand bell to get attention. With his arms spread wide, he gestures toward his shop, ambitiously promising passersby *only here* can they purchase goods fresh from distant Uthuria. As proof of his statements, he offers hot cups of coffee at his shop's entrance.

Since the heroes recently discovered at least one person from the Uthuria fleet already returned to Grangor (Darion Pekhebbber), they may want to investigate the shopkeeper's claims. Or, they might assume the Uthuria fleet's crew mutinied and sold the goods on the black market. However, the shopkeeper's claims are more fantasy than reality, as follows.

-  The shopkeeper is one of the Hortemanns' employees. With a *Perception (Spot)* check +1, the heroes discover the Hortemanns' emblem (a thick *H* in front of a red circle) in numerous places throughout the store.
-  Horun purchased his goods from the Hortemann counting house, as usual.
-  If the heroes press him for answers (competitive check using *Fast-Talk*, *Intimidation*, *Persuasion*, or *Seduction* against Horun's *Willpower* (SR 6, (12/10/10)), Horun tells them exactly what goods he has for sale: 2 crates

of coffee, 10 sacks of peanuts, 20 ounces of amber, and 3 sacks of cacao beans—all of which, he claims, are *fresh from Uthuria*.

-  Horun tells the heroes the Uthuria fleet sailed into a heavy storm and is undergoing repairs in Brabak. This freight was sent as a taste of what's to come and as proof of its imminent return. It arrived in Grangor yesterday (an *Empathy (Sense Deception)* check shows Horun is not lying—he believes what he says).
-  If the heroes played through *The Employee* plot line, they may notice these are the exact goods—in the exact amounts—Torvon Snakkeling stole from Sumudan de Vries' storehouse.

Odina's employees purchased the goods on the black market; she now has one of her employees sell them in one of her stores to encourage rumors that Sumudan's fleet will soon return. She attempts to remain as close to the truth as possible.

This ploy has the intended effect: news spreads quickly throughout the city, there are soon long lines outside Horun's store, and the de Vries stock value rises.



The Prime Suspect

After meeting Horun the market crier, the heroes should no longer have any doubt about Odina's involvement in the case. But, they can't prove it—at least, not yet. However, they collected much evidence during their investigation they may need to revisit, now that they have a new theory. It could be prudent to revisit old locations and ask new questions.

To obtain solid evidence against Odina and Arn and close the case, the heroes need to find answers to the following questions.

-  Where did Arn Knokenbreeker go after he left the *Murder Him?* (page 55)
-  Where did the villa Hortemann acquire goods from Uthuria? (page 56)
-  Where was Odina Hortemann the evening Sumudan de Vries died? (page 56)
-  Can Odina and Arn be placed at the counting house the night Sumudan died? (page 57)
-  Did Odina and Arn plant evidence on Thuan de Vries? (page 57)
-  Who paid Thuan's debt? (page 57)
-  Was Sumudan's death a suicide? (page 58)

If the heroes find answers to *most* of these questions, they can thwart Odina's plans (see *Odina's Downfall*, page 58).

It is not necessary to have *all* the answers; however, the heroes must do quite a bit of convincing, which is easier the more information they have.

It is important for your players to be able to put the adventure's background in the right context at this point. Therefore, you should not make things too difficult for them. This adventure can't cover every detail your players might question; but, as the GM, you have all the relevant information. Thus, you should resolve all trails your players want to follow, using a simple *Asking Around* check if they are false trails. This way, your players don't spend too much time on fruitless investigations. If your heroes get stuck, you can always use *Fate Points* to give them clues (see the optional rules for *Using Fate Points*, on page 6).



Finding Witnesses to the Officer's Murder

To accuse Arn Knokenbreeker of Darion Pekhebbber's murder, the heroes need one more crucial clue in the form of a witness. Even though Arn was careful to avoid getting caught when he dumped the body in the water, witnesses still saw him near where the body was found, around the time of Darion's death.

Arn over to the heroes. She acts as though their *eyewitness reports* are the trumped-up accusations of drunk sailors and nostalgic imman players, and provides an alibi for Arn: he accompanied her to the *King Khadan Hall* on the night in question, to guard her seat while she watched the performance of *The Flying Bornlander*. As evidence, she shows the heroes her entry ticket. There were no witnesses, as she was alone in the box. If the heroes find this odd, she informs them she supports the hall of arts as a patron and, because of her dedication, those who run the hall invite her to visit on a regular basis. She does not always invite a guest to accompany her.

