

Flames in the Night

NOCD Adventure 4

Adventure Overview

The adventure begins with the Heroes having a meal in a small town in Castille. A group of the Castillian military sweeps through town, attempting to press all able bodied men into service to fight against the Montaigne. The Heroes Put up a valiant fight, but are rescued by a group of women who distract the military, and lead the Heroes in a secret tunnel beneath the city to safety.

Once there, the Heroes discover eight other women, hungry and battered, who claim to be the only survivors of an Inquisition attack against their boarding house. Their leader, among others, was captured and hasn't been seen since the attack. Since they did a favour for the Heroes, they would like one in return. Their sister house may be in danger, and they would like for the Heroes to evacuate it and lead the women to safety.

Once the Heroes arrive at the sister house, they must defend it against the Inquisitors. After the battle, it is discovered that those who were previously captured will be burned at the stake as heretics. The Heroes must now seek out and save them from a fiery death.

Scene 1 : A Close Call

This scene opens with the Heroes relaxing in a small inn having dinner. They were travelling through Castille, and stopped for siesta in a small village, not

far from La Pasiega. The inn is relatively large, and is filled almost to capacity with patrons who have come to eat, drink, and enjoy the entertainment.

A small band of female musicians take their place beside a small stage near the back of the inn. When

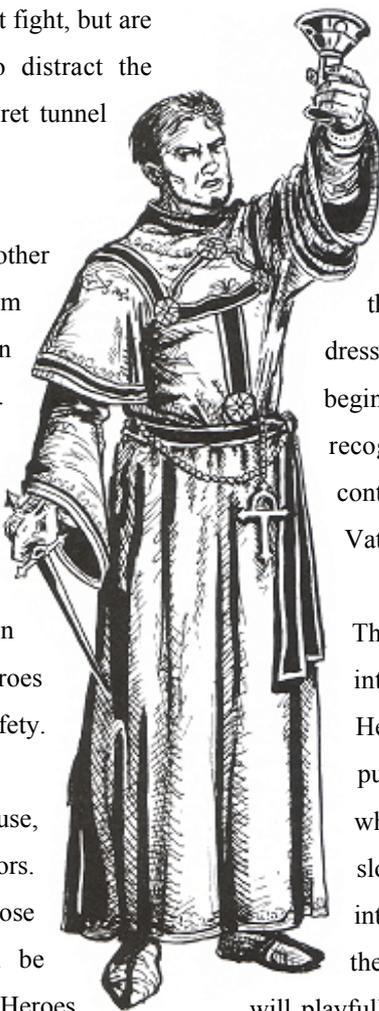
they begin to play, the curtain opens, and a beautiful Castillian girl slowly strides into view. Her flowing raven hair sweeps just past her waistline, as her coal black eyes quickly scan

the audience. Wearing a tight red dress slit up the left side, she slowly begins to dance. Any Castillian Heroes recognise it as the Zarabanda, a controversial folk dance labelled by the Vaticine church as obscene.

The girl eventually takes her show into the audience, approaching the Hero with the highest Panache, and pulling him from his seat. She whispers in his ear to stand still, and slowly dances around him, making intense eye contact the entire time. If the Hero places his hands on her, she

will playfully slap them away with such grace that it seems to be part of the show.

Suddenly, a loud crash is heard as both doors of the inn burst open, and the room fills with Castillian soldiers. Most are young men, armed to the teeth, and brandishing rapiers at the patrons. Near the rear door stands one squad of riflemen, their guns loaded and



aimed at the crowd. The girl slips behind the Hero she was dancing with, using him as a shield against the intruders.

