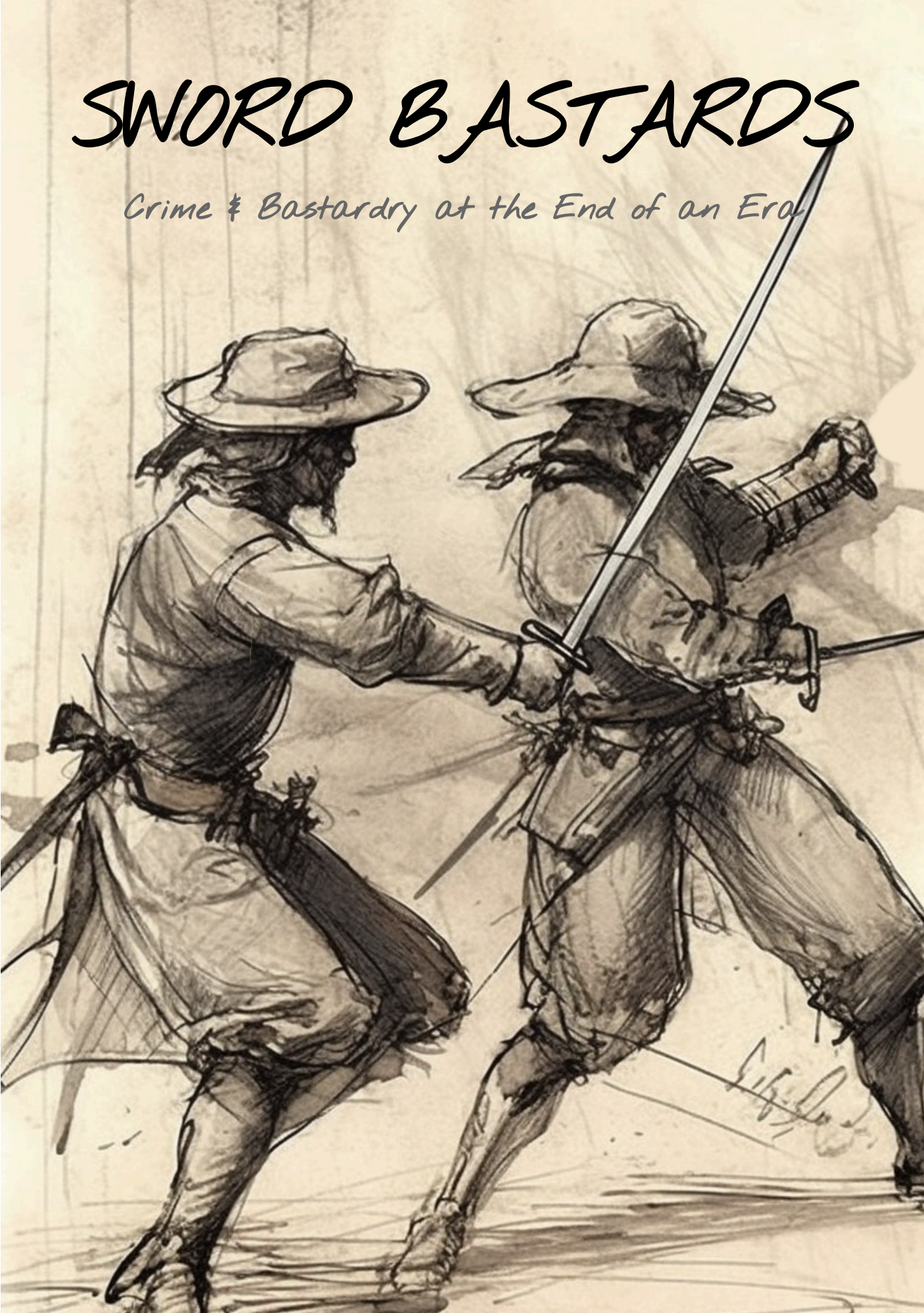
SWORD BASTARDS

Crime & Bastardry at the End of an Era



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Preface

There's a part of me in this wretched hobby that is compelled to INNOVATE and that same part is driven by little more than self-flagellation. Sword Bastards is a mixture of a handful of ideas that have been brewing in my brain for the past while.

The first of which is CRIME as CRIME games are weirdly uncommon in the modern sphere. The primary driver I see referenced is actually Blades in the Dark, which does have its influence on Sword Bastards, but has to deal with the fact it's Forged in the Dark and makes me feel the color gray. But most other games handling crime are either cyberpunk samurai being punks or some story-driven art game about the poverty of people. Or you end up with Cartel, by Magpie Games, which is about playing the Sinaloa Cartel and is somewhat completely unironic.

The second major thing is using a weird system. I feel like I've been pretty lax with my designs recently and pushing myself to add something completely stupid may help kickstart the brain. After mulling it over quite a bit I decided on cards. Yes, just a deck of cards. While extremely common, decks aren't all that common in TTRPGs outside a few select games. Mostly used in storytelling games or as a "Secondary" Supplement to the core.

Thus here we are, CRIME & CARDS all while being a bunch of irredeemable assholes in a city doing crimes.



The Blood of Men and Swords

For as long as man could remember, we had been at war against the Aeven. Tall, slender, ethereal beauty and the same monsters that enslaved our ancestors in the Valley of Creation. Humanity rose up in these primal years and were exiled by our treacherous tyrants, forced to roam the world as wanderers. Eventually the tribes split apart, drifting to new lands to create new nations. Slowly and steadily humanity became stronger, but the Aeven always remained.

They stood at the forest's edge, a child missing one night, a bloody raid the next, slaughtered livestock, or a peasant decapitated outside a hillfort. But in their terror tactics, the Aeven emboldened us more than anything. Our towns grew larger, our walls grew higher, the lights bonfires gave way to torches and hollowed lanterns. But there needed to be a spark to embolden mankind, a unifying force to bind people together.

The Southerners have their Khalid, a bold and heroic man who led a suicidal charge against an encroaching Aeven onslaught and emerged victorious. The Northern Tribes have Hilda the Witchwalker who turned the Aeven's wicked sorceries back on them to allow their Thanes to slay their foes. Even the men of the deep East, at the edge of the world rallied around the Khan Tabur who was said to possess blood of giants in his veins to drive out their Aeven oppressors.

To us, of the river Thes and the brave lands of the Galatians, it was the Martyress Empress Ada. Her story is a simple one, she was married to a Petty King named Sigmund in their hillfort. He was a noble, if slow-witted, man who loved to hunt and drink. But she loved him and he loved her. On one of those many hunts, Sigmund encountered an Aeven hunter, alone the two parlayed to hunt a great white stag in the woods. While odd, the mark of the hunt of a great beast was too intoxicating. Hunting the great beast the two managed to slay it, but there the story grows a tad confusing.

Either Sigmund offered half to the Aeven who felt offended and murdered him or the Aeven murdered him before he was able to offer anything. Regardless of the reason, his hunting companions saw their lord slain by the Aeven and fought back, but the murderer avoided capture. Outraged, Ada took up arms herself and rallied the local lords and people to her cause. This rally call escalated further and further until the whole region was up in arms and chanting their war cries. One too many children taken, one too many kin killed, one too many wrongs never righted.

Rallying behind the bereaved widow clad in her husband's armor, this grand army marched to burn every Aeven hold they could find. The scouring of the Galatian lands of Aeven was long and brutal, but in the field of battle Ada met the Aeven King Maledictus. Driving his crimson blade into her chest, she powered through and jammed her own knife into his throat. Routing the Aeven and leaving their city looted, burning, and salted.

While her wound was mortal to any normal person, Ada managed to overcome its wicked influence. The other Petty Kings bow to their seemingly revived Martyress. Ada returned to her home, being crowned as Empress of all of the Galtians, her influence founding the Royal Line at the birth of her and Sigmund's son, Sigmund II. This is over 1600 years ago at this rate, but the Imperial House of the Adian still reigns supreme, expanding its influence beyond the traditional boundaries of the Galatians and to the Thes.

The Long War

The official stance of the Church of the Martyress, and every Duke, Archduke, and King who resides under the Bladed Cross, is total Aeven annihilation. Every sermon, every formality, every piece of industry has been directed toward galvanizing, preparing, and arming the people for war against the hated enemy of mankind. Other wars have of course broken out, heretical cults, breakaway kingdoms, or even the occasional invasion from the North or South has spurned conflict forward. But every few years, a bloody Crusade into the woodlands would leave a burnt out husk of an Aeven stronghold and the heads of their royalty mounted on pikes.

And every war led to new advancements.

The first formalized the armies down to be more efficient, better armed, more organized. Then through the Orcs, Giants, and Goblins toward the East, other exiles of the Garden of Creation with as much animosity toward the Aeven as any man, they gained gunpowder. The techniques to craft the first crude firearms proved effective and every year more were produced and readied for bloodier warfare.