Deciphering Odina: A substantial portion of Odina's statement is truth. The only lie is that Arn was there, too, guarding her seat. If the heroes doubt her statement, ask for a competitive check using *Fast-Talk (Manipulation)* +1 against Odina's *Empathy (Sense Deception)*. Keep your roll for Odina hidden, stating only the result of the check—if the heroes' QL is higher than Odina's, they are certain she's lying. If they lose the check, they see no signs that Odina is lying (though this does not mean they must believe her statement).

Investigating the Opera House

For a description of the opera house, see page 12. The *King Khadan Hall* has not yet begun to resume operations. Workmen are still trying to rebuild the damaged stage. The heroes might be able to find someone who remembers Odina leaving the performance early that night. Perhaps *Siranja Biret* (see page 28) remembers seeing Odina; or the pageboy, **♣** *Thallian Ackerman* (24; hair slicked back neatly with pomade; good posture; nasal voice; loves his profession; hates stingy, unfriendly guests; needs additional income because the opera house has closed; *Willpower* 8 (14/14/14), SPI 2), who was Odina's server that evening. He remembers the patrician ordered a bottle of *Golden Cliffs Aurora* (a tart, red wine). However, when he went to deliver the wine to her shortly after the intermission, she was gone. A box office employee, **♣** *Arnica Jolen*, says she saw Odina and her bodyguard leave the hall during the intermission.

If you wish to resolve this research using a check, have your players make a cumulative (group) check using either *Streetwise (Asking Around)* +2 or *Etiquette* +2 (5 minutes) to determine who can provide the information they need.

Back to the de Vries Counting House

Once the heroes can refute Odina's alibi, they must find evidence proving the patrician and her bodyguard were in the counting house on the night of the crime.

They may find the dried ink smudge on Sumudan's writing desk in the merchant house suspicious. It could indicate

someone interrupted Sumudan shortly after he finished writing something; otherwise, it is likely he would have removed the spot. The heroes might also remember Odina's white shirt had an ink spot if they saw the maid with it at the villa Hortemann.

However, it may prove more fruitful to the heroes to revisit the neighbors (see *The Neighborhood*, page 28) rather than the crime scene. If they suspect Arn and Odina were in the counting house that night, they could ask Captain Tonia ter Grachten once more exactly what she saw. Since the heroes can rule out the possibility the captain saw Gylduria de Vries and her husband (either because they visited *King Khadan Hall* and know Gylduria's husband was in an accident that night, or because they played through the scene entitled *The Daughter*), Captain Tonia can provide an acceptable description of Arn and Odina—if the heroes ask her the right questions. Captain Tonia also has a good reputation, which is useful for convicting Odina.

Who Framed Thuan?

If the heroes no longer believe Thuan killed his father and instead suspect Arn and Odina, they must also find evidence to prove the patrician and her bodyguard framed Thuan. To do so, they could *Ask Around* in Thuan's neighborhood again, or try to figure out who paid Thuan's debts.

Nosy Neighbors

If the heroes didn't question Thuan's neighbors on their first visit to his apartment (page 37), then now is the time to do so. Simona Durenald's observation about Thuan's visitor should, at the very least, give the heroes pause. Simona's description fits Arn Knokenbreeker, precisely. If the heroes now know Thuan was not home on the night in question because he was breaking into *Svealinja Watergaard's* storehouse, they might conclude someone broke into Thuan's apartment.

Thuan's Account

If your heroes spoke with the shady moneylender, Stordian Goudtand, in the *Wheel and Cup* tavern (page 39), then they know someone paid Thuan's gambling debts. It is possible they also know the repaid sum roughly corresponds to the amount stolen from the counting house. However, finding out who used the money to pay Thuan's debts is far more difficult a task. The Northland Bank's policy prohibits them from revealing who used the money to purchase the promissory note (they call this *banking secrecy*).

♣ *Jucaro Damotil*, a Northland Bank employee, starts out with attitude level 5 (+/- any advantages or disadvantages) toward the heroes. He is not willing to disclose an official secret to the heroes until his attitude reaches level 9. All *Fast-Talk*, *Persuasion*, and *Seduction* checks meant to force Jucaro to reveal what he knows (see page 9) receive a

penalty equal to the difference between Jucaro's current attitude level toward the heroes and level 9. Furthermore, Jucaro can make a *Willpower* check (SR 7 (11/13/12), SPI 2) to attempt to resist their manipulation. This means the heroes might end up wasting their time here; however, the following actions provide bonuses to their checks.

