

The Banner Swap in the Wind

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A Black Banners Adventure for Fate's Edge (no gunpowder)

Adventure Overview

Tier: II–III

Length: 2–3 sessions

Theme: Banner politics, village defense, condotta manipulation

Hook: A Vilikari village caught between two rival banner companies offers the party a chance to play the companies against each other for the village's survival.

Setup: The Village of Saltmere

Saltmere sits in a strategic valley where two trade routes converge. The **Iron Lanterns** (siege specialists who promise “no fire in hospitals”) and the **Thornwrights** (sappers/road-cutters who price bridges by the breath) hold *conflicting charters* to secure the valley. Village elders approach the PCs to manipulate both banners into terms that spare Saltmere.

Saltmere at a Glance

- **Assets:** Winter granaries, shrine-hospital (old stone), river ford, timberyards, waymarket green.
- **Strings:** Ledger of Small Kindnesses (debts owed), ford-right witness-stone, bell-token set (for parley).
- **Clocks:** *Granary Seizure* [4], *Shrine Fire Rumors* [4], *Village Panic* [6].

The Companies & What They Want (concrete aims)

Iron Lanterns — Siege Specialists

Captain Thorne Ironwright (methodical, honor-bound) seeks:

- **Garrison Charter:** permanent *winter garrison* with stipend.
- **Sanctuary Credit:** public recognition of Lantern hospital rites.
- **Bridge Priority:** stamp rights if siege breaks a crossing.

Quartermaster Bray wants predictable *Pay-day* and *rations*.

Thornwrights — Sappers & Road-Cutters *bridge is paid.*

Captain “Cut” Marrick (reckless innovator) seeks:

- **Demolition Writs:** license to *fire-set* & *wedge* old footings.
- **Reconstruction Fees:** toll schedule until *the*

- **Exclusive Road Works:** first refusal on all valley roads.

Engineer Tessa Chain wants materials and *no audits.*

Props & Handouts (printables)

- **Charter Excerpt Cards (index-sized):** one for each company with *said* and *meant* lines.
- **Bell Dawn Rite Card:** the three-bell sanctuary text.
- **Articles of the Camp Sheet:** quick examples (below).

Articles of the Camp (examples & violations)

| Article (exemplar text) | Typical Violation / Evidence |
|--|--|
| No open flame nor fire-setting within twenty paces of a sanctuary. Take no road you will not defend. | Char streaks, heat-stress in stone, pitch jars and braziers in shrine yard. Abandoned picket, unpaid tolls during raid, missing watch roster. |
| Record both said and meant; do not trade on ambiguity. No seizure of granaries without Bowl (fairness) first. | Conflicting orders, unsigned addenda, missing witnesses. Grain carts diverted without ledger entry; stamped but unsigned receipts. |

Article Cite (mechanical): Citing a relevant Article under witness grants **Position +1** for that parley; presenting *material evidence* adds **DV −1**.

Session Structure & Pacing

Act I — Council (45–60 min). Frame crisis, place clocks, hand out charter cards.

Interlude Orders (10–15 min). Each PC may take 1 *Between-Scene Order*: *Scout*, *Audit*, *Canvas*, or *Secure Proof*. Resolve with a single roll; deliver leads as cards.

Act II — Manipulations (60–90 min). Run Parley, Debts, False Orders, and/or *Forgery Mini-Score* (below).

Act III — Crisis & Charter Endgame (45–75 min). Roll Allegiances-in-Flux once mid-talks; resolve a *Synthesis*, *Gambit*, or *Third Way*.

Investigation Beats (choose order)

1. **Charter Analysis** (*Wits+Lore* or *Diplomacy (Broker)* DV 3): Overlaps with *different end terms* (*first frost* vs. *bridge is paid*). Note *witness gaps*.

2. **Ledger of Small Kindnesses** (*Wits+Investigation DV 4*): Concrete debts: Lanterns owe *sanctuary upkeep*; Thornwrights owe *bridge toll arrears*.
3. **Scout Reports** (*Wits+Survey DV 3*): Sightings: mantlets staged; *lever-frames*, *pitch-kettles*, and *rope-saws* positioned at old footings.

