

Knights of the Rose+Cross

Ø20 Society Supplement

The Enlightened Soul

A thin shaft of sunlight penetrates the still air of the chapel. Grains of dust slowly fall in the beam as if transfixed by the moment. Twelve Knights stand around a great stone seal carved long ago into the floor, at the centre of which a young man kneels bare-chested and head bowed. He looks up as the Master steps forward and places the tip of a sword against his breast bone. In that moment, he reflects on the weeks of training as he tries to settle his racing heartbeat. A single drop of water gathers on the edge of the blade and time seems to slow down even more as it drops to the floor. The sound of the drop almost reverberates in the silence of the room.

“You have resworn the Three Oaths and are found to be true of heart.”

For a moment, the light reflects off the sword and onto the face of the penitent man. His eyes sparkle with a depth that seems to belie his young years.

“Arise Poor Knight and take the tabard. Wear it wear and serve the Order. Honour and Justice.”

The young man slowly stands as the reply rings out through the small chapel.

“Honour and Justice.”

Introduction

The noble Order of the Knights of the Rose + Cross is much more than the gentleman’s club that many of its detractors would have people believe. It was officially founded by the Vatacine Church in 1617 as “servants of the Church and makers of justice”, although some conspiracy theorists say it is much older. The group has always had powerful figures

in its membership, for instance, the original three leaders were a daughter of the King of Montaigne, the High Advisor to the Hierophant and the son of a Vodacce Merchant Prince. With this level of backing and a series of daring acts, the group was quickly inundated with requests for membership from the second sons of noble lines and for patronage by the first sons. While training is difficult and many leave before it is complete, the Poor Knight that emerges has started on a path to discover the true strength of the human spirit. As the 10th century scholar and philosopher Verkündigen Rosenkreuz wrote, “Heroic deeds awaken humanity’s slumbering soul”. Indeed, many Knights have been attributed to miraculous feats that go beyond the known powers of the sorcerers. If a Knight puts his soul and mind into doing a task, it usually gets done.



Membership

Petitioners for membership must be sponsored to join, either by a patron of good standing or an existant Knight. The Order is very selective as to who it teaches and to who it reveals the true secret of the human spirit.

After a gruelling training regime, the successful candidates are entered as Poor Knights in a closely guarded ceremony. Assigned as a Tyro to a more senior Knight, called the Domine, the Poor Knights are expected to travel and perform what is required of them to see if they will advance to become a full Wandering Knight.

While the bulk of Knights seen around Théah are of Wandering and Poor ranks, above them are the Sergeant Knights who also wear the blue tabard and oversee training and the protection of the Chapterhouses. The higher echelons of Knights wear a black tabard and take care of the larger picture for the order, from the Adepts who run the affairs of the Houses to the Seniors who oversee them and finally the Master Knights. The Masters are the public face

of the Order, representing the group in social circles and coming themselves from powerful families and backgrounds.

New Feat: Tyro

You are training under a senior member of the Order to develop your skills and learn the ways of the group. Once you pass their various tests and trials you will be fully admitted as a Wandering Knight.

Prerequisites : Membership – Rose+Cross

Benefits: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus in combat situations when fighting with your Domini. At the end of every session during which your Domini asked you to do a specific task you receive an extra 2d10 experience points.

Special: If you wish, you may establish a Tyro/Domini relationship with another player who has the Domini Feat given below. Once you two reach a combined level of 9, you are no longer considered a Tyro and you may select one new bonus Feat at this time. If there is no PC available or willing to become the Domini, that role is handled by GM as an NPC. Completion of the training period should usually be marked with a proper ceremony.

New Feat: Dominé

You have been entrusted with training a Poor Knight into the skills and ways of the Order. You are referred to as Dominé and Tyro respectively and usually develop a strong loyal bond.

Prerequisites : Base Attack Bonus +4, The Secret

Benefits: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus in social interactions when accompanied by your Tyro. Once per session your Tyro must carry out an instruction from you. The instruction must be reasonable, lawful and specific.

Special: If you wish, you may choose another player whose level is lower than yours and who has the Tyro Feat. Once you and your Tyro reach a combined level 9, you lose this Feat and may either choose another Tyro or gain a different bonus feat of your choice. If there is no PC available or willing to become the Tyro, that role is handled by the GM as an NPC.