- The heroes can attempt to change *Jucaro's* attitude (see page 8) by each making a competitive check using their preferred skill (*Fast-Talk*, *Persuasion*, or *Seduction*). The checks don't receive initial penalties, but if Jucaro realizes the heroes are together, then each additional attempt to influence his attitude receives a cumulative penalty of -1 (this means the next attempt receives a penalty of -1, the attempt after that receives a penalty of -2, the attempt after that receives a penalty of -3, and so on). If the check is successful, then his attitude increases by the net QL (limit of 2) to a maximum of 7.
- The heroes can use spells and liturgical chants to make their Social skill checks easier. It is also possible to cast *Bannbaladin* (see *Core Rules*, page 288) to change Jucaro's attitude.
- Jucaro's attitude is automatically 1 higher when dealing with Blessed Ones other than Blessed Ones of Phex.
- If the heroes have gained Thuan's trust, he can appear before Jucaro as Sumudan's heir. The bank employee discloses information to Thuan far more readily than to the heroes. Additional checks receive a +2 bonus.

What the Heroes Find Out

The heroes can learn the following facts from Jucaro if they manage to sufficiently raise his attitude toward them and gain his trust.

- Odina Hortemann deposited 108 ducats and 3 silverthalers the day after Sumudan's death. She then told the bank to send a promissory note for this amount to the moneylender, Stordian Goudtand, to repay Thuan de Vries' debts.
- Sumudan's own debt amounted to more than five figures. He used many credits to outfit his current voyage to Uthuria. Furthermore, he didn't take out any insurance on the fleet—probably because of his lack of funds. Sumudan would have gone bankrupt if the fleet didn't return.

Did Sumudan, In Fact, Commit Suicide?

If the heroes learn Sumudan was in debt and would be bankrupt if he lost his fleet, they may decide the theory the merchant committed suicide could be right, after all. They might already suspect the Uthuria fleet isn't returning if they did any research into Darion Pekhebbber's murder.

With this knowledge, the heroes can probably reconstruct a reasonable course of events. But, to be certain, they must confront Odina. It is still quite possible she killed Sumudan; but, at the very least, she framed an innocent man and committed stock market fraud. Therefore, after they gather their evidence, the heroes must confront the antagonist.

Odina's Downfall

To convict Odina, the heroes need the following information.

- Odina does not have a solid alibi. She says she was at the *King Khadan Hall* that night, but she left the opera house early.
- Odina was seen at the crime scene, near the time of Sumudan's death.
- She planted false evidence on Thuan.
- Odina invested a lot of money in Sumudan's voyage to Uthuria (they can learn this information from rumors about Odina, from other investors, or from Odina herself; This can help the heroes understand Odina's motivation).

• The heroes may have promised to share their findings, anyway (see *The Shareholders*, on page 46). If not, it is likely Thuan is currently imprisoned. This is another a good reason to share their findings with all the shareholders—the merchant's son won't be freed unless the heroes can solve the entire case.

Furthermore, the heroes may have discovered Odina's henchmen selling de Vries shares in her name and rigging bids to attempt to raise prices.

This information is not necessary to convict Odina, but it can provide the heroes with important allies for the final confrontation.

Presenting the Evidence

No matter what the heroes find out about Odina, the patrician's social status is too high to convict her on circumstantial evidence. The heroes need a confession proffered in front of witnesses with good reputations and of equal or higher status than Odina's.

Luckily, Odina still regularly meets with the other shareholders. This provides the heroes the opportunity to disclose their investigation results in front of people with an equally high social status and accuse the patrician.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

While you're still a long way off, you hear furious voices that soon drown out the chaos in the temple of Phex's main hall. It is obvious the shareholders' nerves are getting raw in the side room.

A man says, “The share price hasn’t been this high in months. I say we go sell everything, immediately. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

Odina reprimands him in a calm voice, saying “My dear Kaarstett. Surely, you’ve heard: a taste of our waiting riches has already arrived. The rest will follow, once the fleet repairs are completed in Brabak.”

Another shareholder chimes in, saying, “That taste is nothing more than a few sacks of peanuts and a bit of coffee. That doesn’t really give us any information about what the ships might bring. I say, let’s sell—before we end up with empty cargo holds and empty coin bags.”

This may be the perfect time to shed some light on the matter....



Much like their last visit, the heroes find two dozen shareholders—as well as Odina and Arn—in the salon. Because the situation is tense, it is not difficult for the heroes to get everyone’s attention. In their current situation, the shareholders are desperate for news to help facilitate their decision to keep or sell their shares.

