

5E

SPAGHETTI FANTASY

BRANCALONIA



- BRANCALONIA QUICKSTART -

ACHERON

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Number 0



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Spring 1020



SPAGHETTI FANTASY

BranCalonia

Based on Italian tradition, folklore, history, landscapes, fiction, and pop culture, Brancalonia is a Campaign Setting for the 5th Edition of the most famous role-playing game ever.

Brancalonia is a game by Acheron Games.

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Borgo Stricchiano was invented by Federico Guerri for “Bucinella – approx. 25,000 inhabitants”.

The game’s launch and financing campaign are managed in partnership with Officina Meningi, Epic Party Games and Ludiblood.

Our special thanks go to Guido Campanini and Luca Bellini for their work in support of the game’s very first version.

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Brancalonia is a product of the authors’ imagination: any reference to existing personalities, organizations, places, names or events is purely fortuitous.

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You can find Brancalonia adventures, companion, and utilities on WWW.ACHERON.IT



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The basic rules of the SRD and the *Quickstart* will give you a good glimpse of *Brancalonia* and of what the definitive game will be like. This manual will introduce you to the setting, the moods, and the new rules of our all-Italian fantasy world; it also features the demo adventure *The Treasure of the Bigat*, complete with everything you need to try out this expansion in a long single session, or even over a couple of games.

Through our Newsletter and dedicated **Facebook Group** you will always find further expansions, tips, previews, as well as groups to play with, live or online!

This *Quickstart* is updated to the final version of the core ruleset and to the *Brancalonia - Setting Book* standard.



Brancalonia

PIZZA, DAGGERS AND MANDOLINO



Enter Brancalonia, a land full of pitfalls and profit possibilities, in the most incredible and roguish Italian role-playing game you have ever participated in!

Create your own band of knaves, enlist in a free company, get assigned some well-paid jobs, go give a fist and knife buffet to those deserving it.

When you have collected a nice loot and climbed the ranks of your company a bit, you will be ready to try your luck, in that final job that could allow you to go out in a blaze of glory...

After all, what could possibly go wrong?™

Zappa e Spada's "*Spaghetti Fantasy*", an anthology series published by Acheron Books, and Ignoranza Eroica's "*Fantasy di Menare*" (Fantasy of Hard Knocks) join forces in *Brancalonia*, the campaign setting for the 5th Edition of the most famous role-playing game of all times.

A "back-to-front" version of Medieval Italy, this fantastic, fairy-tale influenced, roguish world quotes, collects and mixes contributions from contemporary and classic Italian fiction, pop culture and collective imagery:

↳ Traditional Italian folklore and fairy tales, from *Le Piacevoli Notti* (The Pleasant Nights) by Straparola to the eighteenth-century *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* (The Tale of Tales);

from Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* to the most popular collections of folk tales of the *Bel Paese*.

↳ The chivalrous and courteous tradition, from medieval "cantari" (minstrel ballads) to Renaissance epics.

↳ Our period movies, such as *For Love and Gold* (or *The Incredible Army of Brancaleone*) and *The Profession of Arms*; and international blockbusters with Medieval and Renaissance settings, like *Ladyhawke*, *The Princess Bride*, *Flesh + Blood*.

↳ Twentieth-century Italian fantasy masterpieces by writers such as Pederiali, Eco, Buzzati, and Calvino.



Knaves, Bounties, Bands, and Jobs

In Brancalonia, all playing characters are Knaves, i.e. members of a Band of mercenaries, rogues, and similar rascals, engaged in questionable Jobs across the various domains of what is left of an ancient kingdom now in ruins.

THE KNAVES

The world you live in is one of breathtaking adventure, heroic feats, and legendary deeds.

Here, knights in shining armor lead fearless armies against terrifying enemies; skilled treasure-hunters, ready for anything, explore the forgotten basements of long-lost empires, juggling lethal traps and nameless monsters; cunning, mischievous heroines use their charm to deceive princes and merchants and steal treasures worthy of a royal ransom in one night!

But you're not one of them... you are the ones who step in when things go wrong: lazy swindlers, scoundrels of the lowest order, listless dabblers and greedy knaves.

The mean, the seedy, the ugly ones.

That's you, in short.

You're the dregs of the adventure world, the cannon fodder of all battles, the scum that emerges when you scrape the bottom of the barrel, the dirty dozen that is pulled out of prison only for desperate missions.

Do you find this unfair? You're not so stupid, then... it is unfair. But let's face it: fate has better things to do than bother playing clean with the likes of you ...

Enough talking, scapegallows... it's time to get busy!

BOUNTIES

With all the rogues, losers and bootlickers like you out and about, the Kingdom could fill ten thousand galleys, and even wage war on the Soldan, out there in the Overseas. But lo and behold, you're still roaming the towns and countryside, making trouble wherever you go, and no-one seems capable of putting an end to this scourge.

This rabble, this throng of gallows birds, of which you are such worthy exponents, is also identified in its entirety as the Bounty Brothers: the network of Bands and Knaves on whose heads a bounty – large or small – was placed at some time by one of the Kingdom's fief lords.

Whatever the prize, selling a Bounty Brother to guards and bounty hunters is universally considered an unparalleled infamy, and no honorable brother would ever do it. Of course, dishonorable rats are never hard to come by; even so, a Brother who hands another one over to the Guards is

easily offering them a chance to collect two bounties... if you see what I mean!

In short, Knaves don't normally collect each other's Bounties, but these are known to be highly coveted by Hunters, and Guards, at least when the game is worth the candle.

The Bounties of Knaves and other characters in the game represent not only their value in money but also their reputation within the Band and among the various Bands around the Kingdom.

Rules for Bounties are explained in detail in the *Brancalonia Setting Book*.

THE COMPANY

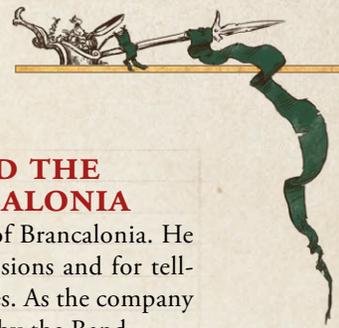
Rampaging freely up and down the Kingdom, acting on their own initiative or selling themselves to the highest bidder, the bands of *Brancalonia* are framed as companies of fortune in the pay of some avid general, petty nobleman, or vile local lord.

The band which the Players' Knaves belong to can be many things: a battered army heading for the Overseas to wage war; a traveling caravan of rovers or mountebanks; a guiscard lodge in search of a lost portent of the Draconian Age; a medley of robbers who prey on wayfarers; a contingent of deserters who fled the war to seek refuge; a well-organized mercenary company; the crew of a pirate ship; a bunch of treasure hunters; a gaggle of criminals in disarray; a brotherhood of pious friars on the trail of some ancient relic; a squad of escaped convicts; a guild of bounty hunters, reprobates, beggars or swindlers; a horde of pagans at the gates of the city; and anything else that comes to mind.

In any case, ordinary people consider affiliated Knaves dangerous, annoying and ready for anything. Ideally, it's advisable to steer clear... failing that, it's best to befriend them.

In addition to carrying out their odd Jobs, Knaves help manage their own company together with their leader, according to rules of Rollick (passive time).. The choices made at this stage improve the conditions by which the missions will then take place, and missions accomplished will improve the Band's status.

The rules for managing the Band, Notoriety and Dens are explained in detail in the *Brancalonia Setting Book*.



THE BAND

In Brancalonia, the party of the Players' Knaves called the Band.

A Band is a close-knit, tried and tested handful of Knaves who can be sent on a mission and relied upon to perform together without murdering one another a few steps down the road. The players' Band is only one component of a company, which can count a couple, a dozen or even a few hundred. Climbing up the ranks of the company and becoming its leader is one way for a Knave to advance in the game.

You will start off as third-rate scoundrels in a vile, dangerous world, clawing your way up through dirt and blood; eventually, if you prove yourself up to it, you will rise to the rank of leader of your Band and shake the thrones of kings and lords.

Are you ready? Um, right: you were born ready...

THE BRANCALONIAN JOB

Companies (and consequently Bands) are often hired by villagers, merchants, nobles, and warlords, for all sorts of odd jobs: generally illicit, dangerous tasks that nobody else wants.

And that's on a good day...

On a bad day, there are curses, demons, witchcraft, monsters, and double-dealings behind the jobs.

There's got to be a catch if people resort to Knaves, right?

Bands and companies also ensure a smooth exchange of players and characters, casual play, one-off sessions and progress in rank and level.

“Life is like a bowl of soup in a dive:
you never know what your going to get.”

- SOR FORESTO DE'GONZI, TAVERNKEEPER -

THE CONDOTTIERO AND THE ATMOSPHERE IN BRANCALONIA

The Condottiero is the Game Master of Brancalonia. He is responsible for conducting game sessions and for telling what happens during the adventures. As the company leader, he offers Jobs to be carried out by the Band.

More than anyone, the Condottiero contributes to maintaining the correct atmosphere around the game table by mediating between the demands, inclinations, and desires of other players.

In fact, Brancalonia lends itself to many different approaches:

- You can focus on military campaigns and missions with a tragicomic, bitter, raw or sarcastic tone: in this case, the company – probably a mercenary army that sells itself to the best patron around in the War of the Thousand Years – will be striving to get rich and live long enough to enjoy its accumulated treasures.
- You can focus on folklore creatures, monster hunts, and fable-like stories. In this case, the atmosphere will be that of the traditional fairy tale, with adventurous expeditions, treasure hunts, magical enterprises, or even with typically rural-gothic themes.
- You can focus on picaresque, rowdy and highly ironic situations, rich in pop quotes.
- You can descend into a darker world, all intrigues, political plots, murders, and decadence, or even venture into grimdark, low fantasy and grand-guignolesque scenarios.
- You can take to sea with corsairs and creatures of the abyss, sailing the Sea of Sapphire, the Charybdeans or the Murky Sea, to plunder and be plundered by pirates infesting such waters.
- You can experience more chivalrous stories of brigandage, resistance, dynastic intrigues, and lofty ideals. What if an heir to the Kingdom's throne were hiding among the thieves?
- You can indulge in the surreal and the fantastic, delving into the more supernatural and fantastical aspects of the setting, or imparting some magical realism typical of so many twentieth-century Italian authors.

Within the *Campaign Setting Book*, all these ingredients have been dosed to our personal taste: in your games, you, the players, will decide which to use and which to leave out.

The important thing is that the Condottiero and the Knaves always agree on what is about to happen in your Brancalonia!



Overmountain

Mortecarlo

Langariva

Sea of Towers

Gargantha

Zigane Sea

Gongon Islands

Maranna Inyestata

Fioraccia

Cucca

Titan Spine

Castle Nottur

Pertugia

Rocca del Nibbio

Borgo Stricchiano

Torgia

Plutonia

Port Patacca

Penumbria

Auracastro

Aspromonti

Apollonia

Sea of Shadows

Abracalabria

Windy Islands



Sapphire Sea

Strait of Seyflae

Port Anduja

Scilla Regia

Vernagallo

Costantinapoli

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Quinotaria | 9. Alatia |
| 2. Falcamonte | 10. Ausonia |
| 3. Galaverna | 11. Forgotten Lands |
| 4. Vortigana | 12. Volturnia |
| 5. Pianaverna | 13. Piccadora |
| 6. Penumbria | 14. Zagara |
| 7. Torrigiana | 15. Tasinnanta |
| 8. Spoletaria | 16. Callista |

Charibdean Sea

Sidonia



Brancaforia

Welcome to Brancalonia

The adventures of Brancalonia Knaves take place in what its inhabitants refer to as "the Bounty Kingdom", or simply "the Kingdom; after all, what the Chancellor of the Emperor of Altomagna stated is true: "the Bounty Kingdom" doesn't really exist!

