

Ultima VII Forsan



DEAD in VENICE

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ULTIMA FORSAN

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Ultima Forsan Dead in Venice



n introductory Ultima Forsan adventure for three to five Novice heroes, set in Old Venice. Heroes, aboard a Ferrara airship, crash into the City of Sorrow. They have to find a way to escape from Venice, but they'll need to find an agreement with the insidious Lazzarettos.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins in the sky over Old Venice, while the characters are flying to (or from) the Teutonic Federate Principalities. They are traveling on an astonishing aircraft built in Ferrara and their mission could be diplomatic, or linked to another adventure or campaign. I.e. the aircraft might be directed to Lucca for the upcoming Universal Council (see the official campaign *Once upon a time in Lucca*) or the reason of the travel is somehow connected with *The secret of Marco Polo*, the four-parts adventure you can find in *Ultima Forsan: Setting Book*. The sly Hilaire von Aschenbach and her Lazzarettos are an encounter in common for both adventures and you can manage their mood and reaction according to previous encounters.

Suddenly a cannon hits the flying ship.

BACKGROUND FOR THE GAME MASTER

This adventure involves a crash landing in the terrible Old Venice, an encounter with the Lazzarettos and the exploration of the ancient and abandoned Arsenals of the city, before the Heroes face a horrible Abomination.

As the Game Master, you can of course expand at will the city exploration and the interactions with the smugglers of Venice, or add other details about the flight of the Ferrara ship, before and after the incidents of Venice.

SCENE 1 THUS PASSES THE GLORY OF THE WORLD

While the Heroes are flying over Old Venice, a cannon ball hits their airship and it goes Out of Control. The pilot (and/or the Heroes) can only try an emergency landing, with a successful Weird Science Roll (a co-operative roll is allowed, if it makes sense).

If the roll fails, the airship crashes and everyone on board suffers 2d6 damage. With a successful Agility Roll, Heroes can jump away from the ship just before the impact, halving the damage.

On a successful roll, the Airship can be driven safely to the ground among the city ruins, in a stagnant water canal, on the square of a huge church or on its top. In any case, the group lands near a large, unidentified cathedral.

The glass windows are broken and a damp wind comes from the outside, along with a faint luminescence. Inside the vast church there are secondary chapels, major and

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minor apses and altars, as well as three naves separated by huge columns that support high vaults.

Rot and decay dominate. The floor is flooded with putrid waters up to Heroes' knees, and signs of flooding can be glimpsed along the walls and columns, almost ten feet high.

The air is fetid and the architectural wonders of a glorious past are covered with streaks of brown mush, huge and swollen patches of mold, and dark seaweed that sometimes seem to pulsate in the gloom.

The size of the church is colossal - maybe three hundred feet long and one hundred fifty wide - but now this wide building just inspires a sense of death and decay, very much like the whole city.

Looking around and reading the inscriptions near altars and statues, the Heroes can soon understand they are in the Church of Saint John and St. Paul.

While the Heroes are intent on searching and wandering in this building or in the puddles outside, with a successful Notice Roll they may notice movements in the water. Shortly after, aware of the danger or not, they are attacked by Shrieking eels. Heroes who have failed their Notice roll are Surprised and receive no action card at the first round.

Shrieking Eel (2 x each Hero): they use their Shriek special ability at the first round, before attacking the Heroes, giving them the possibility to leave the puddles or find a better place for combat (i.e. an altar or a sarcophagus emerging from the water).