The Confession

By way of the shareholders, you can ask your players to present their chain of proof, backing Odina into a corner. Moderate their speech by asking questions like the following, forcing them to present their chain of proof in the correct order.

- What is their main theory? (Arn and Odina used Sumudan’s suicide to their advantage? Arn and Odina murdered Sumudan and/or Darion Pekhebber?)
- Can they refute Odina’s alibi?
- Can they prove Odina was at the crime scene?
- All the evidence points to Thuan... Can they prove otherwise?
- What would Odina gain from her deception?

For sample shareholder information about Murak Kaarstett, Othonia ter Broock, Rahyanis Laevigata, and Vero Finesmith, see page 48.

Naturally, Odina dismisses the heroes’ accusations (“You have no proof of that!”), and presents her alibi. This should prompt the heroes to present evidence to support their theory. The key to destroying Odina’s alibi lies in asking her about the second act of *The Flying Bornlander* on the night in question. Because she left the performance during the intermission, she doesn’t know about the accident, which reveals her lie.

If you like, you can also have your players make a cumulative group check using *Persuasion*. Each time a

hero reacts to a question, expanding the accusation, they can make a check and add their QL to the group’s total QL. If the heroes achieve 10 QL total in this manner, they convince the shareholders of their theory and Odina makes a complete confession.

Odina vehemently rejects the allegation that she killed Sumudan or had him killed. When she confesses to her crimes, she mentions Sumudan’s farewell note—which is in her vault. She is also adamant that she never asked Arn to kill Darion Pekhebber; rather, Arn presented her a *fait accompli*.

Arn angrily grinds his teeth at Odina’s betrayal; but, Odina prevents him from leaving by placing her hand on his chest to calm him. She has one remaining idea to save them from the noose.

A Matter of Negotiation

Odina’s confession should close the case, but the patrician has one, final scheme. Before the heroes arrest her, she addresses the shareholders.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Outrage spreads through the hall as soon as Odina confesses her lies. The merchants nervously and frantically talk amongst themselves. “Outrageous!”, someone says. “Scandal!”, yells another. The merchants’ faces reveal their obvious panic—you see beads of sweat forming on even the seemingly unconcerned mage’s forehead.

With determination, Odina raises her hands in the air and yells above the din, “Yes, it is all true!” The hall immediately falls silent, and she continues. “I found Sumudan dead in the courtyard. After reading his farewell letter, it became clear to me our shares wouldn’t be worth a single kreutzer if the public learned why he took his own life. I staged his murder to stall for time. I invented fake shipments, started rumors, and led you down the garden path so I had time to sell my shares in secret. For that, I am truly sorry, my friends.”

Outraged people almost shout her down, but Odina raises her voice, saying, “All is not lost! There is still a chance we may all leave this house as winners!” She unexpectedly points at you, saying, “These people are the only ones besides us who know the truth. If each of us gave them only a fraction of our shares, the truth would never have to leave this room. I’m certain that—together—we can still find a way to make a profit in this situation. What do you think?”

She watches the shareholders questioningly as whispers start to spread around the room. Her calculating gaze then focuses on you for an uncomfortably long time.



It quickly becomes clear the merchants prefer a small sacrifice over the risk of losing everything. Characters with a strong moral code might be quite shocked at how quickly the merchants seem willing to forget Odina's disgraceful deeds.

Greed Versus Morals

The shareholders make the heroes an offer. On average, each shareholder is willing to give the heroes shares worth 5 ducats, which amounts to 100 ducats the heroes can split amongst themselves. Naturally, considering their current situation, the shareholders are willing to negotiate. The players can make a cumulative group check using *Commerce (Haggling)* (5 minutes, 5 attempts, any number of heroes) and receive a +1 bonus if they present good arguments. If the heroes reject the offer because of their moral integrity, the shareholders see it as a negotiation tactic and increase their offer.

In the end, they should offer the heroes (depending on the heroes' check results) between 500 and 3,000 ducats. If the heroes do not accept the bribe at this point, they'll need a good argument to sway the majority. The heroes' resistance may convince about half the shareholders that the plan they were discussing is wrong; the other half, including Othonia ter Brook, refuse to accept *No* for an answer. For them, it is all about the money—for the rest, their entire existence. Therefore, they won't allow the heroes to leave until they accept the bribe. The shareholders use weapons to enforce their demands, if needed (as burghers, they are armed).