The Ten Year War was the last conflict, driving thousands of men into the field toward the final holdout, the grandest city of all, one forged of gold and crystal that the Aeven so prized, woven into the woodland and mountains as a venerable testament to their mastery of the world around them. The siege was three years long and after bombarding the city for four months straight with cannon fire, the final charge toward the gates were completed. Every Aeven, man, woman, child, were put to the blade and their city looted and burnt. In the year of 1623, twentieth year of the reign of Empress Rosa IV, the long war, sixteen-hundred years in the making. Came to a close.

And Then All Hell Broke Loose

That was years back. Almost immediately the Kings, Dukes, and Archdukes had armies, industries, and entire nations built on the back of killing Aeven that not one of them realized what would happen afterward. Of course the bastards fought one another! The Ten Year War was nothing! The Crown Wars saw an empire go into total war with one another over territorial disputes dating centuries back. The Church lost its influence as people no longer fretted about the Aeven being behind every crime, the printing presses that once pumped out training guides and schedules soon became places of learning and literature.

The Imperial Titles were already, at best, ceremonial at this time. But after Empress Rosa's passing due to age, her granddaughter, Ada XII inherited the throne. Empress Ada would go to claim more crownland and assert her authority. Guarded by an elite guard of musketeers, her ascension has seen the rise of Absolute Imperial rule being floated around by military officials and the most loyal lords.

Who Are You?

You? That's hilarious. You're a man of Thes. We've always been the "Others" in Imperial Society. The Martyress protects her kin, but she doesn't give a rat's ass about you or me. The Dukes down here are too busy fighting one another and bickering about the politics of the matter.

The cities have begun filling with people, namely people escaping from up north. Each one wants a better life, and that led to the Old Army. Veterans, soldiers, the whole lot of them came into the city and set up shop. They strong-armed the locals for protection money and set up the foundations of the modern power structure. Good business they had for a while, that is until the new Watch Commander came in. Nasty bastard that one. The bosses were taken down in a series of raids, the lucky ones just got killed, the unfortunates were sent downriver to the frontier on the shipping lanes.

The Old Army routed you could say, fragmenting out into a handful of different groups all vying for control of their own niches. Plenty of room for the entrepreneurial sort to stake a claim. Fancy using that sword of yours for more than impressing ladies and your pals? I got a job for you all, simple one, smash and grab, a few silvers in it as well . . .



Fate & Destiny: How to Play

Sword Bastards is a Tabletop Roleplaying game about the devilish and roguish lives of the titular Bastards. All the crew needs is a 52-Card Deck with two Jokers (Black and Red), three to five Bastards, and a Watch Captain (WC) to act as the arbiter of the story.

During their crime filled escapades, the Bastards will need to challenge themselves, others, and sometimes one another for supremacy. This is done using one of three methods of resolutions: The Reverse Roulette, The Grand Roulette, and Dueling.

The Reverse Roulette

The most common type of challenge the Bastards will encounter will involve playing Reverse Roulette. The WC will announce the difficulty of the Challenge and the Bastard being tested. The Bastard will draw a number of cards equal to their [ATTRIBUTE] and any modifiers they may have. Then the WC will flip the Lead Card from the top of the deck.

When the Lead has been revealed, the Bastard will need to play any card that they are able to that matches the difficulty set out by the WC. For every Card they are able to place, they score a Success. Only one Success is ever needed to pass a Challenge, but each additional one makes the Successes grander and more impressive. If the Bastard is unable to play any Card, then they have failed and suffer the consequences.

Difficulty	Roulette Call
Easy	Rouge or Noir
Medium	Same Suit
Complex	Within 3
Difficult	Within 2
Hard	Within 1
Dangerous	Equal Value
Miracle	Equal Color Value

Rouge et Noir - The Bastard needs to play either a Black or Red Card depending on the Lead.
Same Suit - The Bastard plays a card from the same suit as the Lead.
Within 3, 2, and 1 - The Bastard plays a card with a value within the range of the Lead.
Equal Value - The Bastard plays a card from any suit of equal value to the Lead.
Equal Color Value - The Bastard plays the card from the same colored (Hearts/Diamonds or Clubs/Spades) suit of equal value.

The Deck will not be reshuffled until the end of the scene. If the Deck runs out, it may also be reshuffled at that time, but not before.

Reference Note: **Suit Values**
(Lowest Value) A - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - J - Q - K - A (Highest Value)

The Joker

Should a Joker be played as the Lead Card, ONLY the other Joker counts as being valid, making the Challenge effectively a Miracle regardless of difficulty. On the other hand a Joker can be played by a Bastard to count for any Card of the same color, effectively making the Challenge Easy.

The Grand Roulette

The Grand Roulette is played similarly to a standard Rever Roulette except every one of the Bastards will draw and play a card on the Lead. Success is only reached if there is a valid card for every one of the Bastards present.

This does mean that particularly lucky Bastards may be able to compensate for their comrades who are failing miserably. It's all for one and one for all, except sometimes it's okay to cut loose one of the crew to succeed. Cutting loose a member has them fail alone and suffer the consequences rather than having the group go down, potentially leading to some hurt feelings or a decapitated head on a pike outside their home.

The Duel

Inevitably, a Bastard will find themselves clashing blades with rivals or the Watch, when this occurs play shifts to the duel system. Each Bastard will draw a number of cards equal to their Combat Skill and begin placing them in either the Right, Center, or Left.

Red counts as offensive strikes and maneuvers, while Black counts as defensive postures and quick thinking. When all cards have been placed, both sides reveal their placements, resolving each one in a quick series of parries, thrusts, and slashes. If the Bastard is lucky, they will remain standing, if not, they may be in a pool of their own blood with a blade through the chest.

More of this will be explained in detail in the Blood in the Street section.

Cheating Destiny

The Bastards have one leg up on the challenge, that is the Cheat Line. At the start of the Session, the WC will draw a number of cards equal to the number of Bastards, placing them face up. This is the Cheat Line.

At any point a Bastard may substitute a card in their hand or just take a card from the Cheat Line. Taken cards are not replaced until the next session.

The Cheat Line can be used for Duels, normal Challenges, or even a Grand Roulette. The only exception for using the Cheat Line is when a Bastard does not have any cards in their hand, including when they have played them all for a Duel. Think carefully on when and how to use your few advantages.

Control & Chaos

If a situation erupts that the Bastards have an advantage or disadvantage, they will gain Control or Chaos. Control allows them to draw an additional card, while being under Chaos lowers the card draw by one.

If a situation occurs that no cards may be drawn, then the Challenge is considered a disastrous failure for everyone involved. Things will get terrible quickly.

A Bastard's Life

The City is a beacon of science, arts, and stability, but underneath the facade of perfection lies the true guts of society. Crime is rampant in the streets as the Watch hammers down dissent of the Old Army and tries to wrangle the hedonistic aristocrats from themselves. This has led to a surge in organized criminals taking over from the formerly dominant Old Army, waging war in the street for territory, glory, and the right of exploitation.

The Bastards are drawn into this life for a variety of reasons, some by choice, others by chance, regardless of the reason they are now stuck in the muck and the only escape is upward.

The Suit of a Bastard

When first creating a Bastard, they will determine their initial set of Suits that dictate their overall abilities, attributes, and natures. The Suits not only represent their physical ability, but also their demeanor.

Blades (♠)	Pentacles (♦)
The Bastard is quick with their wit, step, and blade as they cut to the heart of the matter with elegance and grace. Thieves and Nobles are attuned to Blades.	The Bastard's analytical and thoughtful approach to life, love, and bloodshed as they tend to be pensive about most things. Fences and Clerks are invested in the Pentacle.
Batons (♣)	**Chalices (♥)**
The Bastard strikes boldly and forcefully, cutting away the formalities, being proud, strong, and resilient through it all. Thugs and Soldiers are built for Batons.	The Bastard would like nothing more to express themselves to the world, whether by acts of love or threats towards others. Charlatans and Priests are ideal for the Chalice.

Bastardry

The Bastard's notoriety, criminal behavior and roguish disposition toward others. Rogues, Scoundrels, Rascals, Wretches, Crooks, Rapscallions, and Villains all embrace the title of Bastard.

To begin, the Watch Captain will divide the deck into the four main suits, dropping Jokers for now. Each of the Bastards will draw from one of the decks for each of their Suits.

After determining the Bastard's Suits, they will now determine their Bastardry. Depending on the TOTAL results, their Bastardry will change.

The Nature of a Bastard Chart	
Card Draw	*Nature Value*
2, 3, and 4	1
5, 6, and 7	2
8, 9, and 10	3
J, Q, and K	4
Ace	5

Bastardry Value	
Nature Total	*Bastardry*
20 - 16	0
15 - 10	1
9 - 5	2
4	3

Side Note: **Creating Your Own Spread**
If the Players wish, they can assign their own Attributes. The options are 4,4,4,4 (0 Bastardry) 4/3/2/2 (1 Bastardry), 3/2/2/1 (2 Bastardry), and finally 1/1/1/1 (3 Bastardry).