A rumble goes through the crowd, but the patrons, are too afraid of the soldiers to make a ruckus. A man wearing the uniform of an officer strides to the forefront of his men, bows mockingly, and begins to speak. "I am Captain Lopez of the Castillian Army. As you know, our war efforts have been hampered by a lack of volunteers to fill the ranks left by those who have fallen. As of right now, all able bodied men in this room may consider themselves 'volunteers.' For your selfless decision to join our ranks, you have the Army's gratitude"

The soldiers fan out, and begin the arduous process of moving the men outside to be conscripted. Captain Lopez, upon seeing the Heroes, swaggers over to their table. "Greetings Gentleman. You all have the look of able swordsman, quite a find among this rabble. Unfortunately, we have no officer positions available, but I'm sure you will make excellent soldiers. Who knows? Perhaps one of our front line officers will fall in the near future, leaving an opening. I'll keep my eyes open." Lopez cracks a wicked grin.

The Heroes are then surrounded by a large group of veterans, intent on stripping their gear and taking them outside. The Heroes must fight if they want to retain their freedom. If they resist, they will be attacked by Captain Lopez and one brute squad per Hero. The soldiers have the following stats:

Threat Rating: 3

Weapons: Rapiers (medium) Muskets (firearms)

TN to hit: 20

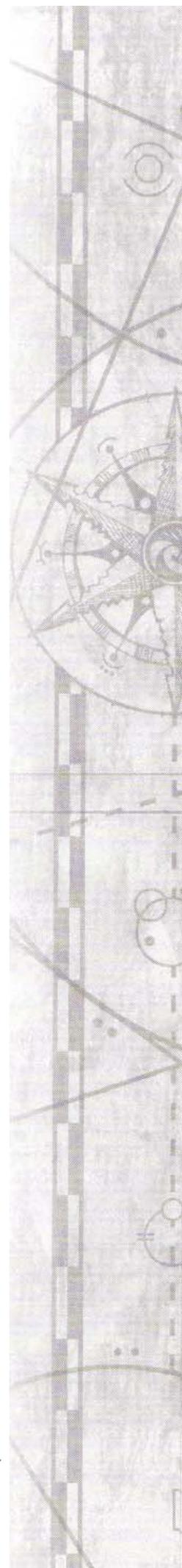
Special: Roll and keep one extra dice when attacking

After two rounds of combat, more soldiers flood into the inn at the rate of four Brute Squads per round (2 squads per entrance), to a maximum of twelve Brute Squads. At a particularly dramatic moment, especially if the battle is going badly for the Heroes, one of the female musicians (an Ussuran shape-shifter) transforms herself into a bear and lunges into the fray. The soldiers scatter, fleeing towards the nearest exit. During the commotion, the dancing girl grabs the Heroes, dragging them backstage. She then takes them down into the cellar where she reveals the entrance to a secret tunnel. Urging them to follow, she flees into the tunnels darkness.

The Heroes follow the dancing girl through a tunnel system beneath the village, which eventually deposits them into another cellar. Here, they join a small group of women, dirty and battered, who are tending to each other's wounds, mending clothing, and preparing meagre meals. Shortly thereafter, the female musicians enter the cellar behind the Heroes, slightly dishevelled, but no worse for wear.

The Proposition

The dancing girl, introduces herself as Martine and explains their situation to the Heroes. They are all members of an unofficial finishing school for women, and unknown to most, the school encourages the practice of sorcery. The school, known as the Academy of Women's Arts (AWA), was attacked two nights ago by the Inquisition. Many women were killed, and several more captured. Their Headmistress, Belicia de Savino, was among those taken away by the Inquisitors for interrogation. Since then, those who escaped have been hiding here in this cellar, while the able bodied attempt to earn enough money to relocate.



This is the problem: there is a sister school nearby, and many of those captured know its location. Martine fears that someone will divulge its whereabouts during the torturous interrogation of the Inquisition, and it will suffer the same fate as the AWA. Martine pleads with the Heroes to go to this school and help them evacuate, or protect them if necessary. If the Heroes resist, she reminds them that she and her girls saved them from military inscription. They have nothing to offer the Heroes except their gratitude, and the satisfaction of doing the right thing.

Scene 2 : Depending the Deek

Martine tells the Heroes the location of the second Academy house, and swears them to secrecy. She loans them a pendant to give the headmistress when they arrive, and a letter penned by her own hand. She explains that the pendant bears the symbol of the Academy, and the letter is a factual account of the incident with the Inquisition.