If violence seems likely, the heroes need a good plan. With a cumulative group check using *Persuasion (Debate)*, they can attempt to make the greedy merchants rethink their ways. Certain individuals, such as the reluctant *Murak Kaarstett*, are easier to convince in this manner. Others, such as *Othonia ter Brook*, *Rahyanis Laevigata*, and *Vero Finesmith*, are so consumed with greed they won't come to their senses no matter how

convincing the heroes' arguments. The heroes start out facing 12 opponents in total; For each QL they achieve on their cumulative group check, they convince one opponent to back down (to a minimum of 5 opponents).

One Last Battle

Battle eventually ensues in the temple of Phex's side room. Odina, Arn, and a handful of merchants—capable of pretty much anything—refuse to let the heroes leave. The heroes face opponents who may not be great fighters, but have the advantage of being armed. Heroes who aren't trained in ways to quickly disarm or overcome their opponents may find the furniture offers them a chance to still put up a fight (of course, their opponents can also use such tactics).

- ☞ Take the rapiers off the wall—takes 2 actions
- ☞ Take the two-lilies off the wall—takes 3 actions
- ☞ Use a book to *Parry*—a thick book from the shelf can take a few hits—*Brawling PA*; consider the person holding the book *armed*).
- ☞ Throw a book—*Thrown Weapons*, **RT 1**, **DP special**, **RA 4/8/12** (see *Core Rules*, page 372). Hits do not cause DP, but the target must make a *Self-Control (Ignore Distractions)* check +2 or the book interrupts their longer action.
- ☞ Throw the bust—A chest-high column holds a marble bust of a portly merchant. *Thrown Weapons*, **RT 1**, **DP 1D6+2**, **RA 3/6/9** (see *Core Rules*, page 372; check has a penalty of -2).
- ☞ Roll the column—The attacker must make a *Feat of Strength (Pushing & Bending)* check (two actions); their opponent must make a successful *Body Control (Jumping)* check -1 or receive the state *prone*.
- ☞ Drop the chandelier—A heavy crystal chandelier, which can be lowered with a rope, hangs above the negotiation table. If the heroes loosen the rope (*Ropes (Knots)* check -2; 1 action) or cut it (5 structure points; see *Core Rules*, page



Odina Hortemann

COU 14 SGC 15 INT 13 CHA 14

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 12 STR 12

LP 29 AE - KP - INI 14+1D6

SPI 2 DO 7 TOU 1 MOV 8

Fate Points 3

Social Standing: Free

Languages: Native tongue Garethi III, Thorwalian I

Scripts: Kuslik Signs

Advantages: Inspire Confidence

Disadvantages: Negative Trait (Curiosity)

Special Abilities: Feint I, Keep at Distance I (see *Aventuria Compendium*, page 153), Headlock (see *Aventuria Compendium*, Page 152)

Combat Techniques: Brawling 12

Unarmed: AT 10 PA 5 DP 1D6 RE short

Dagger: AT 10 PA 5 DP 1D6+1 RE short

Rapier: AT 11 PA 5 DP 1D6+3 RE medium

PRO/ENC 0/0

Skills

Physical: *Body Control* 3, *Climbing* 3, *Feat of Strength* 4, *Stealth* 7

Social: *Empathy* 12, *Etiquette* 11, *Fast-Talk* 12, *Persuasion* 6, *Seduction* 7, *Streetwise* 10, *Willpower* 10

Nature: *Orienting* 6

Knowledge: *Religions* 5

Craft: *Commerce* 14, *Sailing* 5, *Vehicles* 7

Equipment: Dagger, rapier (other merchants normally use foils)

Combat Behavior: Odina tries to avoid combat; she hasn't killed anyone yet, and is not yet guilty of a serious crime. When forced to fight, she'll use her fists and, if needed, feints; she uses her dagger only in an extreme emergency.