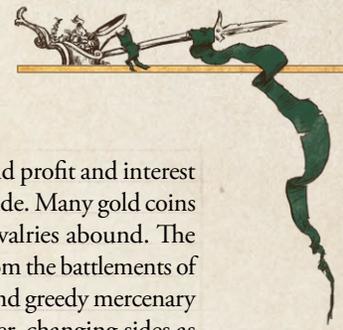
The territories of the Brancalonia Peninsula and neighboring islands are but a minor possession of the Empire of Altomagna, ceded to Queen Menalda of Catozza as a vassalic benefit a hundred years ago and never recovered, even after the dynastic line of the Catozzi was broken by intrigues, plots, and a dozen suitors.

The Bounty mentioned by Pomponius was for the head of Buemondo the Fat from Aurocastro, who – from the bottom of the "bad boot" peninsula – had set up a confederation of bandits, lords, and brigands. These villains raged from Piccadora to Falcamonte, assaulting each and every imperial army and refusing to pay taxes, tithes, and levies.

"The Bounty Kingdom is merely a geographic expression!"

- CLEMENS POMPONIUS,
CHANCELLOR OF ALTOMAGNA -





In exchange for the head of Buemondo, said to weigh eighty pounds, Menalda was given the regency of the Kingdom on behalf of the Emperor. A century has gone by: the entire peninsula has eluded Altomagna's control – and no-one is keen to reclaim it.

With the Iron Crown of Menalda gone missing and the succession's heraldry undecided, the Kingdom is now split into over a dozen independent regions; in turn, these are fragmented into local potentates, fiefdoms, counties, villages, marches, duchies, baronies, alliances, knighthoods, municipalities, and commercial leagues; not to mention the uncertainty of the domains' boundaries, and surrounding no-man's-lands...

Given the wide variety of themes and tones that can be used when playing Brancalonia, each of these regions can be the scene of odd jobs and situations with a highly specific atmosphere.

Here is a quick overview.

QUINOTARIA, OR OF ANCESTRAL RUINS, SEA MONSTERS, AND GORGONS

Legend has it that Quinotaria is the place where, centuries ago, a mythical beast called Quinotaur crawled out of the waters and mated with the wife of the distant King Clodion of Overmountain, of whom the current rulers of Quinotaria are thought to be the remote descendants.

The coast and valleys of this region are dotted with ancient ruins of unknown origin, similar to the cyclopean ones found further south along the boot. The most disturbing rumors about these lands regard the dracians, a deformed and amphibian-like people said to live along the coast; the gorgons, unnatural beings descended from the Quinotaur; and the Signs, abominable bodily deformations reputedly marring some of the inhabitants and giving them unspeakable powers. Although not the capital, the most important city in the region is Lungariva, ruled by very wealthy merchants.

FALCAMONTE, OR OF KNIGHTS, GOBBOLINI, AND BRIGANDS

The lands of Falcamonte are harsh and wild, with occasional glimpses of rich and fertile views. The capital of the region is Tauringa, where the royal seat was repeatedly placed; consequently, the city and its surroundings teem with landed gentry and town nobility of all sorts, old knighthoods gone to seed, brave cadets full of ideals, swordsmen in search of recruitment, very wealthy winemakers, scheming courtiers, and decadent aristocratic families. Every forest and no-man's-land is infested with robbers and bandits, thieves and marauders, keen to return to the poor (including themselves) what was purloined by barons and princes of the blood. Last but not least, the gobbolini, a veritable plague of this region, lurk in gorges and caves at the foot of the mountains, attacking and insulting anyone who passes within their range.

GALAVERNA, OR OF MERCHANTS, MOUNTEBANKS AND GUISCARDS

While Falcamonte is home to ancient and impoverished aristocracy, the neighboring Galaverna is the land of merchants, moneylenders, entrepreneurs and companies of fortune. Every-

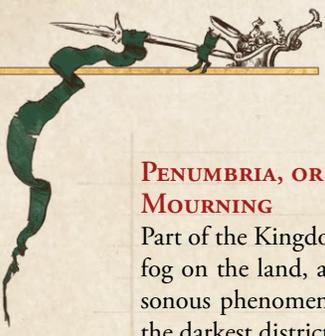
thing has a price, honor is non-existent, and profit and interest reign throughout the villages and countryside. Many gold coins flow around these parts, and parochial rivalries abound. The Greats of Galaverna eye one other grimly from the battlements of their respective towers, while their skilled and greedy mercenary armies sell themselves to the highest bidder, changing sides as others change their underwear. This area is also renowned for its many workshops, factories, and craftsmen; for its alchemy, pyrotechnics, and watchmaking; and for the affected ways of its ladies. Here, companies of mountebanks, musicians, and conmen draw crowds in the squares and courtyards, and wizards, charlatans, charmers, healers, and Guiscards earn their living as theater actors and operetta sorcerers, or as genuine experts of arcane arts.

VORTIGANA, OR OF SEQUINS, SAILING SHIPS, AND STABBINGS

Probably the largest region in the Kingdom, Vortigana is entirely the domain of the powerful merchant city of Vortiga, so called because of the whirlpools (vortici) and currents that stir its waters. Ruled by a lugubrious council of wealthy tycoons, Vortiga is also famous for its masks, intrigues, and Carnival. The city long fingers reach across an ample stretch of the Murky Sea as far as Sidonia, including the islands of Callista and Tasinnanta. This merchant opulence, whence thousands of gold coins pour yearly into the Grand Council's coffers, is countered by the constant siege of pirates and corsairs along the routes of its sailing ships; the rivalry of barbarians and Tergesta refugees; the presence of thieves and murderers, of gifted and beggars along its streets; the infestation of bandits, pagans, heretics, benandantes (good walkers), and superstitious in its vast hinterland. The mainland domains are also a point of passage favored by fugitive gangs, marauders, deserters, spies, troublemakers and disbanded armies from Altomagna, as well as the homeland of choice of many mysterious and extraordinary beings, such as sylvans, fanes, morgants, and magical creatures from the north.

PIANAVERNA, OR OF MISTS, WITCHES, AND PAGANS

Pianaverna extends south of Vortigana, Falcamonte, and Galaverna, and is formally ruled by the Greats of the latter. This is a foggy and depopulated land, traversed by the largest river in the Kingdom, the Fossa (Pit), and by all its tributaries. Swampy, mephitic, haunted by wretches, bandits, and fugitives, Pianaverna is scattered with tiny hamlets as well as a few villages of a certain importance, all infested with scores of mercenary companies and small armies of fortune. This is also the seat of old legends, forbidden sorcery, and very ancient creatures: here, horrid hags and monsters of the rivers, fugitives and wanted men, malebranches and bavalisks have their hiding places. Part of the region is occupied by the Pagan Plain, a no-man's-land home to one of the largest confederations of pagan tribes in the Kingdom. The area is frequented by hermits, monks, itinerant priests, preachers, and miraculists, seeking to bring the Light of the Saints among the heathens inhabiting these parts.



PENUMBRIA, OR OF MOURNING, CRIMES AND MORE MOURNING

Part of the Kingdom is surrounded by the Mistide, a wall of fog on the land, and sulfurous mist over the sea. This poisonous phenomenon delineates the borders of Penumbria, the darkest district of the boot peninsula. The origins of the Mistide could lie in the occult feud disputed for almost half a millennium by the jinxes and the superstitious, or lurk in the very heart of Penumbria and its unspeakable secrets.

Caught between the blades of mercenaries and outlaws, the hungry fangs of its abominable fauna, the abundance of unprejudiced lordships and the lack of a central power, Penumbria is marked by extreme political instability.

The rule of the fiefdom is divided between the Dukes-Counts of Castel Notturmo and the Criminese Cupola; the latter, a panel of the dons (bosses) of the city's families (each of them heading a criminal activity), elects members of the Malavita family as godfathers.

Here, settlements of scores among gangs, harassment perpetrated by the Guards, fraudulent dealings of corrupt local cops are permanently on the agenda.

For the mooks of the gangs in the Orbino, Pertugia and Crimini suburbs, any pretext is valid to unleash feuds aimed at controlling a square, a pier or an intersection. The blades trade remains the most popular and profitable.

Every lordship in Penumbria is devoted to a particular saint, and prophecies are treated like bets. The region's entire economy is controlled by the Cupola, whose shady trafficking reaches every corner of the Kingdom.

The Penumbrians are violent, brutal and abject people: incessant wars, armed feuds, massacres, crimes, killings, diseases, and abominations have made these districts the most lethal in the Kingdom.

TORRIGIANA, OR OF SIGNORIE, EXTRAVAGANZA AND TALKING MARIONETTES

The Torrigiana region is spread with fortresses, towers, lighthouses, castles, strongholds, and villages; every prince or mayor rules only as far as their city walls, and each village is disputed among powerful neighboring lordships. The region owes its name to its immense Hanging Towers: heritage of a lost era, these also lie, sunken and forgotten, among the marshes of putrid Maremma and even in the depths of the mysterious Sea of Towers.

Torrighiana is rife with intrigues, quarrels among families, struggles for power, conspiracies, and armed scuffles, all of which happen regularly, several times a year.

Yet the atmosphere here is warm and enchanted, and visitors perceive that this is a land blessed with sunshine, fine wine, and good living. When dwelling in or passing through Torrigiana, you can't help noticing how the presence of Turquoisies, the Blue Fairies, of sprites, talking animals, and other portents totally permeates everyday life. Extravaganza, the mysterious and paradoxical power that governs wonders and magic, is very strong here; again, in this very place grows the tree whose magical wood is used to make the talking marionettes so admired in the rest of the Kingdom.

There is no shortage of wines and meat in the cities of Torrigiana; indeed, Cucca, inhabited by prosperous bankers and shopkeepers, lends its name to the mythical land of Cuccaigne, where you can "drink, laugh and be merry".

As well as the celebrated Fioraccia, the best-known city in the region, Torrigiana is also home to the mephitic and disturbing Maremma; and to the charming Borgo Stricchiano, governed for centuries by the Della Guerra dynasty who, despite their belligerent-sounding surname, were wise and munificent patrons of mountebanks and musicians.

SPOLETARIA, OR OF CASTLES, MERCENARIES, AND SWORDPLAYERS

As already mentioned, the main function of Spoletaria, when still part of the Kingdom of the Two Scyllas, was to act as frontier march and garrison against horrors and fugitives from Penumbria. Now that this region is no longer under anyone's control, its fortified citadels have become one of the main recruiting centers for mercenary gangs and sellsword companies. It is often here that the highly feared Penumbrians, renowned as the cruelest killers plying the battlefields of the Kingdom, find recruitment when fleeing their homeland. Again, it is here that, in the absence of other occupation, daredevil captains and marauders put together companies ready for anything and head up the Via Cappia (Hanging Road) bent on looting. After all, what you do in Penumbria stays in Penumbria, right?