A Skill Up the Sleeve

Not every encounter will be sword fights and punching out rivals, the Bastards will be managing their fledgling gang through a bit of elbow grease and ability. Every Bastard will choose a Skill Set, indicating a set of talents and abilities they've developed in their history.

These Skill Sets are written broadly, either as former careers, notable achievements, or nicknames the Bastard has earned through their novice years. As the Bastard grows in influence and power, they will develop further Skill Sets which further help differentiate their talents from their comrades-in-arms.

When a Skill Set is relevant to a Challenge, the Bastard will draw an additional card for it. If multiple Skill Sets would seem to be appropriate, the Bastard will still only draw one card to the Challenge. Skill Sets are never used in duels, as no amount of history will save them in the heat of clashing swords.



Blood In, Blood Out

During their escapades, the Bastards will find themselves in desperate odds and circumstances, to represent their willpower and courage (or brazen disregard for danger) each of the Bastards will have a Bravado score.

Bravado is the measure of determination the Bastard has to even the playing field and allow them to succeed. Bastards may spend one Bravado to Top Deck[1] to add to their hand for any Challenge. Simple enough to understand, but Bravado also acts as the first layer of defense for a Bastard in a duel.

If the Bastard is struck in combat, they will reduce their Bravado first before taking on Wounds. These represent small cuts, knicks, and near misses that edge the Bastard toward the inevitable. SHould a Bastard take damage exceeding their current Bravado, they will not take the additional damage to their Wounds, but they are not exposed to the horrors of combat and disaster. May the Martyress protect them.

Each Bastard has a Bravado of thirteen (13) to begin with. When used, Bravado does not return until the job is complete and the Bastard is allowed time to rest. If they are Wounded at all, then they will not recover their Bravado until they are fully healed.

Fighting Styles

These streets devour the weak, but the Bastard will not go down quietly. Each Bastard is a trained fighter to some degree. They may not be Imperial Musketeers or full fledged soldiers, but their guts and talents allow them to duel with those around them.

Each of the Suits is tied to a Fighting Style, adding Bastardry to each of them to determine the final value. These are the number of cards drawn during a duel, and each will be in conflict with another, potentially granting advantage, or disaster, should the Bastard choose the wrong one.

During their creation process, the Bastard may select one style to be their preferred style, granting a +1 to it as well as being their default if they are ambushed or forced to fight without preparation.

Agile (Blades)	Deliberate (Pentacles)
Quick strikes and dexterous moves in a flurry of steel and steps. Never let them rest, never let them strike.	Slow and cautious, each strike planned, each stab a test, every moment a calculation. They may come, but they will die.
Brutal (Batons)	**Fanciful (Chalices)**
Thunderous hits and bold movements, striking hard and fast for the killing blow. Overwhelm them, overtake them, crush them!	It's a dance of swords, always planning the next retort and thrust, never letting them think too fast. Not like you're thinking either.

[1] Draw from the top of the deck blindly

An Example Character: **Vicente Cosentino, Sword Bastard**

We'll make an example character to tie all of this together. Vicente draws for his Blades, Pentacles, Batons, and Chalices. Drawing a 9 for his Blades (3), 9 for his Pentacles (3), Jack for his Chalices (4), and 6 for his Batons (2). Adding all of his Suits together, he ends up with a 12, giving him 1 Bastardry.

With his high Blades, Pentacles, and Chalices, Vicente's player decides to make him an educated charlatan, a smoothtalker with a penchant for finding marks and outwitting (or out running) them quickly. He takes the Skill Set of Scaramouche Actor, being an actor by trade and huckster by deception.

Always one for a show, he chooses the Fanciful Style as his Preferred Style. Each of the Combat Styles comes together as Agile (4), Deliberate (4), Fanciful (6), and Brutal (3).



Blood Pacts & Solemn Oaths

With the collapse of the Old Army, a new upheaval of minor gangs have formed and are starting to fight for territory and the businesses of the previous order. The Bastards are one of these gangs, a batch of fools bound together by little more than oaths of camaraderie and a desire for profits.

Each Gang and Organization in Sword Bastards is given a Rank from 1 to 10, representing their overall importance and ability to influence the city. The Bastards will begin at Rank 1, barely qualifying as a threat and being little more than lackeys for major players.

Normal gangs will have to manage their income, influence, control of their people, and their own underlings. The Bastards aren't concerned with that, as their gang is little more than a wrecking ball focused on forcing others to bow to their whims or risk violent reprisal.

Territories, Districts, and Boroughs

The City is divided up into various smaller pieces of land known as Territories, Districts, and Boroughs.

Territories are the smallest section of the city, but the most physical, they are neighborhoods, streets, and defined areas that the Sword Bastards can actively visit and wander through. Rank 1 to 3 Gangs often operate on the Territory scale, trying to claim one or two streets as their private domain. Each one of these can only support one kind of racket, but controlling them is rather simple.

Districts are composed of 13 Territories, each of them forming an area of the city in broad terms. Often these are locations such as "The Docks" or "Lowtown." These areas can manage District wide businesses and rackets to influence the area, but are fought over by Rank 4 to 7 Gangs and groups. The Watch operate on the District scale when assigning the nightly routines not caring about the individual street, but the security of the area entirely.



Finally, the Boroughs, only two or four of these are in the city, encompassing huge chunks of the city and dividing the various districts between them. These are the domain of the Rank 8 to 10 groups, reserved for the best of the best or the city-wide organizations that keep it functional.

As the Bastards begin their journey, they are most likely feuding with other minor Gangs for control of a single territory. Expanding their influence is going to take a lot longer than a single night.

The Business of Others

Gangs live and die by their niche and income, fighting to continue the process of exploiting it. At the bottom are the producers, those who bring in smuggled contraband into the city, growers of illegal herbs, and even the occasional gambling den operating outside jurisdiction. Above them, the movers, those who reap the benefits and keep the Watch off their backs, however these groups always demand kickbacks. Finally, similar to the Old Army, are the overseers, the ones who keep the whole mess running smoothly influencing groups and power players.

Each Gang produces one of four kinds of "Goods" in a Territory. Hearts represent what people need, these are smuggled contraband, back alley barbers, and poor houses, without them the people grow desperate. Diamonds represent what the people want, these are pleasures of the flesh, mind, or soul, engaging in depraved brothels, drug dens, or gambling holes. The Clubs are the necessary job security of the day-to-day, they are the "guilds" of the underworld, muscling in on valuable contracts, or sniping high-paying work before others can. Finally, the Spades are the business of criminals, fences, safehouses, and more "exotic" merchants target and sell to the seedy underbelly of society away from prying eyes.

The Bastards produce and cultivate nothing.

The Bastards run a mixture of protection racket and violent marketeering, often being muscle for a few well-to-do groups before bullying, coercing, or being "promoted" to bossing others around for fear of reprisal. The Old Army was one such group, growing in power not by production, but by getting others to produce for them.

The only two factors the Bastards must consider is their Notoriety and Dominion. Notoriety represents the Gang's overall presence in the popular eye, slowly building until they are household names and on the Watch's docket every night. Dominion measures the number of controlled groups and Territories the Gang can manage before people begin to think they can go their own way.

The only way to consistently raise either is to improve the Rank of the Gang, and that always means paying upwards, often with a knife in the back.

Notoriety	Reach
1 - 4	Neighborhood
5 - 9	District
10 - 14	Borough
15+	City

Rank	Dominion
1 - 3	[2 x Rank]
4 - 6	[3 x Rank]
7 - 9	[5 x Rank]
10	[10 x Rank]

If the Bastards want to be known, they'll need to fight upwards for it. Force others to kowtow, or earn their respect enough to have them pay them instead of their current boss.

A Band of the Unfortunate

When creating the initial gang, it's important to define what the gang is built around as we carve out a niche for ourselves. There are a infinite number of reasons why Bastards band togethers, but most of them can be broken down into a few broad categories:

Neighborhood Gang	The Graduates
The Bastards are part of a neighborhood together, most likely growing up alongside one another or moving into the same row of shoddy housing. The Bastards are tied to the neighborhood and those who live among them know it.	The Bastards are formerly part of a children's gang, these loose groups are dominated by a few older kids or are used as lackeys by more "official" groups to spy on enemies or run distractions for the watch. Graduating out of the "little leagues" is a big step, but one every child must do.
The Breakaways	**The Fops**
A larger gang used to have multiple crews working side by side, with the Bastards themselves being one part of a greater whole. Whether the boss got killed, the gang ran out of money, or even just the group struck out by themselves, the reality of the matter is that their previous allegiances mean little now.	Less of a gang and more of a band of oddities deciding to tear up the town. While they may not be organized, official, or have any sort of backing of the major groups, they do have the resources and lives beyond the criminal enterprises to rely on.

