

# NORTHERN CROWN

## VILLAINS OF VANDALIA

This summer, explore North America's legendary past with *Northern Crown*, a new d20 System campaign setting from Atlas Games. Patriots, pirates, puritans, and witches battle for the fate of an entire continent in a world inspired by colonial America's history and myth. From the ravenous wendigo of the frozen north to the haints that prowl the southern swamps, *Northern Crown* has no shortage of monstrous adversaries to challenge its heroes. But often, the most dangerous foes are human. Here's a closer look at some of *Northern Crown's* most nefarious villains: the Vandalian.

## THE VANDALIAN THREAT

When Philathelias Jeferson and his mentor Chiron Franklyn created the Republic of Sophia on the shores of Northern Crown as a beacon of freedom and refuge for scientific thought, they never considered that the greatest threat to their young nation might come from within their own ranks. And yet, within a few years of the republic's war of independence from the Kingdom of Carolingia, one of Jeferson's most trusted ministers has hatched a scheme to create an inland empire armed with advanced war machines and infernal inventions ...

The renegade state of Vandalia is the domain of a cadre of rebel captains and ministers from the Republic of Sophia, led by Lord Asaph Burr — Jeferson's former secretary of the exchequer. Spurning the freethinking philosophy of Jeferson and Franklyn, Burr has established an autocracy with the aim of claiming an inland empire at the expense of his First Ones neighbors, notably the Shawnee, the Mingo, and the Cherokee. The Vandalian are aided by several morally compromised natural philosophers and led by the mysterious Annalisa X, who are in the pay of Burr to develop new weapons of war and spread terror and destruction through scientific means.

The heart of Vandalia is a new-forged fortified settlement midway up an inland vale to the west of the mountains that separate the continent's interior from the settled coastal plains. The settlement is surrounded by miles of farmland and pasture, which has been hacked out of the hardwood forest that once covered the area. Besides the parade ground and fortifications, the town features a House of State, where Burr and his renegades plot and scheme, and a walled College of War for the use of the natural philosophers.

Currently, Vandalia is planning an assault on Logstown — a settlement that formerly belonged to the Français and has recently been captured by Jeferson's troops. Considered the key to the Ohio Vale, the settlement is a flashpoint between the First Lord of Sophia and his former confidant. In the long term, Burr plans to seize the fertile Tennessee Vale, and so control the crucial land route of the Natchez Trace, giving him a military highway as far as the great river Espiritu Santo.

## NEW FOR AUGUST

The *Northern Crown* campaign setting is designed to be easily accessible for anyone who has played other d20 System games. You can play some of the standard d20 System character classes, or choose one of seven new classes unique to the colonial period. The Vandalian agents included in this article belong to the agent class, a core class suited for cloak-and-dagger missions.

*Northern Crown* is a world where newfangled science, ancient sorcery, and burning faith battle for supremacy. In addition to arcane and divine magic, it includes rules for the spell-like effects of a baroque science known as natural philosophy. The natural philosopher core class can create fantastic inventions based on this science, from flying ships to electrified weapons. The automaton in this article was designed using the invention creation rules included in *Northern Crown: New World Adventures*, the first of two volumes available in August.

### Northern Crown: New World Adventures

168 pages, hardcover  
ATG3710 • 1-58978-077-9 • \$29.95

Visit Northern Crown with the *New World Adventures* campaign book, which details the cultures, classes, combat techniques, equipment, psionic knacks, and spells that will get players started in the setting.

### Northern Crown: Gazetteer

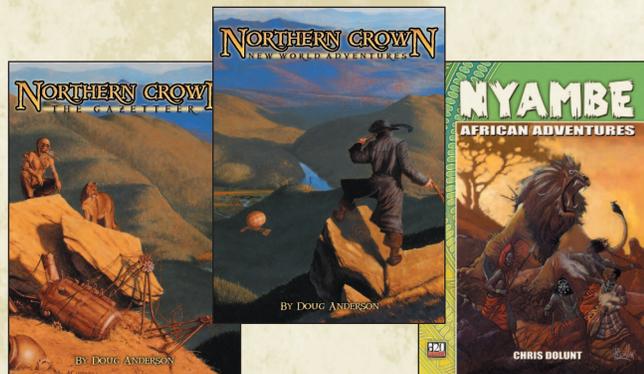
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Explore further with the *Gazetteer*, which delves deeper into the lands of Northern Crown with descriptions of the places, people, monsters, natural hazards, magic items, and inventions that will flesh out a campaign. From intrigue and rumors, to information on secret societies, the *Gazetteer* takes you into the heart of Northern Crown.