The Heroes must journey two days, to a small village near the coast. Here they find the Academy a few miles out of town in a mid-sized, twenty-room estate. Upon inspecting the letter and pendant, the Headmistress, Vanya, welcomes the Heroes, supplying them with a warm meal and rooms for the night. Regardless of how adamant the Heroes are about evacuation, she insists that preparations can wait until morning. From here, Heroes may defer to her judgement, and go to sleep if they wish as they are tired and road weary. Smart Heroes will at least post one guard to protect the estate. Do not suggest this to the players, however; let them come up with it on their own. If they do not specifically mention the posting of guards, skip to *An Open Target* below.

Guarding the Estate

If the Heroes post a guard, then sometime in the early morning he will see the torches of the Inquisitors in the distance. It takes ten rounds for the Inquisitors to arrive, giving the Heroes that much time to evacuate all of the women, and/or make preparations for the coming onslaught. Fleeing into the night would be pointless, as the Inquisitors will surely follow, but Vanya explains that there is a dry well nearby which was recently converted to a shelter for such an occasion. The Heroes may evacuate the women to the well, and still have time to prepare their defences. If the Heroes prepare an ambush, they will receive two free raises to surprise the Inquisitors. If surprised, in addition to the normal benefits, they will not have time to prepare their pistols, and all will fight with medium weapons. There are a total of three Brute Squads plus two additional Brute Squads per Hero. Ramirez attacks the most dangerous looking Hero, backed up by two Brute Squads. The Brutes have the following stats:

Threat Rating: 2

Weapons: Rapiers (medium)

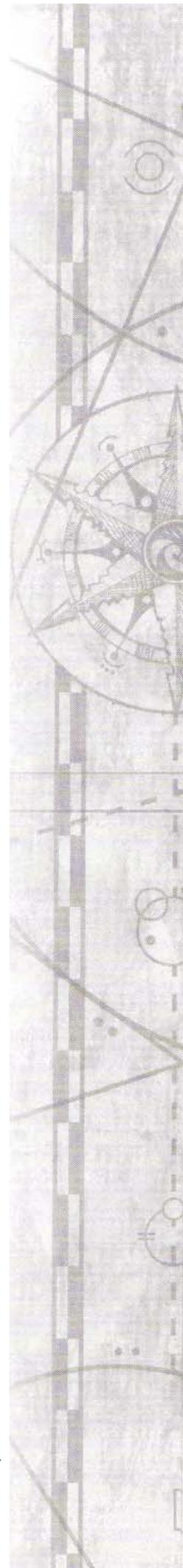
TN to Hit: 15

Attack (Fencing) +1

Special: Due to their fanatical zeal, Inquisition Brutes require 2 Hits before they go down

An Open Target

Sometime in the early hours of the morning, the Inquisition makes a sneak attack. They creep up to the estate and set it ablaze with everyone inside. Then, they surround the house to shoot those who flee with their pistols. This is an excellent place to build tension for the Heroes. The house contains eighteen women, and at least half remain crouched in their rooms, too terrified to move. The Heroes must round them all up and seek a way to exit the house without being massacred. Within six Rounds, the



house will be completely consumed and anyone still inside will burn to death. Let the Heroes come up with their own plan for escape.

Outside, there are three Brute Squads with pistols, who will immediately open fire on anyone who exits the building. In addition, there are two Brute Squads per Hero, each carrying medium weapons. One of the Brute Squads is lead by a young priest named Ramirez. Anyone who survives the initial onslaught of bullets, is set upon by Ramirez and his Brutes. These Inquisitors are fanatical, and will all fight until Knocked Out. They have the following stats:

Threat Rating: 2

Weapons: Rapiers (medium) Pistols (firearms)

TN to Hit: 15

Attack (fencing) +1

Special: Due to their fanatical zeal, Inquisition Brutes require 2 Hits before they go down.