State of the World

The past year has been a troublesome one for the Order, from the war in Castille to the aftermath of the Montaigne Revolution. While the Chapterhouses have held against the pressure, the coming months will be difficult. One of the greatest losses has been that of the Grand Master Aristede Baveaux, who was assassinated on Bloody Feast Day by anti-government activists. While his death has brought the Order closer to the Montaigne Musketeers, his grace and diplomacy will be sorely missed. A number of trouble situations, called “White Roses” within the Order, remain throughout the lands of Théah and beyond.

Avalon

While the rivalry between the Knights and those of Elaine continues, the Order is increasingly concerned about rumours of insurgent groups in the isles. The recent arrival of a large number of Montaigne *emirges* has brought new resources and support to the Order in Avalon. Some have even suggested the founding of a third Chapterhouse in the old capital of Luthon.

Castille

The end of the war may have seen the end of one form of suffering, but it has left the Inquisition in a position to further its stranglehold on the nation. With this constant threat to the Order, it remains difficult for Knights to support groups with noble causes such as Los Vagos and the Invisible College.

Cathay

There is no credible research to indicate any connection between the Order and the lands behind the Wall of Fire. Some scholars of esoteric knowledge claim that the concept of the Golden Soul may have come from some ancient contact with this mysterious land, but their theory is regarded as highly speculative.

Crescent Empire

The events on Cabora refocused attention of the great peninsula of the Crescent Empire and forced many to rethink the Church’s embargo on the land. A number of



Knights have been dispatched in secret to investigate the state of the nation and any threat that it may pose.

Eisen

The activities of the Order in this wasted land remain limited to the area around Freiburg, which has seen doubt over its future with the suicide of Eisenfurst Trague at the beginning of the year. Rumours from elsewhere in Eisen suggest trouble brewing in both Heilgrund and Sieger, but the Order has few resources to spare in those areas. The government-in-exile established in Wische by Anne du Montaigne may present opportunity for influence in that kingdom.

Montaigne

The revolution has placed the Order in a delicate situation, as many of its members had strong ties to the noble families and much of its wealth came from these patrons. It has been the respect of the people for the good actions of the Knights and their steps to mitigate the descent into full chaos that has seen it come through. With the death of Baveaux, Miles Sices du Sices now leads the Order from the Chapterhouse in Paix, much to the chagrin of the most vehement anti-noble activists.

Ussura

The vast steppes of Matushka's land remain closed to the Order, with only a single operative within the household of the Gaius. Following the withdrawal of Montegue's forces, the nation seems to have quietened down but this could only be the silence before a storm.

Vendel / Vestenmannavnjär

The Knights of Kirk continue to try and counsel moderation in the on-going civil war of the Norvik islands though few listen. Most of the Guild Chairs are patrons of the Order, although some Master Knights have expressed concern about any undue influence they may hold over the members of the local group and in particular the young Master of the Kirk House, Colin Quinlan.

Vodacce

The fall of the Merchant Prince Lucani has left the small

group of Vodacce Knights in a precarious situation. While the new ruler of the island, Donello Falisci, seems more noble than his rivals only time will tell if he will continue to tolerate the presence of the Order. While Knights protect the widow Lucani, they will certainly remain part of the Great Game of Vodacce politics.

Explorer's Society

The great new Age of Exploration sees the irrepressible scholars of the Society at the forefront. A number of ships sail with Knights on-board, some of which are more covert than others, ostensibly to protect and serve but also to ensure that no threats to Théah are roused in the mad dash to new lands.

Die Kreuzritter

The Order remains unaware of the survival of the rival order of Knighthood. The secretive Black Crosses continue to try and infiltrate the Order, but without any success.

Invisible College

The end of the war in Castille has focused the attention of the Inquisition back on the rogue scholars, those who did not make the opportunity to flee are now in more peril than ever before. Some Knights have helped smuggle scholars and work out, but must be very careful not to attract the notice of the Church in doing so.

Los Vagos

With the end of the Montaigne occupation, the Vagabond can concentrate on opposing the Inquisition. As with the College, support can only be done covertly by members trained to remain Invisible to all others.

Rilasciare

The revolution has brought a number of political dissidents to notice and questions are starting to be asked about exactly how such a widespread revolt was organised and armed.

Sophia's Daughters

Who?