The long military tradition of these districts has also fostered the flourishing of fencing schools of all kinds, and today this is one of the hothouses of the Kingdom's best swordsmen and weapon masters, excelling in every technique, even the most secret and forbidden...

ALAZIA, OR OF LOST EMPIRES AND DESCENTS IN HELL

Alazia was once the very heart of the Draconian Empire, and consequently the most important region in the peninsula. Centuries ago, the city-state of Plutonia was the center of a boundless empire that touched all known lands, and reportedly counted a million inhabitants. Under the weight of this immense concentration of people and buildings, ancient Plutonia sank into the ground exactly a millennium ago, kicking off the still-raging Thousand Years War. Today, Plutonia is a wasteland of ruins as large as a region, said to lead to the Hell itself, inhabited by devils, damned, ghosts and shadows. Nobody lives around there anymore. The rest of Alazia, now decayed and decadent, is peppered with independent fiefs run by powerful families.

Yet today the Calendar still has its headquarters here, and the region is full of run-down churches, monasteries, and cathedrals. Traditional devotion lives on in its inhabitants, as do numerous orders of chivalry, hard knocks and beggars who have their convents, fortresses and abbeys here.

KINGDOM OF THE TWO SCYLLAS

A hundred years ago, upon the death of Queen Menalda, the Kingdom was split for the first time when the successors of Buemondo the Fat reclaimed the southern lands of the peninsula in an attempt to reinstate ancient and long-forgotten borders. The Two Scyllas are named after a huge pair of stone statues in the form of such monsters, located on opposite ends of the Great Bridge. Spanning the Strait that connects Zagara and Piccadora, this is one of the outstanding engineering works of the Draconian Empire. The Two Scyllas symbolized Zagara and the entire south of the Kingdom – currently numbering the regions of Volturnia, Ausonia, and Piccadora – plus the mysterious Forgotten Counties. But soon these regions, too, were divided: today they are fragmented territories, roamed by armies and bands of brigands, claimants to the throne and usurpers, supersticians and guiscards, mountebanks and rovers. Here and there, bathed in the golden sunlight that blesses the olive groves and vineyards, you will notice imposing fortresses and watchtowers, titanic monuments of the Draconian Empire, and cyclopean ruins said to date back to before man's first appearance on these lands.

These are regions where the Calendar Creed is strongly felt. Hence there are scores of monks, miraculists and healers around, as well as the unfailing crowds of wretches, scammers, beggars, thieves, peddlers of false relics, sorcerers, and pagans of all kinds. As well as with nobles and profiteers of all sorts, it is common for gangs and commoners to have to deal with the godfathers of local criminal organizations, the most powerful in the Kingdom.

Obviously, there is no lack of prodigies and mysteries: among the Two Scyllas' districts, the best-known for its disturbing riddles, portents and superstitions is the Duchy of Acquaviva. The capital of the Duchy has a name that nobody knows, aside from the Acquavivans, owing to the superstition that a stranger's learning the city's name could cause its destruction; to foreigners it is simply referred to as the City of Names.

TASINNANTA, OR OF SECRETS, TREASURES, AND ANTIQUITIES

The island of Tasinnanta is inhabited by a formidable and stubborn, aloof and supportive people, never entirely tamed by the Draconian legions of a thousand years ago, nor by the Vortigan merchants who formally control its coasts today.

Poor in resources, harsh and inhospitable, the island hides in its seemingly bottomless depths miles and miles of tunnels, passages, and caves; remains of lost cities of the cyclopean era; forgotten treasures, ruined towers, and all sorts of secrets and legends. Its innermost regions teem with monsters, witches, giants and morgants, barbarians, pagans, malebranches and gifted.

Details of the Kingdom's history, geography, and other interesting facts can be found in the *Brancalonia Setting Book*.



What you will find in the Setting Book

The Corebook of Brancalonia consists of 192 richly illustrated full-color pages, featuring maps, characters, antagonists, monsters and other images evocative of the Kingdom.

This features:

- A general description of the Kingdom, its history and its main regions, from the Pale Mountains in the north to the Charybdean Sea in the south, from the barbaric city of Tergesta in the east to the coast of the Zigane Sea in the far west.
- Five new playable races, in addition to the human, taken from Italian tradition and folklore: the gifted, the malebranches, the marionettes, the morgants and the sylvans.
- Twelve new subclasses, one for each of the basic classes, each adapted to the Kingdom, and strongly characteristic of Italian history, tradition and folklore: hence we have the benandante and the superstician; the sword-player and the brigand; the miraculist and the friar.
- New Backgrounds, Talents, and Magic Items typical of Brancalonian Knaves.
- Secrets, threats, curiosities, places of interest, rumors, monsters and game suggestions for the Condottiero, including a generator of Dives, one of Memorabilia and one of Roads to nowhere!
- New Setting Rules:
 - Moves and Whacks (full version)
 - Shoddy Equipment and Counterfeit Equipment
 - Band, Notoriety, and Den management
 - Bounties, Revels, and Prophecies
 - Long Rest and Gritty Realism
 - Dive Games
- *In search of quatrins*: a collection of six adventures set in different parts of the Kingdom.
- Twelve new monsters and twelve antagonists typical of Italian history, tradition, and folklore.

“Not the nose”

- MEDLAR THE MARIONETTE -

HOW TO IMPORT OTHER MATERIAL INTO BRANCALONIA

To preserve the correct atmosphere and spirit of Brancalonia, we recommend using the Races, Classes, Backgrounds and other game elements featured in the *Setting Book*.

However, importing into the Kingdom elves, dwarves, gnomes and other elements from official game rules, or from works by other publishers, is neither forbidden nor impossible.

The *Setting Book* has a paragraph entirely devoted to this aspect, including, in particular, how to justify such imports consistently within the setting, and how to manage them during the game.





Freezing nights and empty saddlebags

RULES AND VARIANTS TO BE USED IN BRANCALONIA

SHODDY EQUIPMENT

In *Brancalonia*, everyday objects come at the normal cost, as per common price lists. However, Knaves are generally short of money, and poor-quality equipment is all they can afford;

Shoddy items and services are badly crafted and offered by crooks and scoundrels. They have an unreliable appearance, uninviting taste or ambiguous smell, and they always look ready to fall apart on first use. indeed, poor equipment costs way less than standard-quality gear (usually a tenth of the price).

OBJECTS AND TOOLS

When using shoddy objects or tools, you always run into inconveniences. From time to time, and depending on the item being used and on the situation, the Condottiero can choose which effects to apply; also, if any check involving poor equipment fails by 5 or more, the object will break.

WEAPONS

When you attack with a shoddy weapon, if the d20 roll is a 1, the weapon comes apart. All your subsequent attacks are made with disadvantage. This effect lasts until you use an action to fix the weapon.

ARMOR

Shoddy armors fall apart, literally. Whenever an enemy hits you and the d20 roll is a 20, a piece of armor flies away and the base Armor Class provided by the shoddy armor decrease by 2. If you hold a shield, it will be the first to fly out of hand. The effect lasts until you retrieve the lost pieces and use an action to fix them.

HORSES, MOUNTS E ANIMALS

When making a check with shoddy mounts, if the d20 roll is a 1, the animal will get crippled and will no longer be able to proceed, for 24 hours. A shoddy mount also has a 10 ft lower speed than a typical animal of the same type.

SHODDY MAGIC

Magical components are expensive and rare. That's why those in the Kingdom capable of casting spells and miracles usually employ a poor version of actual magic. This often leads to accidents and weird effects, which have affected the reputation of magic, accused of unpredictability and oddity, as well as quackery, the prerogative of beggars, operetta wizards, and country superstitious.

The effects of shoddy components and materials affect the spells' appearance, but not on their practical functioning. For example, a familiar summoned with poor-components may have a funny or grotesque appearance; a fireball could smell of rotten eggs.

ALL THE REST

For all the things that are not listed above, shoddiness manifests itself in countless different ways, and it's hard if not impossible to create an effect for every situation. When a character uses a shoddy-whatever, the Condottiero can use one of the following effects accordingly to the situation and the object involved:

Small incident. A funny inconvenience with no consequences.

Difficulty increase. If a check must be made, its DC will increase or decrease unfavorably.

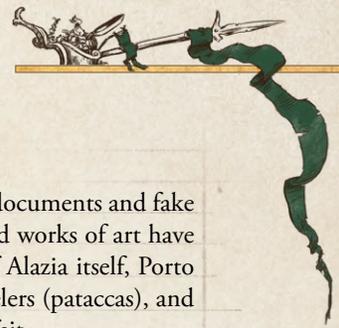
Malfunctioning. Shoddiness leads to an unexpected malfunctioning.

Damaged. After being used, the item becomes damaged and needs to be repaired before it can be used again.

Not working. Not working. If the item is consumable or has a limited number of uses (for example: vials of acid, flasks of holy water, or a healing potion), roll 1d6: on a roll of 4 or higher the item functions normally, otherwise the item reveals itself as a bad imitation and it's useless or wasted.

Annoying inconvenient. An unfortunate inconvenience, such as a quiver leaking 1d4 ammunitions carried during travel, or as having the rations soaked and inedible due to a water infiltration in the boat while crossing the river.





COUNTERFEIT EQUIPMENT

The Kingdom is well-known for its counterfeit goods: forged documents and fake coins are almost more popular than real ones, bogus relics and works of art have entirely dedicated retail and wholesale markets, the capital of Alazia itself, Porto Patacca, takes the name from the rip-offs served to naive travelers (pataccas), and any object or service that appears in the game can be counterfeit.

The counterfeit equipment has 3 key features:

- **It always seems very convenient:** in fact, a counterfeit item generally costs the 50% less than the corresponding object, according to the official price lists. To any doubtful question of buyers, the sellers often try to justify themselves by saying that it has been regularly stolen or it's "second-hand" (which is the same thing). But that's hardly ever true: it's simply counterfeit!
- **It looks like common equipment:** counterfeit equipment does not cause any malus to social reactions like poor-equipment.
- **It works like shoddy equipment:** apart from the aforementioned malus to social reactions, counterfeit equipment shares the same issues and causes the same disadvantages as the shoddy version of the same items.

REST

Among the many game variations used in *Brancalonia*, the Gritty Realism variant for Rests is essential. In *Brancalonia*, the Short Rest lasts 8 hours, and the Long Rest 7 days.

CURRENCY AND COSTS

There are many currencies, ancient coins, chicken feed and items of exchange circulating up and down the Kingdom's cart tracks. Those wishing to avoid any hassle should always use the monetary system in the official rules: gold, silver and copper coins with fixed purchase values and price lists. Call them with the name of the metal they're made of, and you'll be fine. Keep in mind that no one in the Kingdom has the faintest idea what platinum is: as for electrum, they wouldn't even know how to pronounce it. *Brancalonia* replaces electrum with iron, which has the same value.

In general, the least-valuable coins are made of copper and are only good for buying eggs at the market. These are generically known as quatrins, coppers, or *piccioli* (in Zagara, for example).