At some point during the fighting, Vanya flees into the open where she is caught by one of the Inquisitors. He throws her to the ground and draws his pistol with the intention of shooting her. The Heroes witness this, and have mere seconds to save her life. If the Brute feels threatened in any way, he will not shoot Vanya, but instead shoot the object of the threat. If the Heroes rush into the open to save her, they will be fired upon by the musket and crossbow squads. Encourage them to be creative in their efforts to protect her. If the Brute is interrupted in his attempt to kill Vanya, she will use Pyeryem to transform into a rabbit, and flee into the forest surrounding the estate.

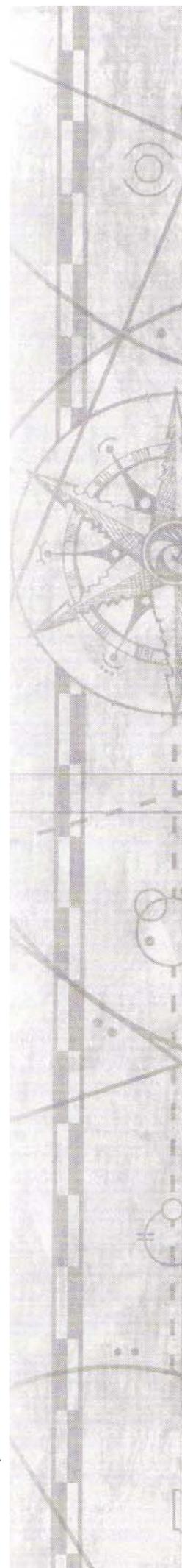
After the battle, it should be easy to evacuate the survivors. The Heroes may do whatever they wish with the Knocked Out Inquisitors; however, outright killing them isn't a very Heroic thing to do. Their best

bet is to tie them up and leave them by the road. If Ramirez is searched, they will find a letter which was sent to the leaders of all the local Inquisition cells. It states that the "Fate Witch" and her troupe of heretics will be burned at sunrise in the Village of San Rosario on the coming day of Soldi. The Heroes realise that this reference is to Belicia de Savino, and they have only one day to reach the village. Vanya demands that the Heroes go to Belicia, stating that she is capable of leading her girls to safety without them.

Scene 3 : Hellfire and Brimstone

When the Heroes arrive in the village, they notice Belicia tied to a stake in the centre of town square, with wood, kindling, and pitch at her feet. Surrounding her in a semi-circle, are four other women tied to their own stakes in a similar fashion. The townsfolk have gathered to watch, some throwing rotten food, others chanting "Burn them all!" Each stake is surrounded by a group of hooded men, waiting for the signal to light the fire.

Upon a raised dais some fifty feet from the pyres, stands an elderly yet powerful man wearing red Vaticine robes and bearing a book of Theus (he is a Monsignor). He is pounding the podium before him, preaching of the evils of sorcery, and how those who practice it will bring about the downfall of humanity. Theus demands that all those who consort with demons be punished to the fullest extent of his will. He insists that he is saving the souls of these women, for he is driving out their demons by burning them in the cleansing fires of Theus. If the Heroes attempt to interfere with the burning by speaking up for the women, they will be attacked as heretics. The Monsignor saying that the women must have bewitched them, and the only way to free their souls is to be cleansed by fire. The Heroes have several



options on how to rescue the condemned women. Two possibilities are detailed below, but do not feel limited by them.

The Heroes go Straight for the Women

If the Heroes rush straight for the women in an attempt to free them, a dozen Brute Squads descend on the area, blocking the Heroes and fighting with fanatical zeal. The Cardinal gives the order, and the pyres are set ablaze. The Heroes have four rounds to free the women (while being attacked by the Brutes) before they are consumed in flames. The Brute's stats are:

Threat Rating: 3

Weapons: Rapiers (medium) Pistols (firearms)

TN to Hit: 20

Attack (Fencing) +1

Special: Due to their fanatical zeal, Inquisition Brutes require 2 Hits before they go down

If the Heroes manage to free them, and there are still Inquisition Brute Squads standing; the Inquisitors attempt to attack and kill the women. Assume the four unnamed women have twos in all their Traits, and their Footwork Knack. If the Heroes choose to flee, use the chase rules in the Game Masters' Guide.