The Hidden Blade

The secret of the Rose+Cross lies in the truth revealed by Rosenkruetz of the power of the human spirit, the so-called “golden soul”. Through deeds and thoughts, the Knights unlock this potential which allows them to do great things and gives power to their Vows. The dawning of this truth comes in the ceremony where the Knight becomes a proper member of the Order. Having learnt the vows of the Order, the penitent recites them again and in that instance gains a

New Feat: The Golden Soul

Your superiors in the Order are impressed by your continued devotion to the quest for the Golden Soul through your deeds.

Special: Use one of the following as a reward for exceptionally chivalrous and focused role-playing. The head of a Chapter House, or even the head of the Order, should grant the honor in an appropriate ceremony.

Benefits: (based on Feats from Swashbuckling Adventures™)

Blessing: Once on each separate roll, the damage the Knight receives is reduced by 1 hit point. Characters with Sorcery or Shaman skills may not receive this as a reward.

Driving Force (modified): The Knight may make an additional attack, performed at his highest Base Attack, after all of his other attacks have been made. He may use this Feat a number of times per day equal to his level divided by 5 and rounded down. In addition, once per day, he may re-roll a save that he has just failed.

Faith (modified): So strong is the Knight’s faith, that he gains a +5 to all saving throws. In addition, any evil character or its minions who opposed the Knight suffer a –4 penalty to their rolls against him.

Lightning Reflexes (modified): When an opponent charges into an area the Knight is defending, the Knight may make an Attack of Opportunity against the opponent.

If a player has performed at a consistently high level, trained at least one Tyro, and furthered the cause of the Order, he should receive one of the following:

Miracle Worker (modified): Healing Wind, Righteous Fury, Shield of the Faithful, or Strength of Theus.

greater understanding of their meaning as their training comes into focus. The Order has tried to bring this fundamental secret to light twice before and both times it has lead to its near destruction, this time the Order is playing it a lot more carefully.

Beneath the public face of Knights in tabards roaming the country and meting out justice, the Order is not above taking steps to ensure certain things occur. When something more subtle needs doing it often falls onto the Invisibles, a small cadre of veteran Knights who operate from the shadows. Many of the most sensitive operations or ones which cannot be traced back to the Order must be fielded by these operatives. Joining the Invisibles entails months, if not years, of subtle observation by the group of Knights who show a certain potential. The Knight is then approach and asked to join. Few refuse this honour. The Knight then drops all outwards signs of membership of the Rose+Cross, their identity as an Invisible known only to their colleagues and the Minister himself.

While a true hero never takes a life, sometimes the only way to deal with true evil is to destroy it. When this is necessary, the Order relies on the protocol of the Black Stone. Knights of a Chapterhouse each draw a stone from a bag and then retire to their rooms. The Knight who holds the Black Stone must perform the execution and then return to his chamber. This way no other Knight knows who performed the task

New Feat: Black Stone Veteran

You have taken a life in the service of the Order. Although the victim was certainly not innocent, the action is a mark you will bear for the rest of your life. You have a certain melancholy and sometimes hesitate in the midst of combat, remembering the face of the person you slew.

Prerequisites: Rose+Cross Membership

Benefits: You receive a +2 bonus to both attack rolls and damage against opponents of a non-Lawful alignment. Once per day, the GM can either give you a –2 to all social interactions or cancel one attack you make.

Special: This feat may be acquired for free following the Black Stone ceremony at the discretion of the GM.

and so is not treated any differently. However, killing goes against the very core of the Order's philosophy and they must reconcile themselves by knowing they have done this task for the greater good so that others did not have to do it.

Feature Characters

The following NPCs are important members of the Order and can serve a number of roles as superiors or provide timely assistance to the PCs. For groups without a tie to the Order, the NPCs may be a public face of the group with an agenda that may help or hinder the players.