### Nyambe: African Adventures

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Finish your journey with the critically acclaimed *Nyambe: African Adventures*, available now through Alliance Games Distribution. Nyambe is a vast land of exotic creatures and wide expanses, whose people were captured and taken to Northern Crown. Having fought to win their freedom, their descendants now work to secure liberty for others.



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## AGENTS OF THE SERVICE

Unique among the spy networks of Northern Crown, the Vandalian Confidential Service requires all agents to demonstrate a knack — an inherited psionic talent found in certain individuals across the continent. Whether possessed of the evil eye, the gift of second sight, or wielding the powers of a firebug, all Vandalian agent NPCs demonstrate a psionic knack that determines their role in the service.

Training for the Confidential Service takes place at the College of War, under the supervision of a master spy. Firebugs are trained as saboteurs to destroy crops, ships, and dwellings, and to wreak havoc in enemy camps and other military installations. Agents with the evil eye are trained as interrogators, using their psionic abilities to read minds, inflict pain, and plant suggestions in the minds of their captives. Agents with second sight often rise to the highest ranks within the service, becoming master spies entrusted with the most dangerous missions to gather enemy intelligence, eliminate enemy agents, or manage a local spy network within a large town or city such as the Carolingian capital, Charles Town, or the city of Sophia itself.

Here we present three sample Vandalian agents for use in any *Northern Crown* campaign, along with a suite of fantastic inventions to equip them for the most sinister missions.

### VANDALIAN SABOTEUR

5th-Level Human Agent, Social Rank 9\*

CR 5; SZ M (humanoid); HD 5d6+6; hp 24; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 insight), touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2/crit 19–20/x2, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/crit 18–20/x2, wheellock belt pistol); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+2/crit 19–20/x2, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/crit 18–20/x2, wheellock belt pistol); Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ Agent Class Abilities, Psionics, Uncanny Dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +9, Disable Device +8, Disguise +5, Hide +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +12, Search +9, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +8, Tumble +10, Use Rope +4

**Feats:** Explosives\*\*, Firebug\*\*\*, Guns, Nimble Fingers, Quick Draw\*\*

**Psionics:** Power points per day: 7; power level: 2nd. 0 Level — *finger of fire, my light*; 1st Level — *control light, firefall, psycholuminescence*; 2nd Level — *burning ray, control flames*

**Agent Class Abilities:** Proficient in dagger, rapier, smallsword, and all pistols; insight AC Bonus +3; +4 bonus to Bluff check when attempting to distract observers in order to hide from them; Sneak Attack +2d6; Uncanny Dodge.

**Languages:** English, Français

**Possessions:** 100 gp, wheellock belt pistol, flint and steel, 2 grenades made with *hades powder*, dagger treated with *occam's blade oil* (+1 damage), alchemist's fire x 2, *potions of cure moderate wounds* x2, *potions of invisibility, automaton immolator*.

### VANDALIAN INTERROGATOR

9th-Level Human Agent, Social Rank\* 14

CR 9; SZ M (humanoid); HD 9d6+9; hp 40; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 insight), touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6/+1; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d4+3/crit 19–20/x2, +3 dagger) or +8 ranged (1d8/crit 18–20/x2, wheellock belt pistol); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+3/crit 19–20/x2, +3 dagger) or +8 ranged (1d8/crit 18–20/x2, wheellock belt pistol); Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ Agent Class Abilities, Improved

Uncanny Dodge, Psionics, *Undetectable Alignment*; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14

**Skills:** Appraise +4, Bluff +16, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +16, Heal +5, Hide +6, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +5, Listen +9, Open Lock +6, Perform (oratory) +14, Search +4, Sense Motive +16

**Feats:** Diligent\*\*, Evil Eye\*\*\*, Force Majeure\*\*\*, Iron Will\*\*, Negotiator\*\*, Persuasive\*\*, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

**Psionics:** Power points per day: 15; power level: 3rd. 0 Level — *daze, distract, elfsight*; 1st Level — *charm person, demoralize, disable, steadfast gaze*; 2nd Level — *brain lock, detect thoughts, inflict pain, suggestion*; 3rd Level — *lesser domination*.

**Agent Class Abilities:** Proficient in dagger, rapier, smallsword, and all pistols; insight AC Bonus +4; +4 bonus to Bluff check when attempting to distract observers in order to hide from them; Sneak Attack +3d6; Improved Uncanny Dodge; *undetectable alignment* at will; can use the Hide skill indoors and in an urban environment, even if the terrain doesn't grant cover or concealment.