The Heroes Attack the Monsignor

If the Heroes attempt to reach the Monsignor, the Brute Squads converge on him in an attempt to intervene, but do not light the pyres. The women are all but forgotten as the Brutes attempt to protect their leader. If one of the Heroes slip past them and puts the squeeze on the Monsignor, then all of the Brutes stop in their tracks. The Brutes will do anything, short of committing suicide, to keep the Monsignor from being harmed. If the Heroes demand it, they will release the women immediately and will even provide a coach or wagon for their get-away. As soon as the

Monsignor is released, the enraged Brutes converge on the Heroes with death in their eyes. The best course of action available to the Heroes is to take the Monsignor with them and release him a few miles outside of town. They may kill him if they wish, but will earn the following 3 point Background: Hunted (Inquisition). They have a good enough head start that the Brutes cannot to catch them.

Scene 4 : A Goodbye Kiss

Once the Heroes reach a safe distance from the village, Belicia becomes curious about her rescuers and begins to ask questions. When the Heroes explain the whole story, she will ask to be taken to Martine and the others. Once reunited with her sisters, she thanks each Hero personally, kissing each one on both cheeks. Belicia's kiss bestows a Blessing Die upon each Hero. The type of blessing depends on which strand the Hero's personality is most closely associated with. If you prefer, you can randomly determine the strand by drawing from a Tarot deck or rolling a die.

Reprinted from the Player's Guide

Blessing Dice

A Hero who receives a Blessing Die rolls one extra Kept die with every roll linked to the appropriate strand. However, this die cannot explode. For example, a Swords Blessing would give the Hero an extra die to roll with every roll involving a conflict. The die remains until it rolls a 1, then it is discarded.

E.g. Antonio has a Cups Blessing. Whenever he makes rolls involving passion, romance or emotion, he rolls his Blessing Die and adds the result to the roll. Under normal circumstances, Antonio can only keep a number of die equal to his Trait, but the Blessing Die doesn't count towards that total. When Antonio's Blessing Die rolls a 1, he adds one to his total and then discards the die.

Important NPC's

Captain Lopez

Brawn 3, Finesse 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3, Panache 2
Advantages: Castillian (R/W), Commission, Toughness
Commander: Strategy 3, Tactics 4, Ambush 3, Leadership 4
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 4, Parry (Fencing) 3
Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 5, Reload (Firearms) 5

Captain Lopez is a typical Castillian military officer. Fined with enough ambition to single-handily win the war, Captain Lopez will do anything to hurt the Montaigne war effort, even if it means subjugating his own people. He is well known among his peers for being able to turn a rag-tag band of commoners into a force to be reckoned with.

Vanya

Brawn 3, Finesse 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Panache 3
Advantages: Ussuran (R/W), Thean, Sophia's Daughters, Noble
Doctor: Diagnosis 3, First Aid 4, Surgery 2, Veterinarian 4
Hunter: Stealth 3, Survival 4, Tracking 3
Pyeryem (Apprentice): Speak 5, Man 3, Animal Form: Rabbit 3

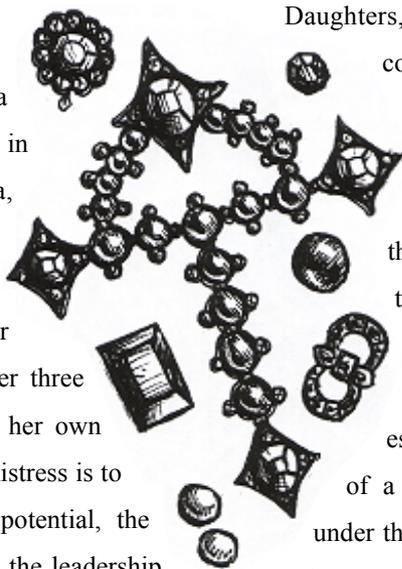
Vanya is the Headmistress of a Sophia's Daughters chapter house in Castille. Originally from Ussura, Vanya joined the Daughters at a very young age and excelled in her duties to the order. She served her apprenticeship in Freiburg, and after three years was sent to Castille to open her own chapter. One of her duties as Headmistress is to single out women who have the potential, the dedication, the strength of will, and the leadership capabilities to one day take over a chapter house and further the cause of the order. She found those

qualities in Belicia de Savino. After only a month, Belicia was appointed as Vanya's assistant where she excelled beyond expectation. Within two years, and after the chapter house had grown to capacity, Belicia was allowed to take a small group of newcomers and open a sister chapter in a nearby village.