10 quatrins (CP) are worth 1 silver coin (SP). The most important and common exchanges are made in silver coins, and each region of the Kingdom has its own mintage. In the Kingdom of the Two Scyllas they are called *taralles*; in Penumbria *baiocchi*; florins, *triskeles* and sequins in Torrigiana, Quinotaria and Vortigana respectively. Marks is the name they go by in Spoletaria, sesterces in Alazia, *bissones* in Galaverna and Pianaverna, and *lire* in Falcamonte.

Whatever their name, the weight and value of these coins is roughly the same.

As we were saying, the electrum is replaced by the iron piece (IP). 5 silver coins correspond to 1 iron hunk. If you find this strange, you obviously haven't seen the coins: silver and gold ones are small and thin, while iron ones are as large as medals; given their considerable weight, hunks are also called *petechins*.

Finally, we have gold coinage, commonly called *aureos* or big pieces (GP). Some cities mint sequins and florins of gold, others use weights and units from the old Draconian Empire or other minting. Again, 1 gold piece is roughly worth 10 silver coins.

Are you totally confused? Not to worry: so is everyone in the Kingdom!

Moves and Whacks

INTRODUCTION TO BRAWLING RULES

With his worn and crumpled clothes and a freshly-swollen face, he could not wait to spend some of the considerable swag that he and his men had just earned, sacking the haunted sanctuary atop Colle Ramino. Drain a couple of mugs, taste the seafood specialties of the renowned inn overlooking the lagoon, and finally have a peaceful sleep on a proper bed - these were the thoughts of the Wandering Knight of the Short Breath Band, the first to cross the shabby wind-doors of the Lobster Inn. Unfortunately, even before the alluring aroma of grilled fish ever reached his longing nostrils, a fir-wood stool - missing one leg - whistled across the room.

It hit him hard. He wasn't yet back on his feet when his Knaves stepped over him, drooling, delivering slaps and punches, screaming and shouting, brandishing mugs as swords and hoisting trays as shields.

Without a second thought, the Knight leaped onto a rickety table, whispering a prayer through clenched teeth to Santa Flammetta from Fioraccia, and lunged into the void ...

With bewildered glances, those beneath him realized too late that they would not see the end of that scuffle.

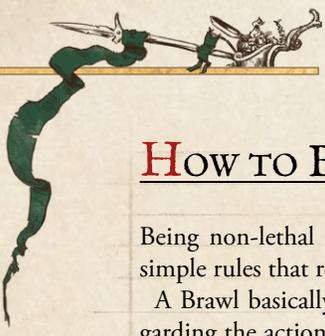
Brancalonia has specific mechanics for the management and resolution of non-lethal fights called Brawls.

Said Brawls are carefully thought out to act as boisterous and amusing intervals. They can be used to start an adventure, animate slower moments, enliven a Job with unusual challenges, or simply as a fun alternative to ease the stressful pace of the deadly fights that can put the Band to the test.

The rules for Brawl in this chapter are a temporary and simplified version of the final mechanics in the *Setting Book*. They are explained here as a demo, although perfectly playable in their own way.







HOW TO BRAWL

Being non-lethal disputes by definition, Brancalonian Brawls are regulated by simple rules that replace the typical cycle of combat.

A Brawl basically works like combat, but introduces significant differences regarding the actions you can take at each turn, and how Hit Points, Damage and Movement are calculated.

Note: During a Brawl, you cannot use class privileges such as *Class Spells*, *Extra Attacks*, etc., but you are allowed to take advantage of passive Features such as *Unarmored Defense*, *Sense of Danger*, etc.

Movement. On their turn during the Brawl, brawlers can move an unspecified distance: this enables them to move as much or as little as they like within the Brawl's environment.

If the movement of your brawler is 0, he or she cannot move.

Damage. Beatings, Moves, and Props deal Whacks and, in some cases, Conditions (see Whacks Levels and Conditions below). Conditions inflicted or suffered during a Brawl last until the start of the character's next turn. In case of critical hit, the number of Whacks inflicted is doubled.

RACIAL POWERS

Each Brancalonian race has a specific Brawl Racial Power:

Morgant: a morgant can use an Epic Prop with a bonus action.

Human: a human has an additional Move Slot.

Gifted: The gifted can choose 1 Move also from the Magic Moves list when selecting Moves at first level.

Marionette: a marionette can use as a Prop one of its limbs as a bonus action: this will not break during use.

Sylvan: a Sylvan is immune to effects suffered at the first two Whack levels.

WHACK LEVELS AND CONDITIONS

During a Brawl, Damage from Beatings, Moves and Props deal 1 or more Whacks. Whacks are measured in 6 levels (see table on the next page).

If an already-Whacked creature suffers another Whack, its current level of Whacks increases by the amount specified in the effect's description.

CONDITIONS.

Some Moves and hits with Epic Props inflict additional conditions. Conditions imposed by Moves and Props follow the normal rules of Conditions. All effects last until the end of the next turn.

Brawl Table

1	Bruised	-1 CA
2	Beaten	-1 CA
3	Injured	-1 CA
4	Damaged	-1 CA
5	Crushed	-1 CA
6	Unconscious	Flat Out



TO THE BRAWL, WITH HONOR

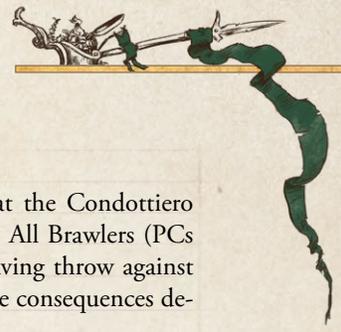
The culture, the rules of honor between scoundrels and rogues, and even the legislation in force in the various domains of the Kingdom establish scrupulous practices for Tavern Brawls.

“NEITHER FOR COPPER NOR HUNGER,
LET THE BLADES HIT IN ANGER.”

A Brawl is a non-lethal fight, and must remain so. If blood were spilled or death brought to the street or into a tavern, the bloody fight would immediately escalate from mere “breach of the peace” (which nobody really cares about), and branded as murder or attempted murder, and Bounties on the heads of Knaves held accountable would rise dramatically. A Brawl is a Brawl, and there must never be any killing. For this reason, participants must never use their weapons or, more generally, strike to kill.

“AS TAUGHT BY GOOD OLE MANNERS,
LOSERS PAY DAMAGES TO
SHABBY TAVERNS.”

As also provided by the law, Brawl rules sanction the convention by which, at the end of a Brawl, anyone found unconscious inside the inn (or similar establishment) or within ten steps of it, may be stripped of their possessions by the landlord, entitled to compensation for damages caused during the Brawl.



BEATINGS

Beatings are the regular attacks that each character (or PC) can make as an action during a Brawl.

Each player character is competent in Beatings (attack roll: Strength bonus + proficiency bonus).

Each time a Beating hits, it deals a Whack.

MOVES

Moves can have various effects, some of which provide an attack roll based on a specific Ability (indicated in brackets). Each character is competent in every Move he knows. A character can only use a limited number of Moves before resting (Short Rest).

Every time your character uses a Move, he or she expends a Move Slot.

Pre-generated character sheets are complete with assigned Moves and Moves Slots.

When you finish a Short Rest, you recover all Moves Slots expended during Brawls, and any Whacks suffered.

STAGE PROPS

You can also inflict Beatings by using anything you can get hold of within the environment in which the Brawl takes place. All objects that can be wielded during the Brawl are called Stage Props (or Props) and are divided into Common Props and Epic Props.

COMMON PROPS

(bottles, pots, cutlery, dishes, candelabra, torches, flasks, stools, pokers...)

Collecting a Common Prop requires a bonus action (each character can use a bonus action during the Brawl).

You can use a Common Prop to attack, as a bonus action, or for improvised defense (AC +2), as a reaction.

After use, a Common Prop will be destroyed or useless.

EPIC PROPS

(tables, barrels, decorative armors, chests, trunks, chandeliers, characters ...)

Collecting an Epic Prop requires an action.

You can use an Epic Prop to attack, as an action, or for improvised defense (AC +5), as a reaction.

After use, an Epic Prop will be destroyed or useless.

When using an Epic Prop, you can choose to inflict one of the following effects:

- 2 Whacks
- 1 Whack and the target is stunned
- 1 Whack to two different targets
- The target is Paralyzed

STRAY DANGERS

Stray Dangers are additional effects that the Condottiero can decide to include during the Brawl. All Brawlers (PCs and NPCs) must achieve a successful saving throw against the Stray Danger in progress or suffer the consequences described in the Stray Danger description.

Examples of Stray Dangers that can be used in the Brawl during the Job included in this starter set:

- **Rain of Stools:** Each Brawler must succeed in a Constitution saving throw (DC 11), or be stunned.
- **House of the Flying Punches:** Each Brawler must succeed in a Strength saving throw (DC 12), or suffer a Whack.
- **River of Beer:** Each Brawler must succeed in a Dexterity saving throw (DC 13), or become Prone.

OPPONENTS

Drunk yokels looking for trouble, vicious bands of wranglers, bandits waiting for the right fool to toughen their knuckles on, tipsy guards on leave looking for a fist-fight. The Kingdom's Taverns always overflow with the worst thugs and brawlers, and while some of them will drop like flies under the Knaves' storm of slaps, others will hold their own and give them a hard time.

Opponents in a Brawl are divided into two categories, Heavy-Hitters and Mob.

The Heavy-Hitter is a single powerful individual, usually at the head of a large bunch of brawlers.

The Mob, on the other hand, is a group of individuals who act separately but share the same Whacks levels (Conditions are applied individually).

“Lions in the evening, asses in the morning”

- VERY FAMOUS SAYING USED BY THE VENTURE CAPTAINS,
INSPECTIONING THEIR WEAKLING TROOPS -



Barrel-Beating and Poppycock

INTRODUCTION TO DIVE GAMES

From north to south, the whole Kingdom is strewn with - and, for the most part, blighted by - taverns, inns, hostels, wine shops and hovels of various (and mostly dubious) worth. In game terms, they are collectively called Dives, which is indicative of their level of refinement...

Between jobs with the Band, the best things to restore a Knave's body and soul are a bowl of slop and a little wine, the buzz of auctioneers and singers, a nap by a warm fire-place, a little company for the night.

However, what really make a self-respecting Bounty Brothers' Den are its games and pastimes: their assortment of competitions, large and small, to make a bit of money, drive out boredom, and have a laugh or two at the expense of dorks and drunkards.

Two of the most popular are the card game Minchiate, or Poppycock; and Barrel Beating, which, with a little luck, can help an honest Knave fill his purse with jingling coins!

You will find other games described in the *Brancalonia Setting Book*.

POPPYCOCK (CARD GAME – GAMBLING)

The Poppycock (aka Minchiate) card deck was born in Torrigiana, home to some of the most experienced and prestigious card players in the whole Kingdom. Poppycock is, in fact, a deck of cards used for various games, though it owes its popularity to the one it is named after..

The recipe for the perfect Brancalonian gambling experience requires a number of ingredients: luck, a quick hand, intuition, acumen, a sharp eye, but also... some skilled cheating!

Indeed, in Poppycock – designed for rabble of the most sordid kind – cheating is an essential and regulated part of the game, providing the cheater is smart enough not to be discovered: if caught, the gambler must fill the “Cover” (betting plate, table stake) with an additional fee or leave the table.

HOW TO PLAY:

For a quick game of Poppycock in a Brancalonian session, the Condottiero and players can follow the rules below, simulating about one hour of play at the dive table:

Each participating character places on the table the same jointly-agreed bet, then the game starts.