The Bastards will next choose their initial stomping grounds in a District, they will be competing over a Territory with others, potentially larger, groups. If they carve out a niche for themselves, they may not be directly competing with anyone yet, but will soon come into conflict.

Side Note: **Gangs & Groups**

The Gangs throughout the city can just be about anyone or anything, each one securing a niche for themselves or fighting tooth and nail for domination of it. The most common of these are smugglers, guilds, or any other "Working Man" syndicate.

However, more exotic groups may show themselves through the city, such as Cults to the Wicked Ones or Exotic Slave Traders passing cargo through the docks. It's up to the Bastards to carve out their own morality in an immoral business.



All that Glitters

Any Gang is trying to better themselves financially, often through selling their wares or stealing it from others. The Bastard's organization is based on kickbacks of protection and threats of violence. Every Territory with a racket will increase the Profit of the Bastards by 1.

When the Bastards want to make a large purchase, they will have a Challenge where they will test their Gang's Profit against a Challenge. Oftentimes expensive purchases (new buildings or contraband) will take a penalty reflecting the possibility of purchase.

The individual Bastards will be paid out at the end of every Job from the Gang's current Profit. If a Bastard is taking a little, they'll receive [Profit x 3] Coppers, but increase their Profit by one for everyone else. If a Bastard is taking their cut, they'll have [Profit x 2] Silvers. Finally, a Bastard may willingly lower their Profit by 1 to receive [Profit] Gold. Profit can dip into the negatives, representing taking out major debts to various individuals to pay themselves.

Side Note: **Coinage**

In the Thesian Accords, technically the Thesian Coin is a separate currency from the Imperial Coinage. Imperial Marks, known as Ladies on the street due to Marytress's Face adorning it, come in small even sized silver coins with the marking of value (1, 5, or 10) on it. Gold Ladies are reserved for aristocrats.

The Thesian Coin is split between Coppers, Silvers, and Golden Coins. In total 13 Coppers are a Silver, 13 Silvers are a Gold, and 13 Gold form a Platinum Piece. Platinum Pieces are fairly large, with a mixture of Platinum and Gold mixed together, these are almost never seen on the streets and only used by merchants. The average wage of a dock worker is 5 Coppers a day, with monthly expenses coming out to 25-30 Silvers to live a humble life.

Retainers & Upkeep

The Bastards are not perfect, sometimes they'll need help or need to pay off people to lower the heat on them. These are reflected in Retainers and Upkeep.

Retainers are the individuals that the Bastards have on Payroll, whether its for a temporary assignment or for a prolonged contract. Each Retainer will lower the Profit for the gang as long as they are employed, taking it off the top before the payout. Retainers may be professional thieves, corrupt Watchmen, or simply a salacious courtesan who feeds information back about her paramours. Temporary Retainers are paid out once, while permanent ones require payment regularly.

This leads to Upkeep. Various factors will cause the profitability of the gang to drop. Some of these will be simple debts or payments that the gang must perform to keep themselves alive. Paying off the dominant force in the District will keep them employed and safe. Other pieces of Upkeep may include personal businesses or subsidies toward others. Upkeep is always taken off the top of the Profits every Job. Failure to pay may result in failing businesses, visits by the Central Guard (on behalf of the taxation offices), or a ransacked home with threats of knee breaking.

A Job's a Job

Jobs are the bread and butter of the Bastards, often a third party approaches their usual haunts, slaps down some money, and asks for a few broken noses or smashed up stores. Jobs represent the main activities of the Bastards in the city, going on these escapades to either get into fights, steal things from others, or orchestrate elaborate situations to do the above two.

Jobs don't always need to be contracted, certain Jobs will have the Bastards take the initiative to rough up a local leader or kick down the door of unpaying tenants.

Each Job is broken down into certain Scenes, each one highlighting a particular event or series of events that the Bastards will need to overcome or deal with. As competent individuals, the Bastards don't need to be Challenged for every single action they take. Throwing a fist at the unarmed shopkeeper will drop him with a broken nose, but throwing hands with a small thuggish outfit of fishermen is going to escalate quickly.

Each Scene has the deck placed front and center, reshuffling in any card that was discarded from the previous scene. The Cheat Line will never be shuffled in or reorganized except at the start of the session. When the scene concludes, the deck is reset and play continues.

A Random Job can be drawn from the top of the deck if needed. Consult the charts below to read the results. In total there will be four cards drawn and if at the table, the Cheat Line can be used to substitute any of them out (with appropriate chaos included).



The Job Type

Black Card		
2 -4	Robbery	The Bastards are tasked with stealing something from the target, it could be large, it could be small, who knows.
5 - 7	Protection	The Bastards are given a protection job, they need to keep the client alive until the end of their contract.
8 - 10	Espionage	The Bastards have to infiltrate, spy, and record various information of the target, slowly learning more about them.
J	Socializing	The Bastards are hired to spread the good word about the client, often through a bit of rough housing and possible acting.
Q	Acquisition	The Bastards need to acquire and deliver a particular item to the client or a person of the client's specifications.
K	Assassination	The Bastards are shooting above their station, they need to kill, quietly, a notable person.
A	Weird	Something is off about this job, something weird is going on and only the Bastards can solve it.
Joker	Bizarre	Something is very wrong about everything currently going on, but the Bastards are stuck in it now, whether they like it or not.

Red Card		
2 -4	Accident	The Bastards have been given a mission to force an "Accident" to happen to the Target. What a shame it was a lethal one.
5 - 7	Disappearance	The Bastards have to find, deal with, and dispose of an individual without being caught.
8 - 10	Murder	The Bastards have a simple job, kill someone, violently and brazenly.
J	Smash & Grab	The Bastards are tasked with breaking down the door and smashing up a location, trying to find an object or evidence.
Q	Sabotage	The Bastards' goal is simple, break something beyond repair or make sure that it fails at a critical moment.
K	Battle	The Bastards have been hired as extra muscle, it's going to be an all out street war and they need to be on the winning side.
A	Weird	Something is off about this job, something weird is going on and only the Bastards can solve it.
Joker	Bizarre	Something is very wrong about everything currently going on, but the Bastards are stuck in it now, whether they like it or not.

The Client / Target

The Suit - The Client		
Heart	The People	A citizen, uninvolved in the nefarious or gilded, has approached the Bastards for the job. How did they get this money, and find you?
Diamond	The Aristocrats	Finery and gold in the muck, an aristocrat (or more likely one of their lackeys) has proposed dirty work. It has to be nefarious to go this low.
Spade	The Underworld	One of the Bastard's own communities has contacted them for help. As expected.
Club	The Guilds	Organized, efficient, and always awash with a few coins, one of the guilds has proposed the mission. It may even be against themselves!
Joker	The Odd	An odd client with an odd way of approaching the situation, whoever they are, they are willing to pay. Hopefully.

The Suit - The Target		
Heart	The People	A citizen, uninvolved in the nefarious or gilded, has been targeted for the job. What did they do to deserve such unwarranted attention?
Diamond	The Aristocrats	Finery and gold will do little to dissuade the Bastards, a Aristocrat, a member of high society has been targeted. Why are they being targeted?
Spade	The Underworld	One of the Bastard's own community of nefarious ne'er-do-wells has been targeted for the job. Who did they piss off this time?
Club	The Guilds	Organized, efficient, and always threatened, one of the trade guilds of the city have been targeted. How big are they and what will the repercussions be?
Joker	The Guard	The actual Watch has been targeted for the job? Who the hell is stupid enough to do that? And why are you thinking about taking it?

The Payment

Card Value		
Number	[Value of Card] x Rank Silvers per Bastard	The Bastards are paid in raw Silvers, it may not be the most amount of money, but a simple job is a simple job. An example is drawing a 6, with a Rank 2 Gang, would make 12 Silvers per Bastard.
Jack	Loyalty of the Client	The Bastards have earned the loyalty of the client, they may be a permanent retainer to assist them, or even another business entering the fold.
Queen	Access to a Location or Item	The Bastards have earned the right to access a location, gain special items, or have access to other valuable areas in the city.
King	[Number of Bastards] x 5 Gold	By the Martyress! The Client is paying out a few Gold per Bastard, it's payday lads!
Ace	Something Weird	Something is wrong with the payment, it could be some esoterica, something seemingly useless, or even access to some more . .. exotic supplies.

Blood on the Streets: Duels

The Bastards are built on combat and bloodshed, and when the time comes, swords are drawn, insults are hurled, and the duel begins. Fighting in the streets is common for the poorer sections of the city, forcing those to rely on the strong to keep them safe.

Often the Watch will break up any fight, but many of these duels find themselves in more private settings, often with the cover of darkness to shield them from prying eyes.