**Languages:** English, Français, Shawnee

**Possessions:** 300 gp, wheellock belt pistol, +3 dagger, *potions of cure moderate wounds* x2, *potions of tongues*

### VANDALIAN MASTER SPY

14th-Level Human Agent, Social Rank\* 19

CR 14; SZ M (humanoid); HD 14d6+14; hp 63; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +5 insight), touch 18, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +11/+6/+1; Grp +11; Atk +15 melee (1d4+4/crit 17–20/x2, +4 dagger) or +14 ranged (1d8/crit 18–20/x2, wheellock belt pistol); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d4+3/crit 17–20/x2, +4 dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/crit 18–20/x2, wheellock belt pistol); Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Sneak Attack +5d6; SQ Agent Class Abilities, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Psionics, *Undetectable Alignment*; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 17

**Skills:** Bluff +20, Climb +12, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +7, Disguise +16, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +20, Hide +20, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +22, Open Lock +13, Search +16, Sense Motive +21, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +9, Swim +1, Tumble +4, Use Rope +4

**Feats:** Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise\*\*, Explosives\*\*, Improved Critical (dagger)\*\*, Improved Disarm\*\*, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Negotiator\*\*, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw\*\*, Second Sight\*\*\*, Stealthy\*\*, Stunning Fist

**Psionics:** Power points per day: 15; power level: 3rd. 0 Level — *Inkling, Know Direction*; 1st Level — *Combat Precognition, Know Location, Lesser Mindlink, Object Reading, Sense Link*; 2nd Level — *Augury, Clairaudience/Clairvoyance, Combat Presence, Detect Thoughts, See Invisibility, Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions*; 3rd Level — *Danger Sense, Mindlink, Remote Viewing*

**Agent Class Abilities:** Proficient in dagger, rapier, smallsword, and all pistols; insight AC Bonus +5; +4 bonus to Bluff check when attempting to distract observers in order to hide from them; Sneak Attack +5d6; Improved Uncanny Dodge; *undetectable alignment* at will; can use the Hide skill indoors and in an urban environment, even if the terrain doesn't grant cover or concealment

**Languages:** English, Français, Shawnee

**Possessions:** 300 gp, wheellock belt pistol, 6 flasks of quiet powder, *mnemosynetic shadow box*, +4 dagger, *potions of cure moderate wounds* x2, *potions of tongues*

\* Social Rank is a relative measure of your status within society.

\*\* Agent class bonus feat.

\*\*\* See *Northern Crown: New World Adventures for rules*.



## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

To supplement their psionic prowess, Vandalian agents are often equipped with unique inventions developed by Annalisa X and her assistants at the College of War. The other nations of Northern Crown are eager to get their hands on these devices at any cost. Below are some samples of Vandalian inventions likely to be used by their agents.

One note of explanation: the word shown in parentheses after the invention's name gives the science associated with it. Natural philosophers have academic degrees in one or more sciences that determine the kinds of inventions they can create and the extraordinary abilities that these can manifest.

### AUTOMATON IMMOLATOR (ANY SCIENCE)

#### Diminutive Construct

CR 1/10; HD 1/4d10 (1 hp); Init +3; Spd 10 ft. (2 squares); AC 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex), touch 17, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -7; Atk Slam -3 melee (1d3-3); Full Atk Slam -3 melee (1d3-3); Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Incendiary Attack, Self-destruct; SQ Construct Traits, Resistance to Fire 10; AL None; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will -5; Str 4, Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 1, Cha 1

Environment: Any; Organization: —; Treasure: None; Advancement: —; Level Adjustment: —

Skills: Hide +4, Move Silently +4

Feats: None

An *automaton immolator* appears to be a small, decorative object — usually a bronze sculpture of a cherub, horse, or other creature, or even a punch bowl or other large item of silverware. Given as a gift, or placed surreptitiously in a dwelling or other structure, it waits for an opportunity to set one or more fires before crawling back to its owner. *Automaton immolators* understand spoken commands, but cannot speak. They obey commands mindlessly, even to the point of destroying themselves.

#### COMBAT

*Automaton immolators* are ineffectual fighters, and are easily destroyed once discovered. Their power lies in their ability to set fires with their Incendiary Attack. If grappled or otherwise caught, they activate their Self-destruct ability, destroying themselves and immolating their attacker.