1. Each participating character chooses 2 abilities, representing his or her approach to the game, with which to perform an ability check. Here are some examples:

- Investigation (INT): make an accurate calculation of the probabilities by monitoring the results of the cards;
- Insight (WIS): unveil opponents' bluffs;
- Deception (CHA): bluff;
- Sleight of hand (DEX): attempt at cheating [failure causes the betting plate to increase by an additional amount at the expense of the cheat, unless he or she leaves the game].

2. Ability checks: at the Poppycock table, each ability check DC is equal to 10, + 1 for each player (including the one doing the checks).

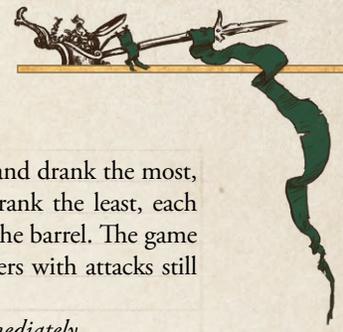
3. Each successful ability check results in an increase in each player's Win Roll, as follows: 0 successes = 1d6; 1 successes = 1d8; 2 successes = 1d10.

4. The Win Roll balances the Knave's skill at the table and the Saints' will.

5. The player who scores the highest result on his or her Win Roll wins the game and takes the money..

In the event of a tie, the winners share the plate.. or, more often than not, start a Brawl!





BARREL BEATING

This ancient tavern sport was born as an allegorical reinterpretation of the well-known popular saying "you can't have yer barrel filled to the brim, and yer wife drunk too", and sees the participants challenge each other in a test that combines resistance (to alcohol), talent (in arms) and a little bit of good luck (as long as it's the Saints' will)

Every tavern, respectable or otherwise, has a Barrel Beating corner.

The barrel – though called a "barrel", this is sometimes a pot, a coffin, or other container – is usually robustly made and even reinforced, and hangs on creaking ropes, or occasionally on chains. The barrel contains the loot, consisting of the sum total of the bets collected from all the participants.

Before starting, the Condottiero determines both the barrel's AC and its hit points, as well as any special traits or peculiarities.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Participants place their bets inside the barrel (same agreed amount for everyone), then the barrel is hung and the game begins.
2. Participants wager how many shots (ranged attacks with light weapons) they will take against the barrel; these will be equivalent to the number of beers they will have to consume before throwing.
3. Each player must succeed in a Constitution saving throw (DC 10 + 1 for each tankard consumed), or become drunk and suffer a disadvantage in all attack dice rolls against the barrel.

4. Starting with the player who wagered and drank the most, down to the one who wagered and drank the least, each player launches a single attack against the barrel. The game continues for as long as there are players with attacks still available or until the barrel breaks.

Note: A critical hit breaks the barrel immediately.

5. When the barrel breaks, or when all the participants are out of attacks, the game ends. The character who dealt the coup de grace is the winner and gets the jackpot. If the barrel is still intact at the end of the game, the innkeeper will get the prize, and beers drunk by the participants will be on the house.

Each tavern has its version of Barrel Beating, with different weapons for throwing, barrel types of varying resistance, and costumes (Dives sometimes offer special outfits to be worn by the participants).

"I spent a lot of money on wine, ladies and fast horses. The rest I just squandered"

- SIR GIORGIO DE' MIGLIORI,
KNIGHT-ERRANT -



The Treasure of the Bigat

INTRODUCTORY JOB FOR A BAND OF 3-6 LICENSED KNAVES.

WRITTEN BY DAVIDE MANA

SUPPLEMENTS, TESTS, AND REVISIONS BY MAURO LONGO, ANDREA MACCHI AND
MAX CASTELLANI

INSPIRATION FOR THIS ADVENTURE WAS PARTLY DRAWN FROM GIUSEPPE
PEDERIALI'S NOVEL BY THE SAME NAME,
A CORNERSTONE OF ITALIAN FANTASY.

To the east of the Fossa, upstream of Borgoratto, the Old
Bucket flows between wild hills, draining a narrow valley the
bumpkins call "Del Bigat". 'Tis there that lurks one such crea-
ture, said to have a lair of gold and a lust for human flesh.

Many sought the valley, few found it, no-one returned.

- BRACCIO DA MONTONE,
"BRANCALONIA CORBELLATICA, LIBER V" -

INTRODUCTION FOR THE KNAVES

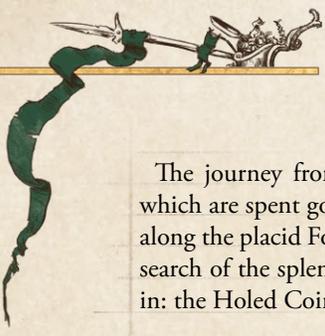
Legend has it that the dreaded Bigat ("the giant worm") living along the Fossa River accumulated a vast treasure over the centuries.

This is probably the usual folklore on hidden monsters and lost treasures heard all over the Kingdom. Still, since you've been hanging around the Den for weeks with nothing to do, and eating for free without doing a minute's honest work, your band leader, Roughger of Punchrabbit, has given you a kick in the butt and ordered you to find out whether this rumor is true, just to get you out of his hair.

Before you come to blows, you decide to accept this great mission. Cracking jokes and playing pranks, you head off for the given area to look for a certain Biondello of Pera, a rascalion said to have an extremely valuable long-lost map of this treasure.







The journey from your Den takes several carefree days on foot, a couple of which are spent going around in circles, but eventually you find yourself walking along the placid Fossa River, between accursed Penumbria and the Pagan Plain, in search of the splendid and welcoming venue this Biondello reportedly hangs out in: the Holed Coin Inn!

BACKGROUND FOR THE CONDOTTIERO

Biondello of Pera is a rough-hewn, Cheap Bounty of Vortigan origin, whose one pride is that he can read (badly, and moving his lips).

These days, he mainly earns his living peddling yellowed and densely-scribbled sheets of paper describing the legend of the Bigat of the Fossa and its fabulous treasure. A mere few pages, copied – with the occasional blunder – from a book, too bulky to be pocketed, which Biondello found in the library of a wealthy Vortigan family for whom he briefly worked as a boot scraper.

Being an ambitious and cunning young man, Biondello proceeded to write multiple copies of the text in question, which he then sold to several adventurers, all eager to get their hands on the fabulous Treasure of the Bigat. The rumor also reached Roughger of Punchrabbit, head of the gang our characters play in, which is why he sent some of his best Knaves to complete the Job. Maybe they would finally prove themselves useful ...

But Biondello went overboard, so to speak, and sold one of the copies to Turtlehead of Toadi, also known as the Toad: a bandit with a commander's ambitions, leading a handful of brutes.

A miserable excuse for a company of fortune, the Toad Gang compensates with crude violence for its lack of discipline and military training. The Toad's men serve as bodyguards for the merchants they have yet to rob, and accompany debt collectors on their rounds. Generally speaking, if it weren't for the fact that Turtlehead has a certain pride and dreams of glory, his men would be happy to get their hands dirty for free.

Having discovered that Biondello has sold the map to others, the Toad is deeply disappointed, and about to react in his usual way, just as the Knaves reach the Inn.

After saving Biondello (or at least his package with the treasure map), the Band goes up Old Bucket creek to challenge the monster and reap wealth, luck and glory, or at least to save its hide, meeting, on its way, mercenaries, brigands, guards, and the Stump Hag.

And then, the final confrontation with the Bigat.

SCENE 1 - AT THE SIGN OF THE HOLED COIN.

The Knaves reach the dive and find Biondello, a moment before throwing themselves into the wildest of fights against the Toad Gang.

SCENE 2 - THE SECRET OF THE BIGAT.

The Knaves discover or recover the secret of the Bigat and head towards the Old Bucket valley.

SCENE 3 - ALONG THE FOSSA RIVER.

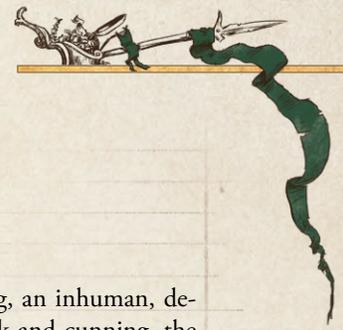
The next stage of the journey takes place along the southern bank of the Fossa and offers opportunities to collect rumors, meet interesting people and buy equipment.

SCENE 4 - THE RETURN OF THE TOAD.

The Band runs into the Toad Gang again and must succeed in sabotaging its advance and shake it off its tail as it proceeds up the Old Bucket.

“You see, in this world there’s two kinds of people, my friend: Those with loaded crossbows and those who dig. You dig.”

- LAPIDARIO DE’ MALI,
THE BRAVEST BRAVO IN PENUMBRIA -



NOTE

This job covers a span of several days of encounters, explorations, and travels. If you want to keep the session time shorter than two hours, you can skip Scenes 3 to 6 directly.

The scenario is also an excellent testing ground for the following options and rules (see pages 13-19):

- Stoddy Equipment
- Moves and Whacks
- Dive games
- Gritty Realism

Reference is also made to the Bounties, the Kingdom's Coinage and Memorabilia, details of which can be found in the *Setting Book*.

If you don't want to use the pre-generated characters of *Branconia*, pending the rules for the creation of the Knaves that you will find in the Campaign Setting, you can import or create more "traditional" characters by using the official rules available. The adventure is designed for Level 3 Knaves, with limited access to arcane and divine resources.

Thieves, warriors, barbarians, rangers, paladins, warlocks and monks are the most appropriate classes. Humans, halflings, half-elves, and dwarfs are the most appropriate breeds. In all cases, remember that you are moving in a low-fantasy context, where races, powers, and supernatural effects should be modified in terms of aesthetics, to lend them an "extraordinary" rather than a "magical" appearance, even without touching the mechanics. Anything too extreme to be redefined in this manner comes from Extravaganza, the power of fairies that makes everything possible. These fairy characters with incredible powers travel incognito so as not to arouse fear, suspicion or mistrust in ordinary people.

SCENE 5 – ABOVE AND BEYOND THE RIVER.

It's time to cross the Fossa River towards the north bank.

SCENE 6 - GRANNY'S HOUSE.

The Knaves must cross the land of the fearsome Stump Hag, an inhuman, demonic creature with unnatural powers. But with a bit of luck and cunning, the Hag can be circumvented...

SCENE 7 - *BIGATTUS DORMIENS NUMQUAM TITILLANDUS.*

The Band and the Toad Gang reach the Bigat's cave almost at the same time, awaking the sleeping beast. And that's bad.

SCENE 8 - THE ECSTASY OF GOLD.

If any of your Knaves survive the previous scene (you never know), this is the time to get their hands on the Bigat's treasure. Um, fine... but how will they carry tons of precious stones downstream without being robbed?

SCENE I - AT THE SIGN OF THE HOLED COIN

The Holed Coin Inn is a dive, the most popular and widespread type of venue throughout the cities and dusty roads of the Kingdom. A common room stinking of rancid wine, ill-heated by a fireplace whose inefficient chimney fills the room with smoke, the den has a counter scarred and dented a thousand times, and variously stained by all sorts of fluids; a rat-infested cellar; a kitchen to the rear; and, beyond the small courtyard where suppliers deliver their barrels, a solitary latrine. The common room hosts half a dozen tables, all lame, all stained with wine and oil and squashed cockroaches, all marked by burns and obscenities engraved with knives. The benches and stools are uncomfortable enough to square out your buttocks.