The Bastards are accomplished fighters, individuals who will risk it all in the tense back and forth of back alley brawls and the clash of blades in the street.

What is a Duel?

In Sword Bastards a Duel is a competition between two or more fighters in a tense exchange of blows trying to defeat one another with a decisive strike.

Duels are between competent fighters, those trained in the arts of combat with enough knowledge to learn the parries, thrusts, strikes, and swift kicks to the nethers to put up a good fight. Dueling is not for the untrained or unable.

If a Bastard draws on a person who is unable to defend themselves, even if armed, they won't be initiating a duel at all. Instead they will use a Challenge to disarm, disable, or outright kill their target. If the person draws and assumes a fighting position, a duel is called and the two get ready for their bout with destiny.



Thrust, Sweep, and Counter: The Basics

A fight has broken out and two figures stand apart from one another, blades drawn and ready to die for their cause. A duel has started.

When a duel kicks off, both fighters will announce their Fighting Style, drawing their Combat Skill in cards to their hand. Depending on the Fighting Style[2], one fighter will place a card face down in one of three areas in front of them, representing their Left, Right, and Center. After placing their card, the next fighter will place theirs.

THis continues until one of two situations occurs:

- None of the combatants have any more cards in their hand.
- One party declares En Garde after two rounds of placements. Determining initiative between the fighters.

If En Garde is declared, both parties reveal their remaining hand, whoever has the highest value card will seize the Initiative. If no more cards are in hand, then whoever placed the first card has the Initiative.

Whoever has the Initiative selects which of the three locations will be flipped over first, then alternating to another opponent, and finally back for the last bout.

This leads to the comparison of the round, where steel will clash and blood will spill.

When a section is flipped, both sides will record the value of the Numbered Cards of both Black and Red. Black is Defense, parries, chambered blades, or even just outright blocking an attack. Red is Offense, strikes, stabs, and attempts at the opponent's life.

Offense is directly countered by Defense, any excess Offense is striking home, dealing direct damage to the fighter. Damage is mutual in a street fight, stabbing at one another with no defense will end with two impaled fools dying next to one another.

If Face Cards are played in the column, then each one has a unique effect tied to it either increasing, or decreasing, Offense or Defense.

JACK	Mercurial and magnetic, Top Deck a card and place it directly on the Column of the Jack.
QUEEN	Regal in demeanor, reduces the value of opposing cards in the same to 0[3].
KING	Royal in nature, doubles the numerical value of any card sharing the same Suit[4].
ACE	A personal gamble, triggers a special move or ability a piece of equipment has, resolving its effects.
JOKER	Chaotic and unpredictable, removes all Offense or Defense of the opposing side depending on the color[5].

After the Comparison, both sides stagger back, and ready again. Whoever did the most damage will begin the next round of clashes. Suggesting one of the fighters doesn't collapse from their wounds.

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[2] Agile - Brutal - Deliberate - Fanciful
[3] Queen of Hearts makes an opposing 4 of Hearts worth 0 Offense.
[4] King of Spades makes a 4 of Spades, worth 8 Defense.
[5] Red Joker removes Offense, Black Joker removes Defense.

Alas, Poor Bastard

When taking a hit, a bladed weapon or other such weapon has hit the body and it feels the familiar sensation of agonizing pain. The Bastards and other "important" entities have Bravado, their natural charm, charisma, and stamina keeping them alive from devilish hits. As stated above, when taking damage the Bastard will reduce their Bravado first, near misses, torn clothes, or minor flesh wounds are all that's visible.

However, when Bravado is broken, and an attack pierces the defenses of the Bastard, they'll begin to take Wounds. Wounds are split up into four categories: Flesh, Minor, Major, and Mortal Wounds. Totaling up the total amount of Damage, indicates the current amount of Wounds the Bastard has sustained.

Wound	Damage	Penalty	Medical Challenge	Description
Healthy	0	None	None	The Bastard is healthy and ready to fight.
Flesh	1 - 5	None	None	The Bastard has taken a nasty flesh wound, it stings, but they'll live.
Minor	6 - 10	-1 Combat Skill	Rouge or Noir	The Bastard staggers, blood seeping from a true strike, but standing still.
Major	11 - 15	-3 Combat Skill	Within 2	The Bastard's mind screams in pain, the wound is serious and they're faltering.
Mortal	16 - 24	-6 Combat Skill	Equal Value	The Bastard has taken a vicious strike to a vital region, they're ready to die.
Deadly	25+	Death	Nothing	The Bastard dies on the spot, cut to pieces, hacked to bits, or some critical function of “Living” being punctured.

For example, if Vincente is struck by a blow while he's exposed, and takes 8 Damage, he's currently in Minor Wounds. If he were to take another hit for 3 Damage, he is in Major Wounds with a total of 11 Damage applied to him.

Each piece of damage indicates another, separate, injury the Bastard has taken. Multiple minor injuries are just as deadly as one rapier in an eye socket.

When a Bastard has sustained Mortal Wounds, they are on death’s doors, barely standing up straight as they struggle to remain functional. Any further damage will kill them outright, they must be rushed to a barber or a more reputable doctor to have the chance of saving them.

When the Bastard returns wounded, but alive, they’ll need to seek medical assistance. They’ll perform a Medical Challenge equal to their doctor’s skill (Barber’s are 3 -4, Doctors are 5 - 6, and Witchcraft is 7 - 9), if they succeed, then they’ll reduce their Wounds by one every day. If they fail, it has grown worse, and they progress to the next category (Minor to Major, Major to Mortal, and Mortal to Deadly).

Advanced Dueling Rules

This may seem relatively simple, but a duel is simply a clash of steel at the end of the day and the Bastards must plan around their hand and abuse their Cheat Line to their best abilities.

If there is a need for more advanced techniques, consult the following.

Range & Movement

Combat is rarely a static endeavor of two individuals standing in place, both are moving to and fro blocking, dodging, and actively attempting to gain an advantage over their opponent.

If the WC wishes to implement movement into the Duel System, then use the following rules.

Each duel is taking place within a number of "Steps" of one another, moving back and forth in a series of blows and counter strikes. Determining the steps away from one another is the only thing that truly matters, with 0 Steps being face to face. Each step away or toward the opponent will take place during the Initiative determination.

Declaring an En Garde has the chance for a duelist to take one of their cards in their hand and choose it to be their movement card. If it is Black, then they'll step backward, if it is Red, they'll step forward. Most sword strikes attack up to two steps, but depending on the weapon, they may not be able to retaliate or even strike.

If a Weapon is not within range, they will forfeit all Offense Cards, but no Defense Cards. If a Weapon is within range, then nothing occurs. Certain Steps toward or away from a target may have special features or objects to be interacted with, such positioning and posturing is up to the WC to determine.

For example, Vincente is dueling a smuggler aboard their ship. He informed that within 3 Steps of both of them are the sides of the ship and they cannot go any further than it.

Stunts & Tricks

For more "exciting" games of Sword Bastards, Stunts and Tricks reflect the little abilities and notes the Sword Bastards are able to perform while in a duel.

When using an Ace, instead of triggering a weapon effect or a Talent, they may instead use a Stunt in the surrounding area. These Stunts should be choreographed to the Bastards before the battle begins, and using them imparts Offense or Defense bonuses to the situation at hand.

Going back to Vincente's duel aboard the ship, drawing, and playing, an Ace allows him to throw a handful of the Red Dust the Smuggler is importing at their face, granting Vincente a +5 Defense on his Left Side it was played at.

Tricks on the other hand can be used right before the Duel, allowing the Bastard to perform an action to give them an advantage or a crippling disadvantage. Often these are bonus Combat Skill that can be applied to one round of the duel or an advantage right off the bat.

Gunpowder Weapons

Expensive, rare, and especially powerful. Gunpowder is the ultimate equalizer in any battle. Most Bastards will be employing the concealable handgun, a short range smoothbore that takes a solid minute to reload.

Getting shot with any gunpowder weapon will bring any target to Mortal Wounds, and if they were previously injured, it will bring them to Deadly Wounds. Most Gunpowder weapons are short range unless fired in a volley, or at close range. Pulling one out in a Duel has the Bastard discard their current hand and draw equal to their Swords Suit. The Challenge will either be Easy, Complex, Hard, or a Miracle depending on the range of the target.

If successful, the deafening crack of the and smoke of the gunpowder will alert just about any Watchman to their location. Get a move on Bastard!

Combat Reaction

Combat can be stressful at the best of times, but certain conditions will trigger different possibilities. The two discussed here will be Perfect Chambering and Capitulation.

Perfect Chambering, or meeting a weapon with a Bastard's own, occurs when both sides have an equal amount of Offense in a Column. Regardless of Defense or any other factor, both attacks "Knock Away" one another in the hit. No damage is dealt when this occurs. Rarely this will happen, but on the off chance it does, it could be the difference between life and death.