Belicia de Savino

Brawn 2, Finesse 3, Wits 5, Resolve 3, Panache 3
Advantages: Vodacce (R/W), Thean (R/W), Membership (Sophia's Daughters), Noble
Background: Betrothed
Courtier: Dancing 4, Etiquette 5, Fashion 4, Oratory 5, Sincerity 5
Merchant: Cooking 3, Seamstress 3, Tailor 2, Weaver 3
Sorte (Adept): Arcana 4, Coins 5, Cups 4, Staves 4, Swords 4

Belicia grew up a Vodacce noblewoman who wanted more out of life than her place dictated. As a youth, she was betrothed to a powerful Vodacce merchant who believed that women should know their role, one of subservience. As the date of the wedding drew near, she became frightened and fled. Luckily, she was quickly befriended by a member of the Sophia's Daughters, who smuggled her out of the country. She was sent to Castille to undergo her apprenticeship in the order, and was appointed as assistant Headmistress in less than thirty days. Serving under Vanya for the next two years, she learned the day to day operations of maintaining and managing an estate. Now she is the Headmistress of a Sophia's Daughters chapter house under the guise of a finishing school known as the Academy of Women's Arts. There she trains her girls reading, writing, scholarly arts, and helps them to develop their sorcery skills.



Brother Ramirez

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

Advantages: Castillian (R/W), Thean (R/W), Faith, Ordained

Priest: Oratory 3, Philosophy 4, Writing 3, Mooch 4, Theology 5

Spy: Shadowing 4, Stealth 5, Conceal 3, Interrogation 4, Poison 3, Sincerity 4

Aldana (Journeyman): Feint (Fencing) 4, Riposte (Fencing) 5, Tagging (Fencing) 4, Exploit Weakness (Aldana) 4, Exploit Weakness (Valroux) 3

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 5

Ramirez is a High Priest of Theus, and one of the many fanatical soldiers serving the cause of the Inquisition. His youth and enthusiasm more than make up for his lack of experience, and his skills as a swordsman make him an excellent field agent for the Inquisition. When he was but sixteen years old, Ramirez joined the Castillian army in order to defend his country. When he was wounded in action and left for dead, his faith in Theus never wavered. Upon his recovery, he joined the Vaticine church and became an ordained priest. While still an acolyte, his devotion and fanaticism did not go unnoticed, and he was offered a position in Theus' elite service: the Inquisition. Quickly rising through their ranks, he is now a High Priest of Theus and is in command of his own Inquisition cell. His direct superior is one of the reigning Cardinals who has been corrupted by the Inquisition.

Monsignor Rios

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

Advantages: Castillian (R/W), Thean (R/W), Faith, Ordained, Miracle Worker (1 die)

Priest: Oratory 5, Philosophy 3, Writing 4, Diplomacy 5, Theology 5

Spy: Shadowing 2, Stealth 3, Conceal 4, Forgery 4, Interrogation 5, Sincerity 5

Knife: Attack (Knife) 4, Parry (Knife) 4, Throw (Knife) 2

Monsignor Rios is the leader of several local cells of the Inquisition. Rios wages a personal war against those who would use sorcery. Travelling often as a youngster, he watched his father die at the hands of a Fate Witch, because he had the audacity to meet her gaze while speaking a kind word. Orphaned, he joined the Vaticine Church, where his hatred for sorcerers made him a perfect candidate for the Inquisition. Now, he scours the countryside of Castille, sniffing out and burning to death anyone with sorcerous blood or heretical ties.

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