Scan the place and you'll easily spot the following:

- Patrons sitting hunched over their glasses, pouring wine from terracotta jugs and busy minding their own business. Some are playing Poppycock, shouting and laughing loudly, the fuse of a quarrel already alight, the row about to explode. One of them corresponds to Biondello's description: a slight man in his twenties, with threadbare clothes and blond hair. If interested, there is room at the table for 1-2 Knaves.
- A group of dangerous-looking men in worn and grubby attire, with mismatched weapons and armor. Even for a place like this, they are a coarse and filthy lot, their rags mended umpteen times, their armors dented, more rust than metal. At a table in the corner near the front door, they are playing Barrel Beating, drinking and talking, and seem to be waiting for someone. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check will allow you to recognize the Toad Gang, a bunch of cheap thugs, but the Toad himself is not around.
- Behind the counter, Hugh the Hanged Man serves drinks and maintains order swiftly, using a cooper's mallet if necessary. A bulky brute with a shaved head and a large overflowing belly, Hugh owes his charming nickname to a misadventure in his youth, when he was hanged for stealing chickens, and the rope broke, unable to bear his weight. Hugh came out of it lame, and with a noticeable scar on his neck.



- Zina and Melia serve at the tables, and whether they are sisters, mother and daughter, cousins or relations, or share no kinship at all, is the subject of heated alcohol-fueled discussions among the regulars. Over the years, the two women, somewhat wilted, have refined a technique that allows them to keep drunkards and other romantics at a distance.
- Vanni is in charge of the kitchen and is the sort of phenomenon the minstrels sing about: a skinny cook. He's as thin as a wraith, in fact – so much so that the Hanged Man usually forbids him from being seen by customers, lest he give the wrong impression on the quality of his cuisine.
- In the large fireplace in the main room, a roast suckling pig on a skewer is slowly turned by a very scruffy, bored-looking lad: Spiedino.

If the Knaves go straight to Biondello, he will chase them away and ask to end the game. Daggers and knives will be drawn under the tables at the first annoying gesture.

Teasing the Toad Gang before Turtlehead makes his appearance could easily cause a fight to break out.

If the Knaves take a seat and begin to guzzle the first round of wine, the fight hits them forthwith.

In fact, a few minutes later the door opens and Turtlehead comes in; after exchanging banter with his men, he grabs Biondello, slaps him in the face and slams him onto the Knaves' table, his nose broken and bleeding profusely. The poor fellow groans, as shards of your wine glasses fly in all directions.

The background buzz in the tavern suddenly dies down.

The little man tries to sit up, his eyes glazed over, when a shadow falls between the Knaves and the light.

Two huge ham-like paws grab Biondello by the collar and lift him up. A hulk of a man with arms like sacks of watermelons shakes the little man furiously, bellowing in scorn, then slams him back onto the table so hard that its legs give way, and the whole thing collapses.

The Knaves jump back to save their ankles.

Turtlehead of Toadi is here.

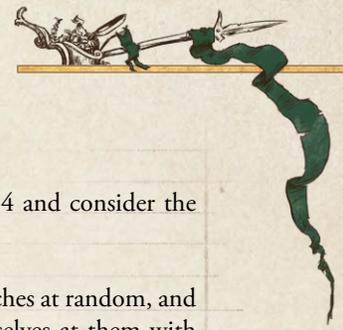
Behind him, the half dozen ugly faces of his gang are approaching.

On the floor, among the remains of the table, the little man tries in vain to get up by grabbing hold of a Knave's leg.

Turtlehead now bends and lifts Biondello up off the ground.

The men behind the brute start to push the other patrons away to make room. Some of them push back. One of the waitresses screams, a slap resounds. Someone laughs.

And while a stool cleaves the tavern's smoky air and hits the skull of an unsuspecting Poppycock player, an alcoholic roar announces the explosion of a violent riot in the Holed Coin!



DIVE GAMES

Any Knave who wants to participate in a game of Poppycock or a round of Barrel Beating must follow the instructions on page 18-19.

Here are the special rules for playing Barrel Beating at the Holed Nickel Inn:

(Barrel | Total HP: 23 | CA: 12)

DESCRIPTION

At the Holed Coin Inn, the disguise provided for Barrel Beating players is pretty traditional: bonnets, handkerchiefs, and rice-harvester aprons; the barrel is resistant and reinforced with iron bands.

Available weapons: Throwing hoe (Ax) or Nasty Knife (Dagger).

HARD KNOCKS!

It's time for a fun Brawl! Play by the special rules on page 14 and consider the following ideas:

- The men of the Toad Gang can't wait to start throwing punches at random, and attack, unprovoked, even the adventurers, throwing themselves at them with a real surprise attack, or at least with an Advantage. They are mostly standing between the adventurers and the front door, making it difficult, therefore, to get away.
- The rest of the patrons try to make the most of this fun occasion, attacking anyone who comes within range. See Wandering Dangers: The Tavern of the Flying Fists.

OPPONENTS IN THE HOLED COIN INN

TOAD GANG

AC: 12

Attack: +4

Whack: Every bandit has 2 Whack Levels

Moves: Bouncer, Clothesline

Move Slots: 2

Clothesline. As an action, the henchman can make an attack. If it hits, the move deals 1 whack and the target is knocked prone.

Bouncer. As a reaction, when the henchman is successfully hit by an attack, it can make an attack roll against his opponent. If it hits, the target is stunned.

TURTLEHEAD OF TOADI (THE TOAD)

AC: 18

Attack: +7

Whack: 6

Moves: Bouncer, Clothesline, Driving Drop

Move Slots: 2

Special Moves: "A crown for their heads!", Human Shield

Brawl Features: Iron Jaw

Bouncer. As a reaction, when the Toad is successfully hit by an attack, he can make an attack roll against his opponent. If he hits, the target is stunned.

Clothesline. As an action, the Toad can make an attack. If he hits, the move deals 1 whack and the target is knocked prone.

Diving drop. As an action, the Toad can make an attack roll. If he hits the target, the move deals 1 whack and the target is stunned. The Toad take 1 whack.

Special Move: "A crown for their heads!" Once per Brawl, the Toad can summon the help of the Inn's bystanders, promising a reward for anyone who will help him. The Special Move activates the Stray Danger "The House of the Flying Punches", but it only targets the PCs.

Special Move: Human Shield. When the Toad is attacked by a creature, it can use his reaction to grab a member of the mob that takes the hit in his place.

Brawl Features: Iron Jaw. The Toad can spend a move slot and use his reaction to remove a condition that affects him.

Round One: the Toad, in a thunderous voice, accuses Biondello of being a cheat, a deceiver and a great liar (all true), and repeatedly roars “you lump of dung! Get up, scumbag! How many of those have you sold, so far?!” Unless he is distracted by the intervention of the adventurers (who could take the boy's defense, for example), his actions in the following turns will all be focused on his prey.

Round Two: The waitresses try to get out of the way, but if cornered, they might ask for help from the most charismatic Knave in the Band.

At the same time, an envelope of yellowed papers will slip unseen from Biondello's torn coat.

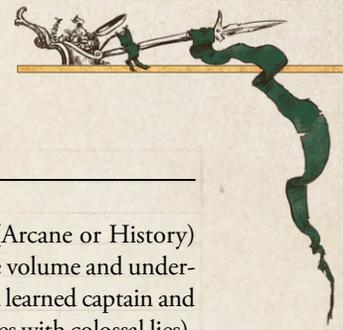
With a Wisdom (Perception) check DC 14 the player can spot the envelope falling on the ground and being kicked under a table. A Dexterity (Stealth) check DC 11 is required to reach it unseen.

Round Three: Hugo the Hanged Man jumps onto the counter brandishing a cooper's mallet, and begins to strike right and left indiscriminately, yelling blasphemies. See Stray Dangers: Rain of Stools.

“Turn the other cheek, brother,
so I can turn the other hand”

- FRACAS FROM TRIVELLE -





SCENE 2 - THE SECRET OF THE BIGAT

If the Knaves manage to save Biondello from the clutches of the Toad Gang (or at least save a copy of his papers), then things can go on.

Biondello's envelope (the one seen in the tavern, or one of the many copies that the crook peddles) contains five pages copied from a book, namely the Fifth Volume of the classic "Brancalonia Corbellatica", compiled about a century ago by Braccio da Caprone.

With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcane or History) check, the player can correctly identify the volume and understand its reliability (medium: Braccio was a learned captain and lover of writing, but he stuffed his chronicles with colossal lies).

Provided the Knaves can read, or find someone to do it for them, they will find the following information in the five pages:

Pages of Brogliaccio

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | THE BIGAT AND ITS NATURE – With extensive quotations from the classics, Braccio da Caprone describes the Bigat as "a strange lizard" that lives along rivers and has a fondness for marshy areas. A lonely creature, it only mates every five hundred years, and doesn't even enjoy it. It collects treasures, usually in the order of several hundred silver coins. |
| 2 | THE BIGAT AND ITS NATURE (CONT.) – The Bigat is not afraid of fire and water, but fears iron and magic. It is subject to long periods of hibernation, but when active it craves fresh meat once a moon, and is particularly fond of human flesh.
In the absence of men, it is content with beasts. |
| 3 | THE BIGAT OF THE FOSSA – Braccio da Caprone reports the tale of frequent sightings of the creature along the Fossa River, where the beast frequently attacked fishermen. The last sighting along the river dates back over two hundred years. |
| 4 | THE VALLEY OF THE WORM – Sightings along the Fossa may have ceased, yet many people claim that a Bigat took up residence along the course of Old Bucket creek, a tributary of the Fossa. Once luxuriant, the valley, known to the villagers as the "Vàl del Bigat", is now a wilderness, and no-one ventures there if they can avoid it. |
| 5 | MAP OF THE VALLEY – A map of the place, with partial description. Unfortunately the page was torn out unevenly and part of the map is missing, as is part of the text, which mentions a "Granny's House" not featured in what remains of the map. |

If things go wrong and the papers get ruined, the Condottiero will only be able to provide information on some of the pages.

If things go even worse than expected, salvation will come from the fearful attendant of the tavern, Spiedino, who can read, knows the content of the papers by heart, having seen

dozens of copies in the hands of Biondello, and can help the Knaves if they promise to let him join their Company.

In fact, Spiedino craves a little adventure and can't wait to leave that dump of a tavern. Also, he hides a secret: Spiedino is actually a girl, but in this mean old world it seems safer to pretend to be a boy for as long as possible...

SCENE 3 - ALONG THE FOSSA RIVER

Having somehow recovered the directions of Braccio da Caprone's text, the Knaves are free to plan their trip to the Old Bucket valley and to the mysterious "Granny's House".

According to the map, the route unfolds as follows:

- Three days on horseback, or five on foot, along the Fossa, heading west.
- Three days on foot northwards along the course of the Bucket.

The first part of the journey takes place along the southern bank of the Fossa River, mainly through wild and marshy lands, among chestnut and larch woods.