Capitulation occurs when a target has taken a Wound. They have the option to fall down and "Capitulate" , gripping their new injury tightly to stem the bleeding. They have effectively "Give Up" and cancel the rest of the Round's combat actions, what this entails is giving up before they may take an even more lethal wound in a different Column.

Directional Attacks

Directional attacks have individual locations targeted instead of stabbing at "The Person." When a Wound is taken, the WC or Bastard will draw a card from the top of the deck to determine the location of the strike.

- Hearts is the Chest
- Diamonds is the Head
- Spades are the Legs
- Clubs are the Arms

If a Target is struck in the Head, then they will double the damage taken. Striking the Legs has the Target take the amount as a penalty to their next Initiative, potentially placing them in the negative. If the hit is to the arm, damage in excess of 5 means that any equipment in that hand is unable to be used for the bout. Finally, if the Chest is hit for more than 10 Damage, the Target loses half of their Combat Skill for the bout.

Non-Lethal Takedown

If a Bastard wants to non-lethally deal with a Target, such as just knocking them out with the blunt of their blade or bashing their head in with their hilt, then they will take a -2 Combat Skill for the Round.

If they successfully bring the Target Down to Major Wounds, they are instead knocked unconscious and helpless before the Bastard.



Side Note: **Rapidfire Combat Resolution**

When you're dealing with multiple combatants all at once, the WC, rules as written, is going to be drawing a hand for every combatant. This may seem a bit cumbersome and eat through the deck quickly for "Large" fights. To keep things moving along, the Rapidfire Rule has you top deck a card, examine it, and then play it in one of the three columns. When determining Initiative, if they have used all of their Combat Skill, they have 0, if they have not, top deck again to determine the result.

The WC is allowed to examine the card, then place it, it's not completely blind. If playing this solo, then you would not examine the card, just play it where you feel relatively confident you won't die.

The Armory of the Streets

The City is filled with weapons of war from the centuries of conflict with the Aeven, while most of the exquisite tools of war are safely locked away in the armories, every year a couple more of them leak out. More standardized weapons come from the manufacturers, not entirely switching over from swords to plows yet. Though orders are so massive for the wars up north, that no one misses a few weapons going missing.

When the Bastards hit the street, they'll be armed and ready. While most weapons aren't strictly "Legal," few Watchmen are willing to start a fight without proper backup. But everyone knows when blades clash, blood will stain the streets.

Weapons of a More Noble Era: Melee

Weaponry in the modern era has seen a radical shift toward more sophisticated metallurgy as well as a more devastating effect against the classical knights of old. While the treacherous Aeven did not employ heavy cavalry as our brave knights of old, their armor was thought to be impenetrable for decades before leaps in technology.

In the modern era, the melee weapon is still one of the most common armaments for militaries and personal use. Every Bastard worth their salt will have a weapon to brandish in conflict, often with lethal consequences.

If the Bastard is using two weapons in both hands, then the Column tied to the location (Left for Left Hand, Right for Right Hand) will enjoy the benefits of the weapon. Two-Handed weapons can apply both, but using a One-Handed Weapon alone can also apply it to both hands.

NAME of the Weapon		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
The Left, Center, and Right of the Weapon Description indicates the number of cards that can be placed in the column when using the weapon. If it is marked with an [NA] then as many cards as the Bastard wants can be placed in the column. If it is marked as [NA/X], then any number of cards may be placed in one Column, reducing all other [NA/X] Columns to the X Value of cards.		
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Hands indicate how the weapon can be used, one or two-handed. Certain weapons will have it written as Switch which allows the Bastard to choose whether to make it one-or-two-handed.	Base Damage is the raw bonus of damage added to a successful strike on an opponent. Adding onto whatever the Offense value is to the Target. Base Damage is not added to the Offense during the comparison, only if the attack manages to land a blow.	Effects are the mundane notes and problems the weapon grants the user. These may be narrative, such as being [Concealable] or may grant bonuses (or penalties) such as [-2 Combat Skill].
ACED		
Finally, the Aced Effect is when an Ace is played. When revealed, the Ace Effect will take place and resolve itself first. If multiple Ace Effects take place, priority is given as follows [(Highest) Spades - Clubs - Hearts - Diamonds (Lowest)].		

Swords

Rapier		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
2	NA	2
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Handed	1	[+1 Combat Skill: Deliberate & Fanciful]
ACED		
Impale - The Rapier moves straight through the defense of their foe, reducing Defense to 0.		

Straight Sword		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
3	3	3
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Handed	0	
ACED		
Reliability - The Straight Sword has seen a dozen wars and will continue to do such, Top Deck two cards.		

Arming Sword		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
NA	NA	NA
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Handed	1	
ACED		
Bloody - The Arming Sword is a military weapon through and through, deal +3 Damage if the weapon connects.		

Broadsword		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
NA	4	NA
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Switch	3	One-Handed: [Combat Skill -1] Two-Handed: [Combat Skill +0]
ACED		
Bloody - The Broadsword is a military weapon through and through, deal +3 Damage if the weapon connects.		

Saber		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
NA	1	NA
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Handed	1	[Combat Skill: Agile and Brutal +1]
ACED		
Quick Slashes - The Saber is adept at rapid slashes back and forth, take any card from this column and place it in either the Left or Right Column that has not been revealed.		

Zweihander		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
NA / 0	4	NA / 0
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Two-Handed	4	[Combat Skill: -2]
ACED		
Mercenary's Blade - The Zweihander is a devastating machine in the right hands, double all of the Offense / Defense Cards in the column.		

Side Sword		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
3	4	3
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Handed	0	Concealable, Sidearm
ACED		
A Nasty Secret - The Side Sword is a nasty little surprise to the unaware, if using a Cheat Line Card, its effects are doubled.		

Other Weapons

Handaxe		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
2	2	2
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Handed	2	Piercing
ACED		
Chopper - The Axe is designed to hack away wood and limbs, if the weapon connects, the target automatically goes up one Wound Tier.		

Short Poleaxe		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
3	3	3
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Switch	3	One-Handed [Combat Skill: Brutal +0] Two-Handed [Combat Skill: Brutal +1] Piercing
ACED		
Chopper - The Short Poleaxe is designed to hack away wood and limbs, if the weapon connects, the target automatically goes up one Wound Tier.		

Club		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
2	1	2
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Handed	0	Stun
ACED		
KO Blow - The Club knocks the wind out the target, if damage is successful and the Target has no Bravado, then they are automatically knocked unconscious.		

Warhammer		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
NA / 0	1	NA / 0
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Two-Handed	4	[Combat Skill: -2], Stun
ACED		
Crushed - With an unholy snapping sound, if the Target takes any Wounds from this Column, deal an additional +5.		



Dagger		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
1	1	1
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Hand	0	Sidearm, Quick, Concealable
ACED		
Rapid - The Target removes the lowest Defense Card from their side during the comparison phase.		

Main Gauche		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
3	3	3
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Hand	0	Sidearm, Concealable Optional: Convert all Offense and Defense or Defense into Offense.
ACED		
Turn the Tide - Convert all of one or more suits into Offense or Defense[6].		

Sword Breaker		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
2	2	2
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Hand	0	Sidearm, Concealable
ACED		
Broken Blades - If a Successful Defense is carried out, the Opponent loses -1 Combat Skill and the Aced Ability of their weapon until it can be repaired.		

[6] For example, I have 5 of Clubs and 5 of Spades, I can individually change the Clubs or Spades into Offense.

Short Spear		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
1	NA	1
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
One-Hand	2	Long
ACED		
Keep Back - When revealed, the Target removes the lowest Offense Card in their Column.		

Long Spear		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
1	NA	1
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Two-Handed	3	Long
ACED		
Keep Away - When revealed, the Target removes the highest Offense Card in their Column.		

Staff		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
3	NA	3
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Two-Handed	-2	Long, Stun, Civilian
ACED		
Keep Back - When revealed, the Target removes the lowest Offense Card in their Column.		

Weapons of an Ignoble Era: Ranged

Weaponry has evolved over the years, one of the chief inventions of the modern era has been gunpowder. Changing the face of the battlefield has been the armed legions of musketeers, armed with the latest and greatest firearms to date. While pike formations still dominate the field, gradually more of these musket-wielding men have shown up.

While guns are not common in the lower districts of the city, few firearms find themselves in circulation. Especially the prized pistol, one shot from one of these at close range will kill any man. This doesn't mean weapons of yesteryear have faded, crossbows and the occasional recurve bow find themselves used for quiet operations.

When using a ranged weapon, the Bastard will not engage in a Duel, instead they will make a Challenge determined by the range and conditions of the weapon. If the Challenge is successful, damage will be applied based on the Damage Type.