If the Heroes search the church, they can find something useful or of value:

Roll 1d100 for each Hero succeeding in a Notice roll

01-05	Flint, steel and large candles, still useful
06	Cautery vial
07	Silver cup (1d6x50 florins)
08	Golden cup (1d6x100 florins)
09	Candles, 1d100
10	Iron chain (10cm)
11	Silver crucifix (1d6x10 florins)
12	Golden crucifix (1d6x50 florins)
13	Holy painting (1d6x50 florins)
14	Holy effigy (1d6x50 florins)
15	Lantern
16	Valuable books (1d6x50 florins)
17	Oil for lantern, 1d10 L
18	Relic (Roll on the Relic Table on <i>Ultima Forsan: Setting Book</i> p. 120)
19	Quality wine (1d6 bottles)
20	Mercy Killing Elixir, 1 dose
21-40	Florins, 1d100
41-100	Nothing interesting

SCENE 2 MACABRE VENICE

As soon as the Heroes decide to leave the church and / or explore the area in which they are plunged, they find themselves in the midst of a corrupt, decayed and half-flooded Venice. Around the church, most of the buildings are in ruins and covered with patches of mold and rot. Streets and open spaces are flooded up to knee and slow waves of dark water, with strange and horrible mucilage floating on them, come from the Black Lagoon.

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Should a Hero have the unfortunate idea of wallowing too much in the fetid waters (swimming for more than a minute in it, for example), he would suffer the same effects of Miasma (see on on *Ultima Forsan: Setting Book* p. 104).

Soon, a gurgling moan announces the arrival of new enemies. They are the Drowned, emerging from the waters all around and coming in crowds. Heroes should not try to deal with them: their number continues to grow and environmental conditions will be increasingly disadvantageous for the characters. Better to run away, in a Chase between ruins, flooded streets, unstable bridges and collapsed passages. The Drowned are in increasing numbers, but for the Chase you can consider their number to be the same as the Heroes. Every time the Drowned are dealt a spade card, their number increases by 1d4.

SCENE 3 BENEATH THE SILVER MOON

Suddenly, Heroes can see from a distance, in the direction of the open body of water, a small boat floating slowly through the Black Lagoon. Its lights are reflected on the waves under the bow. It's almost thirty feet long and only about five feet wide, slender and very low on the water surface. An arched iron bow reflects the glow of candlelight, and there is a single oarsman at the stern, fully cloaked and wearing a large felt hat. Together with him, there is also a big cat watching the scene.

Heroes can try to follow the distant gondola, jump into the water to reach it (but better not to!), find some kind of vessel still usable around (with a Perception Roll -2, plus a Boating Roll) or call the attention of the sailor.

In any case, the gondola is the only way to go out of trouble. The gondolier is called Cecchin and is quite willing to save the unfortunate Heroes, but he makes them a lot of questions, he is suspicious and he will probably want to be "rewarded."

Cecchin is one of the Lazzarettos, the Old Venice Tainted. These few hundred people, scattered in some safe shelters of the outer islands and on some barges, are outcasts that make a living by plundering the ruins of the ancient demi-flooded city and reselling what they can to merchants and churches of the rest of the world.

SCENE 4 ABOARD THE BUCINTORO

With the Heroes aboard his gondola, Cecchin rows to the Bucintoro, leaving the Drowned far behind. The *Bucintoro* is a great old vessel anchored off the coast in the Black Lagoon, not far from the city but distant enough to be safe from the Drowned. There lives Hilaire von Aschenbach, head of Lazzarettos, an intelligent and skillful Tainted smuggler which is also the main trafficker for relics, treasures and works of art found in Old Venice. The *Bucintoro* was the ship used in the past by the doges themselves, rulers of Venice. It still seems a floating palace and now it is Hilaire's accommodation, the place where she lives and hides together with a small court of guards, henchmen and sailors. It's made of gilded wood and full of paintings, statues, carvings and decorations of all kinds. It's also equipped with every comfort and luxury, and inside are crammed hundreds, perhaps thousands of works of art.

Hilaire admits she shot down the airship, in order to retrieve and study it. She is, however, willing to make amends, and

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she promises to take the Heroes by sea to Trieste, from where they may continue their journey... but only if they make her a favor.

The ancient Arsenal of Venice would be very useful to Hilaire and her Lazzarettos, because inside its buildings there are still incredible resources, such as spare mechanical parts, chemicals that may still be used and hundreds of artillery pieces and smelter abandoned after the Fall of Venice.

The Arsenal, or what is left of it, however, is haunted by some horrible monsters the Lazzarettos have never been able to banish: a colony of Musselers.