Escape: At *Pain I*; she yields at *Pain III* or if she's backed into a corner

Pain +1 at: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less



Arn Knochenbreker

COU 13 SGC 9 INT 13 CHA 13

DEX 12 AGI 15 CON 14 STR 16

LP 40 AE - KP - INI 14+1D6

SPI 1 DO 7 TOU 3 MOV 8

Fate Points 1

Social Standing: Free

Languages: Native tongue Garethi III

Scripts: Kuslik Signs

Advantages: Rugged Fighter

Disadvantages: Negative Trait (Short Temper)

Special Abilities: Bornlandish Brawling (see *Aventuria Compendium*, Page 156), Feint I, Forceful Blow I+II, Headlock (see *Aventuria Compendium*, Page 152), Low Blow (see *Aventuria Compendium*, Page 163), Master of Improvised Weapons (see *Aventuria Compendium*, Page 153), Protector (see *Aventuria Compendium*, Page 154)

Combat Techniques: Brawling 14, Impact Weapons 14

Unarmed: AT 15 PA 9 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Cudgel: AT 15 PA 7 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

PRO/ENC 0/0

Skills

Physical: *Body Control* 11, *Carousing* 9, *Climbing* 8, *Feat of Strength* 13, *Stealth* 8

Social: *Empathy* 5, *Etiquette* 4, *Fast-Talk* 7, *Intimidation* 14, *Seduction* 5, *Streetwise* 10, *Willpower* 6

Nature: *Orienting* 6

Knowledge: *Religions* 4

Craft: *Commerce* 4, *Sailing* 8, *Vehicles* 6

Equipment: Imman stick, which he uses as a cudgel

Combat Behavior: Arn viciously lashes out against his opponents. He primarily uses Forceful Blow with his cudgel. He knows he must eliminate the witnesses or he is a dead man.

Escape: At *Pain III*

Pain +1 at: 30 LP, 20 LP, 10 LP, and 5 LP or less

Typical Shareholder

COU 12 SGC 14 INT 13 CHA 13

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 12 STR 12

LP 29 AE - KP - INI 13+1D6

SPI 2 DO 8 TOU 2 MOV 8

Advantages/Disadvantages: Individual, for example, Negative Trait (Stinginess) or Personality Flaw (Envy, Vanity)

Special Abilities: Bornlandish Brawling (see *Aventuria Compendium*, Page 156), Feint I

Unarmed: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short

Dagger: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+1 RE short

Foil: AT 11 PA 5 DP 1D6+2 RE medium

PRO/ENC 0/0

Skills: *Body Control* 4, *Commerce* 10, *Feat of Strength* 4, *Intimidation* 5, *Perception* 6, *Sailing* 6, *Self-Control* 8, *Stealth* 10, *Swimming* 7, *Willpower* 7

Combat Behavior: The shareholders are not experienced fighters; they try to gang up on a single opponent. Sometimes, they use feints.

Escape: At *Pain II*

Pain +1 at: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less

Special: Rahyanis the mage also has 34 AE and primarily uses the spells *Armatrutz* (SR 8), *Blinding Flash* (SR 10), and *Ignifaxius* (SR 9) in combat.



- 01 Take the rapiers off the wall
- 02 Take the two-lilies off the wall
- 03 Use a book to Parry
- 04 Throw the bust
- 06 Roll the column
- 07 Throw a book
- 08 Drop the chandelier
- 09 Swing from the chandelier
- 10 Tear down the drapes

349), the chandelier drops. It is large enough to hit 2-3 targets directly below it. To avoid the chandelier, make a successful *Body Control* (*Combat Maneuvers* or *Jumping*) check. If this check fails, roll 1D6: on a 1-2, suffer 1D6+4 DP; on a 3-4, receive the state *prone*; on a 5-6, receive the state *bound* until the end of the next CR.

- **Swing on the chandelier:** A hero can grab onto the chandelier with a daring jump from the balcony (requires 1 action to make a *Body Control* (*Jumping*) check). Afterward, the hero has two options, as follows.
- If they manage to grab the rope, they can swing in any direction, but must stay within range (requires 1 action); their range depends on the rope's length and the environment. To reach a destination on the same or a lower level, the hero must make a *Body Control* (*Combat Maneuvers*) check with a penalty of -2. To swing to a higher destination, the hero must also make a *Climbing* check (this requires 1 additional action). If they fail the check, they don't make it and use up their action(s); however, they may try again in the next CR.
- If the hero wants to hang from the chandelier and hit or kick their opponents, they must make a *Brawling* AT (no base or special maneuvers) with a penalty of -2. If the hero fails the check, falling damage applies (the amount corresponds to the situation; see *Core Rules*, page 340). If the opponents do not defend against the attack successfully, they sustain 1D6+1 DP, are thrown backward 1D3 yards, and suffer the state *prone*. If the

opponents manage to *Parry*, they receive no damage, but are still thrown backward 1D3 yards. If the opponents successfully *Dodge* or use shields to defend, they avoid being thrown backward and do not sustain DP.