Name of the Weapon		
HANDS	**Damage Type**	**Range**
Hands indicate how the weapon can be used, one or two-handed.	The Type of Damage the weapon will deal. • **Deadly** - Immediately place the Target at Mortal Wounds. • **Heavy** - Immediately place the Target at Heavy Wounds. • **Light** - Immediately place the Target at Light Wounds. If shot again, the Target will go up by another Wound Tier. Additional Cards played add +1 to the current Damage done to the Target.	The Range of the weapon. If exceeding the range, then it incurs Chaos to the Challenge. • **Close** - Target is within 5 Meters. • **Distanced** - Target is within 25 Meters. • **Sight** - Target can be seen.
Effects		
Different qualities of the weapon and its effects on the situation.		

Flintlock Pistol		
HANDS	**Damage Type**	**Range**
One-Handed	Deadly	Close
Effects		
Loud, Reload, Concealable		

Flintlock Musket		
HANDS	**Damage Type**	**Range**
Two-Handed	Deadly	Distanced
Effects		
Loud, Reload		

Crossbow		
HANDS	**Damage Type**	**Range**
Two-Handed	Heavy	Close
Effects		
Reload		

Recurve Bows		
HANDS	**Damage Type**	**Range**
Two-Handed	Light	Sight
Effects		

Hand Crossbow		
HANDS	**Damage Type**	**Range**
One-Handed	Light	Close
Effects		
Reload, Concealable		

Sling		
HANDS	**Damage Type**	**Range**
One-Handed	Light	Distanced
Effects		
Concealable		

Effects	Description
Civilian	The weapon is fairly standard for civilians to be seen using, it's almost too common.
Combat Skill: Combat Skills	The Weapon increases or decreases the Combat Skill. Either generalized or when using a particular Combat SKill.
Concealable	The weapon can be easily hidden unless the Bastard is deliberately searched for it.
Long	The weapon has a long reach, they take -1 to Combat Skill while indoors, but they have a natural 8 for Initiative to determine combat order.
Loud	The weapon is hideously loud when fired, every Watchman in the area will hear it.
One-Handed / Two-Handed	Different qualities when the weapon is used with one or two hands.
Optional	The weapon has an optional effect the Bastard can trigger if they wish when a Column is revealed.
Piercing	The weapon ignores all Armor when striking an opponent.
Quick	When using this weapon, the Bastard is always assumed to have a 5 for Initiative. This is superseded when using a card for Initiative.
Reload	The weapon cannot be used after it is fired in a duel, spending at least a minute to fully reload it.
Sidearm	The weapon can be naturally used in the off-hand when using another weapon.
Stun	If the weapon successfully hits a Target, they have -1 Combat Skill next bout. This does not stack.

Side Note: **Unarmed**

One may notice unarmed isn't mentioned in here. But if it does come up as a "Legitimate" weapon and the Bastard hasn't cut the person down or got cut down themselves. . .

Unarmed		
LEFT	**CENTER**	**RIGHT**
2/1	2/1	2/1
HANDS	**BASE DAMAGE**	**EFFECTS**
Being Thrown.	-2	Damage is never naturally lethal, if a Wound is taken, the Target is knocked unconscious instead.
ACED		
Big Hit - Rolling back a hit, the Bastard's fist is now considered a lethal weapon, if they deal a Wound to a Target in the Column they will take 2 Damage themselves, but still knock the person out with the full Wound.		

An Example: **A Basic Set-Up**

Vincente is arming himself to the best of his abilities and he's chosen a Rapier and Main Gauche as his primary weapons. He uses the Rapier in his right hand and Main Gauche in his left.

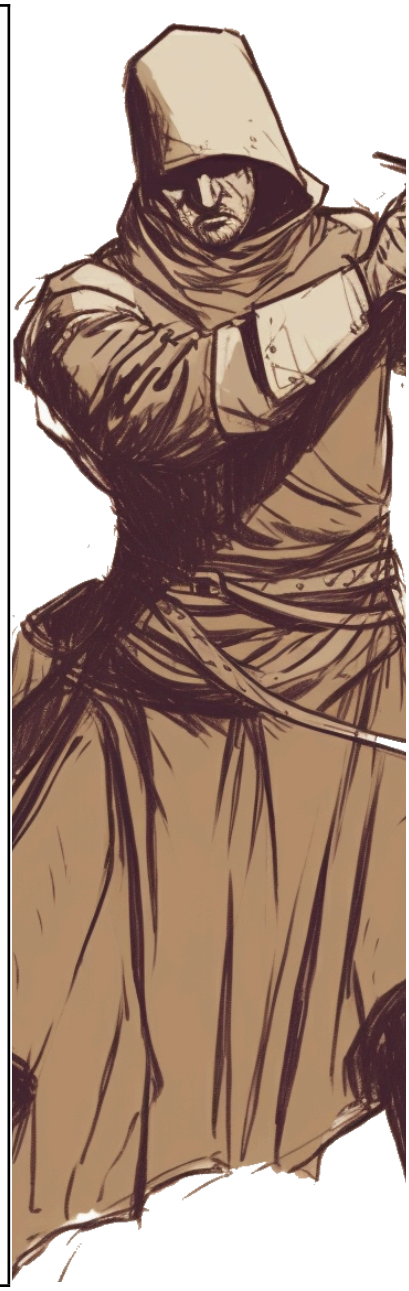
When he's making an attack, he can freely place as many cards as he wishes in the center, two cards on the right, and three on the left. His Rapier (Center and Right) gives him a +1 Bonus Damage, but his Main Gauche allows him to convert all Offense or Defense Cards into one another (Center and Left).

When determining Effect Priority, always take the lowest values.

Side Note: **Costs & Advanced Combat Notes**

Getting a Weapon in someone's hand is fairly easy in the City, but purchasing one legitimately can be arguably more dangerous than a few extra coins in a loose pocket. This table reflects the Bastard Rating of the weapon (allowing a Bastard to take it as a starting weapon if they wish), the Legal Price of the weapon, though it will often be far higher (or lower) depending on the source, and the Range of the weapon dictated in the Range & Movement section of Advanced Dueling.

	Bastard Rating	Cost (Silvers)	Range
Rapier	0	30	2
Straight Sword	1	25	1
Arming Sword	2	30	2
Broadsword	2	60	3
Saber	1	25	2
Zweihander	4	120	5
Side Sword	2	30	2
Handaxe	0	15	1
Short Poleaxe	1	45	2
Club	0	5	1
Warhammer	3	25	4
Dagger	0	5	0
Main Gauche	1	25	0
Sword Breaker	2	35	0
Short Spear	0	12	3
Long Spear	2	36	5
Staff	0	2	3
Flintlock Pistol	NA	300	NA
Flintlock Musket	NA	800	NA
Crossbow	3	45	NA
Recurve Bow	2	30	NA
Hand Crossbow	3	100	NA
Sling	0	1	NA



Equipment & Gear

Throughout their adventure, the Bastards will amass an amount of gear and supplies to use on their heists and jobs. Certain pieces of Gear will be equipped to a hand, others just worn on the person, and even some simply quaffed in moments of desperation. Below is a small selection of different types of equipment that may be found in the city.

Dueling Cloak	
Equipment Type	**Cost (Silvers)**
Wearable (Arm)	20
Effect	
When Equipped, all Heart Cards in the Column become Defense Cards.	
ACED	
All Offense Cards are converted into Defense Cards and the Target removes the highest Offense Card.	

Buckler	
Equipment Type	**Cost (Silvers)**
Wearable (Arm)	30
Effect	
When equipped, that Column will have +5 Defense in addition to the Defense Cards played.	
ACED	
The Column will have +10 Defense in addition to the Defense Cards played. Takes priority over the effect.	

Pistol Brace	
Equipment Type	**Cost (Silvers)**
Wearable (Torso)	40
Effect	
By using a Cheat Line Card and discarding it, the Bastard may use a Flintlock Pistol immediately in a duel.	

Martyress Symbol	
Equipment Type	**Cost (Silvers)**
Wearable (Neck)	10
Effect	
When the Bastard were to be reduced to 0 Bravado, instead reduce it to 1. Can be used once per Scene.	

Side Note: **This Seems Pretty Light**

Yeah, there isn't much to put here. If you have any suggestions, feel free to leave a comment, I'll probably add it. If you're curious, just about anywhere something can be worn, just not doubled up at all.

Lock-Joint Gauntlet	
Equipment Type	**Cost (Silvers)**
Wearable (Hand)	125
Effect	
When the Bastard takes damage in the Column of the hand, they gain +2 Defense. Cannot be disarmed.	