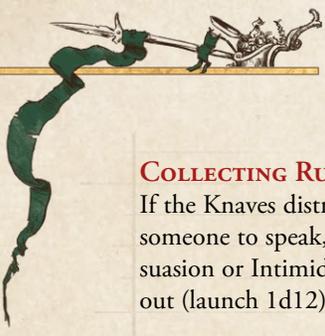
Although the Fossa is dangerous, owing to its proximity to the Mistide of Penumbrina, and to the Pagans' incursions, the waterway and the road that runs alongside it are among

the most important communication routes in the region, manned to some degree by guards from nearby cities and by mercenary companies.

This part of the trip is a good opportunity to have the Knaves interact with a few local characters – petty merchants, disturbing fishermen, and grubby boatmen – in order to acquire supplies and equipment, and to collect rumors on the Bigat and the course of the Bucket.

Any equipment that can be found during the trip will be Shoddy (see page 13).

There are no guards around, but only beggars, wayfarers, jugglers, scoundrels, and peasants, all ready to defend themselves and deliver summary justice, if need be.



COLLECTING RUMOURS

If the Knaves distribute quatrains left and right, or convince someone to speak, with a successful DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check, here's what they could find out (launch 1d12):

d12	Rumor
1	The Bucket flows into the Fossa about forty miles upstream of the Holed Nickel (<i>roughly true</i>).
2	The course of the Bucket has been uninhabited for decades (<i>roughly true, if we exclude the Granny</i>).
3	The spirit of the Bucket is a kind and elderly fairy who helps anyone who treats him courteously (<i>humph!</i>).
4	A group of pagans led by a fierce dwarf has crossed over from the north and is now wandering around the district (<i>true</i>).
5	There is a pleasant woodcutter village called Fairwillow at the top of the Bucket valley (<i>false as a fake florin</i>).
6	The Bucket gets its name from the magical golden bucket lying on its bed: this will bring infinite riches to those who retrieve it from its waters (<i>as true as any legend</i>).
7	The Stump Hag lives along the course of the Old Bucket (<i>true</i>).
8	"Granny" was an old woman and a woodcutter by profession, but has been dead for a hundred years or more (<i>true, except that she has turned into the Stump Hag</i>).
9	A beautiful girl lives in the valley and spends time picking flowers (<i>true, but it's the Hag in the morning</i>).
10	A beautiful lady lives in the valley and offers hospitality to wayfarers and hunters (<i>true, but it's the Hag in the afternoon</i>).
11	Recently, adventurers and knaves ("like you") have been seen heading for the valley (<i>true</i>); the reason is unknown.
12	Nobody has ever come back (<i>true</i>).

The Condottiero should grant the whole Band 1 rumor from ordinary people a day, in addition to the rumors that can be collected through other encounters.

"I'm looking for the owner of that horse.
He's tall, blonde, he smokes a pipe,
and he's a pig!"

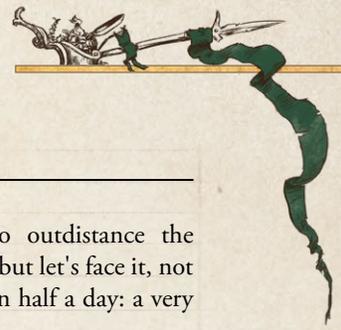
- VERRETTONE, KING OF THE HOGS -

ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE WAY

Once a day, roll 1d6 to see if the Band meets someone special along the way. If the same number comes out multiple times, consider it "1".

d6	Encounters
1	Hunger and thirst: the road along the Fossa is deserted and a little eerie. But you're better off alone than in bad company. Or are you?
2	Three Guards: they are on the trail of the dangerous Brega the Dwarf, a pagan chief who has been seen wandering around the region with some henchmen. The guards ask a lot of questions, but are essentially harmless and don't really want to get into trouble. If suitably approached, they also offer 1 Rumor.
3	A procession of scabies victims on a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Good Women of Mercy to beg for relief from their dreadful illness: you need to give them a wide berth, and thus lose half a day.
4	Melabella, a young woman in distress: her mother has twisted an ankle while looking for mushrooms in the woods, and the daughter is too weak to carry her. Whoever follows the girl in the woods to help her will be attacked by Pagans armed with sticks, henchmen of Brega the Dwarf. The girl has a dagger and knows how to use it. She will offer food, courteous reverence, 1 dose of groggy mushroom (see below) and 1 Rumor in exchange for help. If Spiedino, Biondello or Aleramo travel with the group, this is an opportunity for them to leave the Band behind and follow a new path. Or Melabella could join the Band, who knows?
5	A wandering knight without a horse: this is Aleramo from Roccaspra, a young aristocrat of high hopes and little money. He was thrown by his steed Bofal-macco. If the adventurers help him find his jumpy horse, they will earn one silver coin each, 1 Rumor, and his eternal gratitude, but they will lose half a day. Aleramo could also join the Band as a follower or as an ally, but only if convinced that their work is honorable and can bring him glory. If they don't help him, or if they rob him, they will make an enemy for the future.
6	A Company of Mountebanks – a chariot pulled by a meek old horse with five passengers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farina the aged and pompous leader • Clara the first actress, as attractive as she is nasty • Taricco the minstrel, who constantly strums a lute • Ursula, graceful and vain • Reinardo, who plays all the parts that the others don't do, all of them badly

The Knaves can travel with the artists for a day, saving on supplies and getting 2 Rumors for free. At sunset, the troupe turns to a fishing village where they plan to stop for three days, and our heroes must continue alone.



SCENE 4 - THE RETURN OF THE TOAD

On the fourth night of travel, our adventurers can stop off at the Four Winds Shack, a run-down dive where, for a couple of copper coins or an hour's work (chopping wood, emptying spittoons, plucking chickens), you get a portion of bread soup and a place to sleep in the stables.

Whether they stop at the Shack or outdoors, the Knaves are preparing to retire for the night when the bustle of a group of armed men announces the arrival of the Toad Gang, who settle in the common room, ordering wine and boiled capons (or make camp near the Knaves' night shelter). This time, the Band is almost complete: there are over a dozen mercenaries (fifteen, actually, for those who can count).

While two of them leave to use the latrine behind the stables (or the trees in the field), they discuss how they will spend their share of Bigat's treasure.

Evidently the Toad is also after the treasure. If there was still any doubt, the accusations made by Turtlehead to Biondello are now perfectly clear.

The Toad and his men must be slowed down or stopped: this Job is already complicated enough without competition for the final prize.

Your main options could be:

- Confronting the Toad and his men in combat: it can be done, but it's perfectly clear to the Players that it will be like catching a tiger by the tail.
- Wait until the Toad and his minions are asleep, and put them out of action: not a bad idea in itself, but the mercenaries seem uninclined to go to bed, and when they finally do, well after the moon has set, they leave some men on guard. Weird, huh? There are bad people around, apparently.
- Set fire to the Shack: true, the service is bad, but this would probably slow down the mercenaries only until dawn.

- Sneak away and travel all night to outdistance the competition as much as possible: fine, but let's face it, not much fun. The adventurers would earn half a day: a very narrow advantage.
- Lace the Band's wine or supper in order to put the mercenaries out of action for a couple of days: actually the kitchen is isolated from the rest of the Shack (or the cook is separate from the other members of the Band).

If your Knaves decide for the latter, one of them at home in the wild can try to find something useful in the undergrowth with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check; alternatively they can bribe a passing apothecary with 5 silver coins. In both cases you obtain (roll 1d6):

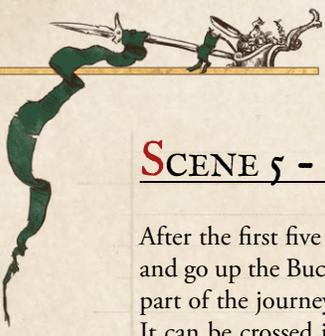
d6	Findings
1-2	Groggy mushroom – a mild hallucinogen that promises to provide the mercenaries with 12 hours of colorful visions and silly giggling, and two days of killer headache.
3-4	Stitch Leaf – a powerful laxative, capable of incapacitating an adult man for 36 hours, with excruciating pain and seismic bowel movements.
5-6	Snoozy Berries – a narcotic effect that can knock out an adult for 24 hours

Once the evil ingredient is procured, one of the characters must mix it in the food or wine destined for the Band; this can be done by carrying out appropriate checks based on the players' choices.

What if the Knaves eliminate the Toad and his minions?

In this case, the Band deserves a breather: after all, it's been hard work...

In the final part of the adventure, the Knaves will meet the remnants of the Gang, led by the guiscard **Saetta**, the Toad's right-hand sidekick.



SCENE 5 - ABOVE AND BEYOND THE RIVER

After the first five days of travel, it's time to cross the Fossa and go up the Bucket. The Fossa River, along which the first part of the journey unfolds, is still navigable in this stretch. It can be crossed in two ways: by paying a boatman; or by stealing a boat, which in the local smugglers' jargon is called "going above and beyond".

↳ GAMBARO THE BOATMAN

Old Gambaro has spent his life on the river – often in the river – and knows every bend, current and legend. He lives in a hut about two spits from the water, across which he has stretched a chain that acts as a guide for the raft with which he ferries travelers from one shore to another.

You can cross the Fossa on Gambaro's raft for 1 iron piece a head or – if you don't have the money – you can threaten the boatman, or tell him a story he has never heard. If the transaction takes place amicably, Gambaro will also tell or confirm 1 Rumor, but the Condottiero must choose a true one.

If poor Gambaro is treated badly, on the first occasion he will report the group's position and intentions to the local Guards or to the Toad Gang.

↳ STEALING A BOAT

Along the Fossa there are several fishing villages: crooked huts; children, and occasionally pigs, splashing around in the mud; and a heavy smell of stale fish in the air.

Stealing a boat from one of these villages, thus depriving a family of its only means of livelihood, requires a heart of stone. With a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check you avoid being caught in the act, and with a successful DC 8 Dexterity (Water Vehicle) check, you avoid overturning in the middle of the river and risk drowning.

↳ SABOTAGE THE FERRY AND BOATS

Knaves who want to further hinder other treasure hunters can break the chain of the ferry and puncture the boats after using them.

For practical reasons, it is not possible to sabotage all the boats in all the villages along the Fossa.

SCENE 6 - GRANNY'S HOUSE

On the following days, the Knaves go up Bucket creek and its uninhabited valley. Looking back from elevated points, will allow you to see a camp fire a few miles away to the south with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. Your Knaves are not alone on the trail to the treasure!

On the third day of travel along the Bucket, you will find yourselves at the confluence of the Old Bucket with the New Bucket, the most substantial river branch. Your Knaves' path continues along the Old Bucket. From now on, you are in the Stump Hag's territory, the real reason no-one has ever found the Bigat and its Treasure. If the Knaves never take a wrong turn, they will reach their destination in the morning; otherwise, all half-day delays and night stops will have to be considered.

So, let's meet the Hag (see page 36).

The Stump Hag owes her name to her habit of beheading her victims with an ax. Just saying. What she does with the heads (or with the bodies, for that matter) is the subject of grim legends and morbid speculation.