- **Tear down the drapes:** The heavy, floor-length velvet drapes bury anyone without the strength of an ox beneath them. The heroes can tear down one of the drapes to attempt to hinder their enemies (requires 1 action). The drapes are 6.5 yards long—large enough to fall on several opponents at once—and pulling them down requires a successful *Feat of Strength* (*Dragging & Pulling*) check with a penalty of -1. If the heroes succeed, everyone standing under the drapes must make a *Body Control* (*Combat Maneuvers*) check, with a penalty of QL/2 from the *Feat of Strength* (*Dragging & Pulling*) check. Each opponent who fails the *Body Control* (*Combat Maneuvers*) checks must roll 1D6: on a 1-2, the opponent suffers the state *prone*; on a 3-4, the opponent suffers the state *cramped* until the end of the next CR; on a 5-6, the opponent suffers the state *bound* until the end of the next CR.

To make this scene more difficult for the heroes, increase the number of opponents. Perhaps they are not able to convince enough of the shareholders to refrain from their nefarious deeds.

- If you don't believe the heroes can face such numbers, the upstanding shareholders in the group can join the heroes' side before or during the fight.

Conclusion

Naturally, a fight in the temple of Phex does not go unnoticed. The heroes scarcely defeat their opponents before a few Blessed Ones and guards—among them, Adaon and Gilmon—enter the meeting room. The heroes could be in quite a predicament, especially if they just attacked or killed some of the most renown burghers in Grangor.

Luckily, before the guards can arrest the heroes, the merchants who chose to remain on the sidelines or side with the heroes during the fight speak up and settle the matter.

What Happens to...

...Thuan?

The heroes' investigation and the merchants' statements clear up the circumstances surrounding Sumudan de Vries' death. The heroes and guards find Sumudan's farewell letter in Odina Hortemann's safe, in which he describes his financial position after the fleet sank, and his regrets at betraying his creditors' trust. He could not live with the shame of bankruptcy and the responsibility of losing honorable merchants' fortunes; thus, he decided to end his life.

Because Sumudan's death is ruled a suicide, Thuan is completely exonerated (and set free, if he was arrested). Nevertheless, tough times await the young man. His father's fortune has become a gigantic pile of debt. Sumudan's property is distributed among his creditors, meaning Thuan and his sister must now fend for themselves.

...the Villains?

If Arn Knochenbrecker survives the fight with the heroes, he faces capital punishment for the murder of Darion Pekhebbler. He won't be in the city prison for long, as the guards have evidence against him, including witness statements from upstanding burghers. The sentence is passed rather quickly, so his execution in the Hangmanwaat takes place on the next Praios day.

The merchants who took up arms against the heroes are also charged with committing a serious crime. The mage, Rahyanis, and the master carpenter, Finesmith, face the same fate as Arn. Wealthier merchants, such as Othonia ter Brook, can afford good advocates, who appeal their death-sentence by arguing that no one died from their use of these weapons, after all. Therefore, their sentence includes paying severe fines, facing humiliating punishment in the Hangmanwaat (the guards immerse them in the water), and—depending on their status—duty in the navy.

Unless Odina actively interfered in the fight, the only crime of which she is convicted is that of casting suspicion on Thuan. She is sentenced to pay a hefty fine; which puts her on the verge of bankruptcy when coupled with her losses from the de Vries shares. Like the other merchants, she suffers the humiliation of being submersed in the Hangmanwaat's stinking slurry, which is pretty much a societal death sentence.

If you like, Odina can reappear as a villain out for revenge in a later adventure.

...the Share Certificates?

Less than one hour after the events in the temple of Phex, the value of the de Vries shares plummets, financially ruining everyone who still holds shares. The stock market



in Grangor goes through a brief period of upheaval—the failure of the de Vries shares affects other debt security owners, as other bonds are no longer covered, either. But, after a few days, the turmoil passes and the majority of Grangorers do not even remember it happened.

Shrewd heroes might be able to sell their de Vries share certificates before the huge crash. The price may be subject to major fluctuations; but, with Phex's blessing, they can still get a good deal. A *Gambling (Betting Games)* check gives a QL/2 bonus to a subsequent *Commerce (Haggling)* check. The *Commerce* check's QL simulates how well a hero performs on the Grangoran stock market floor.

...the Heroes?

The guards celebrate the heroes for their actions. Even Adaon and Gilmon admit they never would have figured out the circumstances surrounding these events—though, they never tire of mentioning they said it was a suicide from the start.