Vials	Effects	Addictive?[7]	Cost (Silver)
Blue Vial	Reduce Wounds by 5	Yes	30
Brown Vial	Increase Combat Skill by +3, Increase Wounds by 10 at the end of the Scene	Yes	10
Light Blue Vial	Reduce Wounds by 15	Yes	60
Orange Vial	Increase Brutal Combat Skill by +3, Reduce other Combat Skills to 0. Lasts until the end of the Scene.	Yes	10
Potion of Bodily Rejuviation	Top Deck. If Red, reduce Wounds by 15. If Black, increase Wounds by 15.	No	20
Purple Vial	Increase Bravado by 5. Top Deck, if Red, suffer from hallucinations.	Yes	5
White Vial	Cures Poisons, Illnesses, and other Debilitations.	No	15
Worm Juice	Cause hallucinations	Yes	3
Yellow Vial	Increase Bravado by 10. Top Deck, if Black, increase Wounds by 20.	No	8

Medical Tools	Effects	Cost (Silver)
Bandages	If at Minor Wounds, reduce Wounds by 5.	3
Trauma Kit	If at Heavy Wounds, reduce Wounds by 5	18
Barber Kit	If at Mortal Wounds, reduce Wounds by 5	50

Item	Effects	Cost (Silver)	Item	Effects	Cost (Silver)
Arrow Quiver	Hold Arrows or Bolts for a Ranged Weapon	10	Lockpicks	A set of lockpicks for getting into places.	10 to 30
Explosive Vial	An explosive compound blows up when thrown.	50	Purifying Talisman	Remove hostile magical effects.	60
Lantern	Provides a Light Source with some oil.	25	Red Vial	A corrosive compound, blinds target if thrown	15
Murky Vial	Flammable compound lights up quickly.	15	Spyglass	A specialized spyglass to see distant objects.	25
Musical Instrument	A simple musical instrument.	10 to 250	Tinderbox	Light a flammable light source	2
Oil Flask	Contains 5 Units of Oil (Lanterns 1 / Night)	5	Torch	A reliable torch, lasts 7 rooms	2
Poison Flasks	Poisons the target, reducing Combat Skill by -3	10	Trap	If someone stands in this, they'll get a nasty leg wound.	5

[7] Make a Rouge & Noir Challenge with Batons, if failed, required to ingest the addictive substance once a week or lose -3 Combat Skill.

A Bygone Era: Armor

Armor in the modern era is reserved for soldiers and the mercenaries, those in the city who can afford fine sets of gear tend to be well-to-do or in service to those who are. The armor of the modern Thesian soldier is steel breastplate and backplate, with a buffcoat to protect the chest, arms and thighs. Morion helmets are for accomplished soldiers, though burgonets have become more standardized even among less accomplished soldiers.

For the Bastards, armor is a commodity, an obvious sign of both wealth and protection. Those who can manage to get some armor strapped to their body they'll survive potentially lethal blows and feel more confident in their strikes. However, armor is both obvious, and heavy.

Armor comes in four weights, reflecting their overall protection, coverage, and difficulty in movement. The penalty reduces Combat Skill by a flat amount, while the Defense reduces any damage by its amount, except if the weapon has Piercing.

Armor Weight	Defense	Combat Skill Penalty	Cost (Silvers)
None	0	0	None
Light	2	-1	45
Medium	4	-2	90
Heavy	6	-3	200
Superheavy	10	-4	1000

Side Note: **Acquisition of Armor**

Light and Medium Armor are relatively easy to get a hold of, buff coats and simple metal plates can go a long way in a fight, but anything heavier requires knowing the right people and getting properly outfitted for it.

Getting armor is just as difficult as buying it.

Side Note: **Sectional Armor**

If using the Directional Attacks Advanced Rules, then each section of a body can be outfitted with different qualities of armor. Combat Penalty is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of zero) for Arms and Legs. But the Bastard will take the Combat Skill Penalty of the heaviest piece of armor they are wearing. The costs are listed below:

Armor Weight	Chest Cost	Limb Cost	Head Cost
Light	45	10	10
Medium	90	20	35
Heavy	200	50	60
Superheavy	1000	200	200

No Streets for Old Bastards

The streets aren't a place for the faint of heart, and those with the gumption to survive find themselves quickly in hot water. The Bastards will need to be smart, fight hard, and prepare themselves for every encounter going forward. But as they grow, they'll confront both external and internal enemies in their rise to power. To get ahead, one has to kill upwards.

Minor Advancement

When the Bastards go up a Tier, they will be given an Advance, representing their growth and development as people and genuine monsters. An Advance can be spent on improving the Bastard's life, whether by fortune or training.

The Bastards who set up new ventures will add to the Dominion of the gang, this new operation will expand the influence of the gang directly allowing them to capitalize on niches in the market, without corralling others.

Legwork represents the day-to-day management of the gang, while thankless, annoying, and oftentimes not entirely thanked, doing the small labor keeps the gang flowing nicely.

Notoriety and fame go hand-in-hand, as the Bastard grows in influence, so do the stories of their martial prowess, impeccable skills, devilish handsomeness, and oftentimes sizes of their hands. Taking the time and effort to bolster and prove these rumors correct has a direct influence on the Bastard's reputation.

Skills keep a Bastard alive, and learning the ins-and-out of a new trade can be the difference between those innards being outwards.

Finally, a windfall is always appreciated. Sometimes it's side-gigs, family, friends, or their actual job finally paying out. When the money comes in, the Bastard is free to share, though this "Legitimate" money tends to anathema among more dishonest types. The eye of the Tax Man is more ferocious than any Watchman.

Business	The Bastard prepares a new business venture.
Legwork	The Bastard increases the Income of the Gang by 1.
Notorious	The Bastard increases their Bastardry by 1.
Skilled	The Bastard gains a new Skill Set.
Windfall	The Bastard gains an immediate [Rank x 10] Silver.



Major Advancement

When a Gang successfully moves up League, from Neighborhood (Rank 1-3) to District (Rank 4-6) for example, they will all earn a Major Advance.

These Major Advances represent a fundamental shift in the nature of the Bastard as well as their abilities. They've graduated from classic bravos getting into fights in the street to actual bosses of their own petty underworld fiefdom. When a Bastard gains their Major Advance, they are allowed to pick a Talent they qualify for OR increase any of their Suits (excluding Bastardary) by 1[8].

Administrative	**Agile Fighter**
Gang has +3 Dominion	Gain +2 Agile Combat Skill
All that Glitters	**Ambidextrous**
May change all Diamonds to Defense during the Comparison phase.	May use any one-handed weapon in an off-hand.
Anti-Hero	**Barbarian Conqueror**
Increase Bastardry by 1	Gain +2 Brutal Combat Skill
Bizarre Combat Style	**Blade to the Throat**
When Combat Styles have been announced during a Duel, the Bastard may switch to any other Combat Style.	May change all Spades to Offense during the Comparison phase.
Blind Faith & Quick Thinking	**Bloodied, but Not Dead**
During the Comparison phase, may move one card to another non-revealed column.	Increase the Wound Threshold by +3[9].
Boss of Bosses	**Checking the Books**
Reduce Upkeep of Temporary and Permanent Retainers by 1.	Increase Gang Profit by 3.
Darling Fencer	**Double Down**
Gain +2 Fanciful Combat Skill	Top Deck a new Lead Card to add to the Challenge, both count for Successes, usable once a Session.
Faithful Blood	**Going Aggro**
Decrease the Difficulty of all Medical Challenges by two steps.	Place two cards during the first bout of the Duel in any one Column.

[8] The rise and fall of the Bastards should feel quick, hence why their Suits will not be changing much. They're notoriety may grow, but they as people rarely will.

[9] Flesh Wounds are now 4 to 8 Damage, Major Wounds are 14 to 18, etc

Hardened	Heart of the Cards
Increase Maximum Bravdo to 26	May Top Deck a Card at any point during Session during a Challenge and add it to the result.
Impeccable Maintenance	**Knows a Guy, Who knows a Guy**
Reduce Upkeep of Temporary and Permanent Buildings and Businesses by 1.	Establish a connection with a know arms dealer and fence, able to buy and sell with relative ease with them.
Misinformation	**Missed the Heart**
Notoriety decreases by 2 every week without a Job being done.	When a Bastard would take a Deadly Wound, they instead are at Mortal Wounds instead. Once a session.
My Blade is My Soul	**Patient Warrior**
Increase the Base Damage of one type of weapon by +2.	Gain +2 Deliberate Combat Skill
Power Through Misery	**Quick Drinker**
May change all Hearts to Defense during the Comparison phase.	May consume a Vial at the start of a new Round of a Duel.
Refusal to Die	**Renaissance Man**
May change all Clubs to Offense during the Comparison phase.	Gain 3 Skill Sets
Rob Lady Luck	**Sleeping in Steel**
Replace the Lead Card of a Challenge with any card in the Cheat Line once a Session.	Reduce Combat Skill Penalty by 2 when wearing Armor.
Sleight of Hand	**Soldiering Skills**
All One-Handed Weapons are now considered Concealable.	Remove Combat Skill Penalties for Two-Handed Weapons.
Throwing Hands	
Unarmed Attacks now deal Lethal Damage, have a Base Damage of 0, and remove the Self-Damage from their Aced ability.	