The Hag comes in three different forms depending on how and when she meets the Knaves:

- In the morning, she appears as a handsome young woman dressed in simple clothes. In this form – the result of spells and illusions – the Hag interacts socially with the characters; she can provide 1 Rumor (true or false, but chosen by the Condottiero) and does not constitute an

immediate danger. Indeed, with a little cunning, Knaves can turn her against the Toad Gang with the famous (or infamous) "eat-me-when-I'm-fatter" trick: "Why waste time with us, when a much better-fed group is on its way?"

- In the afternoon, the Hag appears as an attractive and provocative mature woman, scantily dressed in tattered rags. She has long black hair, very white skin, and full red lips. This too is an illusion created to entice her victims, attract them to her hut and then behead them at ease.
- In the evening and at night, the Hag shows her true appearance: a horrible old woman, smiling obscenely with four crooked yellow teeth, a body seemingly made of withered twigs, held together by what's left of a dress once of great beauty, and now reduced to rags. She effortlessly wields a large executioner's ax whose blade appears to be encrusted with rust (or worse). This is the Hag's true form, also revealed if the evil spell is somehow broken; it is also the form that the Hag takes if confronted in her hut (see below).

Whatever her guise, the Hag is endowed with superhuman dexterity and ability to dodge danger.

If, after showing up with an illusory appearance, her true form is revealed:

- If she has the chance, she will escape and take refuge in her hut, then return at night and go after the Knaves with her ax.



- If she has no chance to escape, she will attack using her own list of spells.

Granny's House is clearly visible at the top of the Bucket valley: it is nothing more than a hut with four dry-stone walls and a rush roof. The door is low and narrow, and there are no windows.

A massive stump stands out in the small clearing next to the hut.

The interior of the Hag's house is a macabre showcase of skulls in various states of decomposition.

Imperceptible from the outside, the stench in there hits you like a brick wall: anyone who enters the hut must pass a Constitution saving throw with DC 11, or they will be prey to uncontrollable retching and incapacitated until the end of the next turn.

In the confined space of the hut, the Hag's ax becomes a deadly weapon which the old woman wields with unexpected force. The blade often hits the walls, causing blue sparks to go off in the half-shade.

SCENE 7 - *BIGATTUS DORMIENS NUMQUAM TITILLANDUS*

After passing Granny's House you reach the upper valley of the Bucket, nothing more than a steep ravine on the bottom of which flows a muddy stream.

If you study the territory – with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check – you will notice a series of footprints in the muddy river bed. With a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check, you can follow the trail: from the riverbed, this passes along the bank then returns to the river. These are the traces left by a very large animal with webbed and clawed feet: the Bigat!

Following its tracks for about two miles upstream, the Knaves will approach a pond of bright-green water. A semi-submerged cave opens on the rock face on the western side of the pond.

The tracks end there.

This is when the Toad arrives. Let the weapons speak...

Turtlehead da Toadi is cross.

He is cross because the fool Biondello has sold hell-knows how many copies of the treasure map and what have you up and down the Fossa.

He is cross because the adventurers have repeatedly slowed down his march and pestered him and his men, some of whom have yet to recover.

He is cross because he hates coming in second.

He doesn't intend to waste time offering the adventurers a way out. He just waits for the right moment, then unleashes an attack with no quarter.

When cornered and reduced to a few Hit Points, the Hag becomes invisible and tries to escape under cover of darkness, leaving behind her ax, a heavily cursed weapon (the Condottiero can freely decide what nefarious properties the object has).

By defeating the Hag, or making her flee the premises, you can plunder her hut. This requires a second saving throw on the Constitution.

In a niche at the end of the hut there is a casket containing loose jewelry for about 50 silver coins, a snake-shaped hilt dagger (Poisoned Dagger) and a silver medal of Saint Sbarella from Belveglio, the patron of business travelers.

A trunk placed in a corner contains an assortment of fine clothes, including cloaks, belts, and boots, evidently taken by the Hag from her victims. Considering the slashes and bloodstains, their overall value is merely a few iron pieces, but something useful could be salvaged.

What happened to the bodies remains a mystery, but perhaps it's just as well...

At present his Band is made up of himself, a number of Bandits equal to the number of Knaves +2, and Saetta who, so far, has remained on the sidelines.

If the Knaves defeated the Toad and his Gang along the way, there will only be Saetta plus the 2 surviving members of the Gang.

After three rounds of combat, or as soon as things get worse for one of the two factions...

Well, there's an ancient draconian saying that goes something like this: *Bigattus dormiens numquam titillandus*, or "Let the sleeping Bigat lie!"

The monster in question is, in fact, as dangerous as it is indolent. It spends most of its time wallowing in some watercourse, napping and very slowly digesting its most recent victims. And everything's fine until someone disturbs its rest...

In our case, the creature's sacrosanct digestion is brutally interrupted by the uproar of two groups of frenzied people trying to murder one another, with a tremendous crashing of metal and shouts and blasphemies, right outside the cave that the beast has elected as its residence.

In the third round of combat, the Bigat bursts through the surface of the pond, launching its unmistakable bellow, and pounces on the shore, tearing into the combatants indiscriminately.

The fight against the Bigat is to the death (see page 35).



With a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check, it is possible for one of the Knaves to persuade the Toad Band's survivors to join forces against the beast. Or, vice versa, to convince the monster to target other enemies with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

If the trick works, the faction so cunningly deceived will do all the dirty work and, when the Bigat or the Bandits have been eliminated, the Band will be able to face the one still standing.

SCENE 8 - THE ECSTASY OF GOLD

Defeating the Toad Gang brings 40 silver pieces in various coins and assorted trinkets, as well as a fair amount of abrasions, bruises, and aching bones. The opponents' weapons and armor are all shoddy, except for those of Turtlehead and Saetta.

Bigat's Treasure is much richer. The weapons and armor of its victims are all ruined by centuries of dampness, but inside the den there are hundreds of Old Draconian aureos, mounds of jewels, valuables and silver coins, as well as thousands of iron pieces and half-rusted quatrins.

The Condottiero can calculate the exact amount of the treasure, the presence of Memorabilia and that of any magical or special objects as he thinks fit.

The Condottiero can also evaluate the difficulty – for a Band of rogue Knaves – of recovering this fortune from the submerged bed of the lair, and of bringing it back. After all, they have no mules, or carts or anything, and the road to the Den teems with guards, mercenaries, bandits, robbers, thieves and villains of all kinds.

Will our heroes be able to bring the treasure back to their Company Den? Or will they squander it in Revels along the way?



Monsters and Enemies

BIGAT

Bigat is a legendary creature that often appears in the stories of the Fossa River. According to the different versions, it is described as a dragon without wings, a huge lizard, or even as a sort of titanic worm.

Regardless of its appearance, the Bigat is a highly territorial creature, which avoids inhabited places and prefers rivers and wild areas.

In the folklore, the Bigat collects a hoard during its entire existence, and it guards and defends the treasure within its own lair.



BIGAT

Large dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 110 (13d10+39)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Condition Immunities charmed

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages -

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The Bigat can hold its breath for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Bigat makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its claws and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Brutish Roar (Recharge 6). The bigat emits an explosive and deafening roar. Each creature within 30 feet of the bigat and able to hear the roar must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 18 (4d8) thunder damage and is deafened for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't deafened. A deafened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

STUMP HAG

According to some, the evil Hags of the Kingdom are ancient cursed beings of unnatural origin, or cannibal monsters similar to fairytale orcs. For others, however, they are witchcraft practitioners who have been corrupted by dark powers. Whatever the truth, each Brancalonia Hag is a creature of its own, with different powers, background, habits and weak points. However, they share a number of common traits.

STUMP HAG

For all the effects, characteristics and powers of the Stump Hag, in this scenario use the **Green Hag**, with the following changes:

GS 5 (1,800 XP)

Damage Resistance (only at night time) against bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks waged with silvered weapons.

Horrific Appearance. Any humanoid creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the Hag and sees her true form must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, the humanoid will be frightened for 1 minute. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with a disadvantage if the Hag is within its line of sight; if it succeeds, the effect ends. If the creature's saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends, the creature becomes immune to the Hag's Horrific Appearance for the next 24 hours. Unless the target is surprised or the revelation of the Hag's true form is sudden, the target can avert its eyes and avoid making the initial saving throw. Until the start of its next turn, a creature that averts its eyes has a disadvantage on attack rolls against the Hag.

ACTIONS

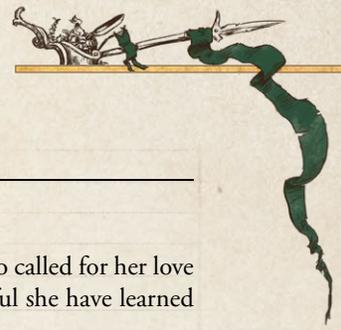
Multiattack. The hag makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

“The Befanas come at night
Children have a look of fright
In their sack broken bones
What a gift from those crones...”

- NURSERY RHIME -





THE TOAD GANG

TURTLEHEAD FROM TOADI - THE TOAD

Experienced warrior, he fights with a greatsword and wears a full armor in good condition. It also has a dagger at the belt and a second one hidden in a boot. He's not particularly smart, but he's definitely bad.

TURTLEHEAD OF TOADI

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (Full Armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses Passive perception 10

Languages Vernacular

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Toad makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The Toad adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Toad must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

SAETTA ("LIGHTNING")

Saetta is the Guiscard of the Company, so called for her love for the Lightning spell, the most powerful she have learned so far.

Or perhaps, according to the gossips, for her ability in running away when things go wrong...

SAETTA

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3

Skills Arcana +5, History +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Vernacular, Draconian

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. Saetta is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The Guiscard has prepared the following wizard spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, trance*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *lightning bolt, speed*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.



TOAD GANG BANDITS

In his company, the Toad brought together some of the worst cutthroats of the region.

TOAD GANG BANDITS

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive perception 10

Languages Vernacular

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.





OTHER ENCOUNTERS

GUARD*Medium humanoid (human), any alignment***Armor Class** 16 (Chain Shirt, Shield)**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +3**Senses** Passive perception 13**Languages** Vernacular**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)**ACTIONS****Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.**CHIEF GUARD***Medium humanoid (human), any alignment***Armor Class** 17 (Splint)**Hit Points** 58 (9d8+18)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3**Senses** Percezione passiva 13**Languages** Vernacular**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** The Chief Guard makes two longsword attacks. If wielding a shortsword, it can also make a shortsword attack.**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.



KNIGHT-ERRANT

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (Plate)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2
Senses Passive perception 10
Languages Any One Language (Usually Vernacular)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The knight-errant has an advantage against fear in saving throws.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight-errant makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the knight-errant can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature it can see within 30 ft makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight-errant. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight-errant is incapacitated.

REACTIONS

Parry. The knight-errant adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight-errant must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

“s this the real life?
 Is spaghetti fantasy?
 Caught in a landslide
 No escape from knavery”

- SOLDIERS' POPULAR SONG -



PAGAN*Medium humanoid (human), any alignment***Armor Class** 12 (Hide Armor)**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses Passive perception 11**Languages** Vernacular**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

Pack Tactics. You have advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of your allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

PAGAN WARRIOR*Medium humanoid (human), any alignment***Armor Class** 13 (Hide Armor)**Hit Points** 67 (9d8+27)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3**Senses** Passive perception 13**Languages** Vernacular**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the pagan hits with it (included in the attack).

Pack Tactics. You have advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of your allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.





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