Hilaire will not accept any other form of payment if not a "cleaning" of the Arsenal, and it will not be easy to defeat her in any other way. She leads Heroes to the drydocks and will wait for them off the coast.

SCENE 5 THE ARSENAL

Most of these old wooden shipyards collapsed long ago and now are just wormy and swollen ruins. But the foundry area was built in bricks and has resisted the passing of time.

These are three small buildings, connected with each other, containing large amounts of metal parts, instruments, tools, cauldrons and artillery pieces more or less finished, scattered everywhere.

Searching around (Notice Roll -2) the group can also find barrels of gunpowder, completely caulked and still protected from moisture. The method of preservation of the skilled shipwrights of Old Venice preserved them so well that the black powder still works (a successful Common Knowledge or Shooting roll confirms this).

The area, however, is infested by Musselers. The Heroes should have the opportunity to fight a couple of them and then set up a winning strategy against these monsters, perhaps using any black powder-based gimmick they can conceive.

As soon as they started to blow things up in the Arsenal and to shoot with its immense mortars loaded with grapeshot, it should be easy to exterminate all Musselers.

And that exactly when the "landlord" appears: Dorsoduro, a Wormridden Musseler (*"Oh, did I forget to mention Dorsoduro?" says Hilaire Aschenbach when the Heroes return, pretending to be surprised*). Dorsoduro falls through the ceiling and, unfortunately for the Heroes, lot of debris falls precisely on the area where there were the weapons they were using, covering or breaking them all, so they have to deal with it the old fashioned way!

Once they get rid of this monster, the Heroes can finally get back to the Bucintoro and Hilaire gives them what she had promised.

Depending on the general terms of their interaction and behavior, she may also offer additional rewards or gifts, and remain friends with the Heroes for future contacts, should they ever visit Old Venice again.

BESTIARY

Shrieking eels, Drowned, Musselers and Pirates are described in the Bestiary of *Ultima Forsan: Setting Book*. Hilaire von Aschenbach is a Veteran Pirate Wild Card and all her henchmen are Pirates and Veteran Pirates. They all are Tainted.

Dorsoduro is an unique Abomination, a Wormridden Musseler.

WORMRIDDEN MUSSELER

“Dorsoduro” (it means “hardback” but it’s also the name of one of the six districts of Old Venice) is a Musseler with a grotesquely swollen belly, into which huge worms corrupted by the Plague proliferate. It arrives last for the combat because of its slow speed. It’s a horrid Drowned, covered with parasites, leeches and molluscs, which are able to take hold on his skin despite the Atrament and now live there as the corrupt and abominable version of the original animals.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (M), Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Swimming d4

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d6.

* **Claws:** Str+d4.

* **Covered with Shellfish:** The thick layer of hard and sharp shells covering a Musseler’s body gives him one Armor point all over the body.

* **Dead:** This creature has all the Special Abilities of the Dead.

* **Fear:** Putrid flesh, fetid mollusks and corrupt worms... Dorsoduro causes Fear.

* **Size +2:** Dorsoduro had been a large man, and is now a swollen horror.

* **Stinking:** The combined stink of the Husk and of the corrupted shellfish covering it requires each character within a range of 2” from a Musseler to make a Vigor roll. If the roll is successful, the character endures the stink without any consequences. If it fails, the character makes all Traits rolls at -1 until he is out of reach of the effect; in case of critical failure, the character suffers -1 on all Traits rolls and spends the next round retching.

* **Swarm of Worms:** Every time Dorsoduro suffers a wound to the body, or if beheaded, a swarm of fell worms the size of a Small Burst Template erupts from its body, with the following characteristics:

SWARM OF FELL WORMS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Special abilities:

* **Fell Beast:** Fell Worms share all the Special Abilities of Fell Beasts.

* **Bite:** A swarm of Fell Worms inflicts hundreds of fierce bites, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the Template, to the least armored location.

* **Swarm:** Parry +2; cutting or piercing weapons inflict no real damage. Impact and area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength at each round.