The Secret

Miles Valroux du Martise, Montaigne Noble 4 / Spy 5 / Desaix Swordsman 5: CR 14; SZ M (humanoid); HD 5d6 plus 4d8 plus 5d10; hp 87; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atks: rapier +11 melee (1d8), main gauche +11 melee (1d4); SA Off-Handed Fighting, Two Blades - One Attack, Lightning Quick Defense, Sneak Attack +3d6, Alias, Brilliant Getaway, Commanding Presence, Contacts, Friends in High Places, Seduction, Taunt; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Wil +9; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 11, Cha 15; AL LG; Skills: Balance+8, Bluff+10, Climb+4, Diplomacy+18, Disguise+8, Gather Information+18, Hide+8, Intimidate+8, Intuit Direction+4, Jump+4, Knowledge (history)+8, Knowledge (mathematics)+8, Knowledge (philosophy)+10, Listen+12, Move Silently+8, Open Lock+4, Perform+6, Ride+6, Search+10, Sense Motive+12, Speak Language (Avalon, Castille, Eisen, Montaigne, Thean, Vendel, Vodacce) Spot+12, Swim+4; Feats : Alertness, Detect Lie, Inattentive (hubris), Keen Senses, Linguist, Membership - Rose+Cross, The Secret, The Vow, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (main gauche), Weapon Specialisation (rapier), Weapon Specialisation (main gauche)

Background

Joining the Order at the age of seventeen in his home nation of Montaigne, Miles quickly proved a capable Knight and earned the nickname "Unshakeable" for his steely willpower. Rising through the ranks, he became the Senior Knight of the Crieux House where his talent for organisation shone through and led to most of the protocols currently used by the Order. Ten years later, he was approached to serve special duty in the Highland Marches and took up the post he has held ever since. As Minister of

the Order, the true power behind the Rose+Cross, he is the only man to know the location of the Order's secret library and the tomb of Rosenkreuz.

Nearly two years ago, Miles returned from the depths of the St Brigid chapterhouse somewhat shaken and since has shown a slow decline in his health and mental state. The other Knights are starting to worry about what is happening to "Old Unshakeable" and just what it is that he found out that is so disturbing.

Using Miles

Since his unknown discovery in the secret library, Miles flits between his stoic self and periods of such a haunted countenance that it unsettles those around him. He is overwhelmed by the secret he carries and has yet to determine how he can resolve the situation. Miles may send Knights on strange missions that make little sense but would seem to fit into a greater plan, or perhaps he has just lost it and the missions are yet another symptom of his decline.

The Sword

Francisco Garcia del Torres, Castillian Musketeer 4 / Desaix Swordsman 3: CR 7; SZ M (humanoid); HD 7d10; hp 64; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18; Atks: rapier +10/+4 melee (1d8), main gauche +5 melee (1d4); SA Elegant Duellist, Servant of the Crown, Two-Blades One-Attack; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 15; AL NG; Skills: Balance+4, Climb+8, Diplomacy+3, Gather Info+4, Jump+10, Knowledge (Religion)+3, Knowledge (Rose+Cross)+5, Listen+8, Ride+8, Search+7, Sense Motive+6, Speak Language (Castille, Crescent, Montaigne, Vodacce), Spot+8, Tumble+10, Use Rope+5; Feats: Ambidexterity, Defender of the Crown, Expertise, Flurry of Blows, Lunge, Membership - Rose+Cross, The Secret, Two Weapon Fighting, Unarmored Defence Proficiency, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (main gauche), Weapon Specialisation (rapier), Weapon Specialisation (main gauche)

Background

The Master Knight of the San Christóbal house is at the sharp edge of the Orders careful dance with the Inquisition. The Chapterhouse houses a great collection of books including some that the Church would currently consider

heretical, such as the *Book of M* that details advanced medical techniques from the Crescent Empire. The Inquisition has tried a number of times to gain entry to the House and each time they have been turned away, however the latest attempt involved sending mercenaries to steal evidence of heresy and almost succeeded.

Fortunately, the evidence was recovered before it could reach the Inquisition, thanks to the timely help of one Marcos Rivera del Rios, known to many as the “Grim Sword”. The two have now joined together to right an injustice against the Don Marcos’ father, purportedly the real creator of the Aldana swordschool.

Using Francisco

In contrast to most of the other Master Knights, Francisco likes to keep his skills honed by performing missions in the field. As the Master of the Castillian capital, he is quite likely to be involved in some way in mission in that country and could even come along. If not with the players, Francisco is also an excellent person to appear at a fortunate moment to lend a hand, or if the players are working against the agenda of the Order could be sent to directly oppose them along with a few of his Knights. With good checks to Jump and Tumble, the Master Knight is also not adverse to a moonlight chase across the ancient rooftops of the city.