**Incendiary Attack (Ex):** An *automaton immolator* contains a small reservoir of *alchemist's fire*. As a full-round action, it can ignite flammable materials in the square it occupies. Up to five such attacks can be made before the automaton must be refilled with *alchemist's fire*.

**Self-Destruct (Ex):** An *automaton immolator* capable of making at least one incendiary attack (see above) can destroy itself in a fiery blast, equivalent to the effects of a flask of *alchemist's fire*. A target in the same square receives 1d6 points of fire damage. Every creature within 5 feet takes 1 point of fire damage. On the round following a direct hit, the target takes an additional 1d6 points of damage. If desired, the target can use a full-round action to attempt to extinguish the flames before taking this additional damage. Extinguishing the flames requires a DC 15 Reflex save. Rolling on the ground provides the target a +2 bonus on the save. Leaping into a lake or magically extinguishing the flames automatically smothers the fire.

*Inventor Level:* 16<sup>th</sup>; *Craft Invention; Price:* 2,500 gp; *Weight:* 10 lbs.

### HADES POWDER (MATTER)

#### Substance

*Hades powder* is an improved form of gunpowder. When used in any gun in place of ordinary gunpowder, *hades powder* adds +10 to the weapon's range increment and +2 to damage. Grenades filled with *hades powder* inflict 4d6 on a direct hit, and 2d6 damage to targets within 5 feet. A 5-pound keg of *hades powder* inflicts 6d6 on a direct hit, 4d6 damage to targets within 5 feet, and 2d6 to targets within 10 feet.

*Inventor Level:* 6<sup>th</sup>; *Craft Invention; Price:* 60 gp per 5-lb. keg, or 15 cp per ounce (enough powder for one shot)

### MNEMOSYNETIC SHADOW BOX (MENTALISM)

#### Light Device

Hit Points 3, Hardness 0, Break DC 11

An outgrowth of the *eidetic shadow box*, which captures photographic images on tin plates, a *mnemosynetic shadow box* records a monochromatic image of a creature's thoughts. Creating an image is a standard action. The person operating the box must make a successful ranged touch attack on the target, who must be within 30 feet. If successful, the box will record an image of the target's current surface thoughts: a memory of a past event, a person, or even a desire or anticipated course of action.

A prototype device includes the shadow box itself, and a supply of 20 five-inch by seven-inch plates. Additional plates can be produced at 50 gp per plate.

*Inventor Level:* 10<sup>th</sup>; *Craft Invention; Price:* 8,000 gp; *Weight:* 3 lbs.

### MORPHITIC BULLET (LIFE AND DEATH)

#### Substance

A morphitic bullet is a hollow ceramic sphere filled with *morphitic spirit* — a volatile liquid described in the *Northern Crown: Gazetteer*. Any gun can be loaded with a *morphitic bullet*. A successful attack deals 1 point of damage, breaks open the bullet, and releases the *morphitic spirit* as a fine mist in a 5-foot by 5-foot cloud. Targets of Large size or smaller must make Fortitude save at DC 20, or else fall into a deep sleep for 1d3 hours.

*Inventor Level:* 6<sup>th</sup>; *Craft Invention; Price:* 100 gp

### QUIET POWDER (MATTER)

#### Substance

*Quiet powder* is a form of gunpowder that ignites nearly noiselessly. This expensive substance is used by Vandalian agents on clandestine missions where the use of guns would ordinarily be inadvisable. The Listen DC to hear a gun fired with quiet powder is 10, as opposed to -10 for ordinary powder.

*Inventor Level:* 7<sup>th</sup>; *Craft Invention; Price:* 10 gp per ounce (enough powder for one shot)

## INTRODUCING AGENTS

Vandalians are among *Northern Crown's* most versatile villains. GMs can use Vandalian agents any time their PCs have aligned themselves with the Republic of Sophia, the Woodland Confederacy, or the Kingdom of Carolingia — the Vandalians' closest neighbors. Occasionally, Vandalian agents will betray their masters and go work for someone else, usually either a powerful Carolingian noble, a mercantile interest like the Northern Crown Company, or a scheming master criminal or power-mad natural philosopher. Here are just a few adventure ideas:

- The PCs are hired by the Sophian Confidential Service to break into the College of War and steal the secrets of a Vandalian invention.
- The PCs are being stalked by a Vandalian master spy, and have no idea who's hired the spy or why they've been targeted.
- A Vandalian agent is ready to defect to the Kingdom of Carolingia. The PCs, working for King Charles, have to get her safely back to Charles Town with the Vandalians on their trail. Half way home, the agent disappears. Who else wanted the agent, and what are their plans for her?



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