The Master of the City,  Gwynn Willforth (late-50s; 6'1"; graying, blond hair; stout), awards the heroes a burgher letter, which allows them to henceforth bring their weapons and armor into the city.

In any case, the heroes receive the rewards the lawful merchants and Tadeo Agtstone promised them, plus they receive 10 AP for solving Sumudan's death. They earn another 5 AP for each side scenario (*The Daughter*, *The Rival*, and *The Employee*) they completed.



218 YARDS

GRANGOR

- A01 Counting House de Vries
- A02 Hotel 'Blue Phecadi'
- A03 Lodging House 'Dolphin School'
- A04 Inn 'Dragon Alley'
- A05 Counting House Watergaard
- A06 Storehouse Watergaard
- A07 Torvon's Apartment
- A08 Dragon Pit
- A09 Thuan's Apartment
- A10 Inn 'Vinsalter Court'
- A11 Hotel 'The Corner'
- A12 Villa Hortemann
- 01 Castle Windehag
- 02 Headquarters of the Horas-Imperial Navy
- 03 Cadet School
- 04 Pilgrim's House
- 05 Drakenbrügg
- 06 Northland Bank
- 07 Printing House
- 08 King Khadan Hall
- 09 Burgher House
- 10 Main Counting House of the North Sea Company
- 11 Cistern
- 12 Brothel 'Red Salamander'
- 13 Casino 'Wheel and Cup'
- 14 Town Hall
- 15 Academy of Apparitions
- 16 Fish Market
- 17 Gyldenland Museum
- 18 Guild House of the Helmsmen
- 19 Orphanage
- 20 Customs House
- 21 Neebrügg
- 22 Brothel 'Dream Parlor'
- 23 Gambling Hall 'Traveling Haler'
- 24 Brothel 'Red Lotus'
- 25 Two-Lilies-Bridge
- 26 Two-Lilies Guard Barracks
- 27 City Prison
- 28 Brothel 'House Thesia'
- 29 Shipyard ter Brook
- 30 Messenger Station of the Beilunk Riders
- 31 Imman Stadium
- G01 Inn 'Cozy Parlor'
- G02 Tavern 'Murder Him'
- G03 Tavern 'The Colorful House'
- G04 Tavern 'Wall of Efferd'
- G05 Tavern 'Seven Winds'
- G06 Inn 'Two Lilies'
- G07 Tavern 'Lion's Cellar'
- T01 House of the Traveling Salesman (Phex Temple)
- T02 Hesinde Shrine
- T03 Pilgrim's Temple (Efferd Temple)
- T04 Temple of Home and Hearth (Travia Temple)
- T05 Tsa Temple
- T06 Rahja Temple
- T07 Dragon Temple (Rondra Temple)
- T08 House of Bishdaniel's Watch (Boron Temple)
- T09 Temple of the Safe Refuge (Travia Temple)
- T10 Peratinc Temple

Koppsound

Newhaven

Sudertown

GRANGORELLA

Vesselbeck-Dike

Grookedwaat

Square of the Travelers

AVENTURIA

One Death in Grangor

by Marco Findeisen

Sumudan de Vries made a risky investment in a trading voyage to the exotic southern continent of Uthuria, and his gamble paid off. Almost overnight, the daring young merchant became one of the richest men in Grangor and gained the admiration of his peers, the respect of the city's patricians, and the blessing of Phex. His new-found fame even secured him a place in high society and gave him a taste of real political power. His next business venture promised to make him a legend. His sudden murder shocked the whole community.

The search for Sumudan's killer leads the heroes from splendid counting houses and patricians' palaces to the seedy taverns and dark tenement blocks that crowd the city's less-desirable canals. After a harrowing chase, the suspect finally ends up in chains, but the facts don't add up. While the city looks forward to a speedy execution, the heroes must race to solve a convoluted mystery and put an end to all the troubles that started with one death in Grangor.



A TDE adventure for 1 GM and 3-5 players who enjoy hard-boiled detective stories

Genre: Detective Story

Prerequisites: Interest in criminology and social interaction; a strong right hook when weapons are unavailable; few or no exotic characters

Location: Grangor

Date: Efferd, from 1038 FB

Complexity (Players/GM): low/medium

Suggested Character Experience Level: Experienced

Useful Skills

Social Skills: 

Combat: 

Physical Skills: 

Living History: 

You need the *Core Rules*, the *Aventuria Almanac*, and the *Aventuria Compendium* to run this adventure. This book includes all other information needed for play, such as maps, handouts, and stats.



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