The Mystery

Louis-Claude du Sinjin, Montaigne Courtier 5 / Spy 3 / Valroux 5 / Desaix 5: CR 18; SZ M (humanoid); HD 8d6 plus 10d10; hp 117; Init +10 (+5 Dex; +4 Improved Initiative; +1 Nimble); Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+5 Dex; +4 Dashing and Daring; +1 Nimble); Atks: rapier +16 melee (1d8+2), main gauche +16 melee (1d4+2), pistol +19 ranged (1d10); SA Off-Handed Fighting, Raise the Stakes, Nimble, Two Blades - One Attack, Lightning Quick Defense, Sneak Attack +2d6, Alias, Brilliant Getaway, Contacts, Talent, Style and Grace, Iron Will, Gossip, Versatile; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Wil +13; Str 13, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 20; AL LN; Skills: Alchemy+6, Balance+10, Bluff+8, Climb+6, Decipher Script+4, Diplomacy+10, Disable Device+4, Disguise+8, Escape Artist+4, Forgery+4, Gather Information+12, Heal+8, Hide+6, Innuendo+8, Intimidation+4, Intuit Direction+6, Jump+6, Knowledge (history)+4, Knowledge (nobility)+6, Knowledge (mathematics)+8, Knowledge (philosophy)+6, Listen+6, Move

Silently+4, Open Lock+4, Perform+4, Read Lips+8, Search+8, Sense Motive+12, Speak Language (Avalon, Castille, Crescent, Eisen, Montaigne, Vodacce), Spot+10, Swim+4, Tumble+6, Use Magic Device+6, Use Rope+6; Feats: Appearance - Above Average, Dangerous Beauty, Dashing and Daring, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms), Improved Initiative, Membership - Rose+Cross, Panache, Road Scholar, The Secret, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (main gauche), Weapon Specialisation (rapier), Weapon Specialisation (main gauche)

Background

Louis-Claude is just one of seven or more names attributed to this charismatic character, who claims to be over three hundred years old. Many would discount such a notion, except for the fact that he has been a member of the Knights for nearly sixty years and still looks to be in his late twenties. For those who he will confide in, he tells of a fateful meeting when he was the seventeen year-old Liam St Claire of Luthon with a young lady who, in the throws of passion, gave him a strange liquid to drink. When the liquid had no affect on him, the lady displayed shock and quickly fled. Louis-Claude is convinced that she also still lives and has spent decades looking for her.

Over the years he has taken many roles - alchemist, spy and entertainer to many a royal court. A century ago he even spent twenty years as a devout follower of the church, but that phase quickly passed. Having travelled far and wide, there are claims that he has entered the Crescent Empire, far Cathay and even an unknown land in the far west. His knowledge of Théah and especially the history and nature of its powerful courts is almost unsurpassed. It is this insight that makes him such a great resource for the Order. Most recently he has fallen for a woman named Seara. Even through all his flirtations and womanising, he keeps coming back to her. The two plan to marry soon on a beautiful cliff-side location in Inismore.

Using Louis-Claude

Louis-Claude is the epitome of the court dandy, both in the way he dresses and in the way he acts. However, he is a dandy that can handle himself thank you very much. You do not live to be his age without being able to defend yourself,

as Louis-Claude has shown in at least twenty duels. Always dressing in the finest clothes and in the best company, he is an ideal contact for a political adventure or may act against the players in one of the many courts if their agendas are that disparate. While he appears to be the epitome of refinement, he is also not above certain underhand acts if they are necessary and could be easily involved in a more action-based campaign centred around powerful people, intrigue and plots.

New Feat: The Invisibles

The senior members of the Order of the Rose+Cross have been watching your progress and have selected you for training as a member of the Order's secret hand. You will be trained to go where most Knights cannot go and do whatever needs to be done to protect society and the Order.

Prerequisite: Membership (Rose+Cross), The Secret

Benefit: Upon completion of your training, you gain the ability to perform one of the following:

Seen But Unseen: You have access to the Order's copious resources which can include appropriate clothing, forged documents and other such items. You receive a +4 competence bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Disguise checks when trying to operate under an assumed persona.

When Needs Must: You realize that Order must be upheld at all costs, which brings focus to your actions. You receive a +2 bonus to all damage inflicted on opponents with chaotic or evil alignments.

The Invisible Sword: The Knight is trained to push himself to the maximum to complete his mission. When a combat attack hits, you may take 1d6 wounds to deliver an automatic 1d6 wounds which your attacker cannot avoid.

Special: Once admitted to the rank of the Invisibles, the Knight loses all visible affiliation with the Order due to the extreme secrecy of his work.

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