Between-Scene Order Option: PCs can push any one beat off-screen for speed.

Forged Ledger, Real Stakes (mini-score)

Make *The False Ledger* an active heist in four steps; three successes needed before 2 SB are generated.

1. **Materials** (*Craft+Wits or Subterfuge DV 3*): Acquire proper paper, stamps, inks. *SB: Shortfall—add Watermark Test later.*
2. **Language** (*Lore+Wits DV 4*): Match charter idiom; fill *said/meant*. *SB: Anachronism—adds DV +1 to Delivery.*
3. **Witness Seal** (*Diplomacy+Presence DV 3*): Coax a minor clerk/bell-witness to “remember” witnessing. *SB: Loose Tongue—Rumor [2].*
4. **Delivery** (*Subterfuge+Stealth DV 4* or *Performance+Presence DV 4*): Plant or present without cross-exam. *On hit:* target unit *Withdraws 1 ring* or suffers *Cohesion +1*. *On miss: False Orders [4]* flips on PCs.

Bell Dawn Parley (set-piece)

Presence+Sway DV 4 under witness; *Wits+Diplomacy may Assist*. Ring three bells; both captains attend. If *Ledger Debt* is presented, choose 1:

- Impose *No-Seizure of Granaries [4]* jointly.
- Establish *Single Banner Hour* (only one company shows colors in town per day).

Condotta Flip (Allegiances in Flux)

Roll 1d6 at scene starts or on a PC trigger; interpret via their play:

- A. **Charter Challenge:** Accuse Thornwrights of storing *pitch-kettles* and *resin jars* in shrine bounds; Lantern inquiry (Position +1 to press).
- B. **Debt Reminder:** Thornwrights fluster; Captain orders an audit (their Payday +1 if unfunded).
- C. **False Orders:** Conflicting movements begin (*False Orders [4]* ticks).
- D. **Broker’s Market:** Exclusive lane offers narrow claims (gain *Bridge Peace [4]* on hit).
- E. **Village Leverage:** Threaten provisioning the rival (on partial: *Village Panic +1*).
- F. **Article Violation:** Formal accusation under witness; force parley or lose face.

Charter Synthesis Workshop (make it tactile)

Draft a new charter by choosing **2 clauses** (and 1 *cost*) from each list; then roll *Broker+Petition DV 5* with Position based on choices made.

Lantern Clauses (pick 2)

- Winter Garrison capped at *20 spears* and *no levy*.
- Sanctuary care funded by *toll tithe* (1 in 20 breaths).
- Bridge priority stamps only *during declared emergencies*.

Thornwright Clauses (pick 2)

- Toll schedule sunsets after *two harvests* or *Bridge Paid [6]*.
- **Fire-setting** limited to *downriver footings*; *no flame* within sanctuary radius.
- First refusal on *road repairs* for one year.

Costs (pick 1)

- Village owes *Indemnity [4]* if raids spike.
- PCs pledge *Witness Duty* (be present for violations; Reputation at stake).
- Market day tithe funds a neutral *Broker's Bell*.

On hit: both patrons accept; gain *Broker's Favor* x2. *On partial:* one accepts; the other demands *Indemnity [4]*. *On miss:* *Political Pressure [4]* enters play.

Endgame Options

The Village Gambit

Lore+Diplomacy DV 4 under witness. Invoke *Ledger Law*: old debts narrow present claims. If upheld, both banners pull to outer rings; village keeps core.

The Third Way

Command+Presence DV 4. Joint defense against a common threat; start *Shared Defense [6]*. On fill, both banners leave with honor; village gains *Watch Rights*.

Mechanical Hooks & SB Menu

Key Dice Rolls

- **Charter Reading:** Wits+Lore (DV 3–4); +1 die with *witness gaps*.
- **Banner Law Parley:** Presence+Sway (DV 4); *Article Cite* grants Position +1.
- **Village Negotiation:** Diplomacy or Broker (DV 3–4).
- **False Evidence:** Subterfuge+Lore (DV 4–5) after the mini-score setup.
- **Supply Cut/Restore:** Tactics+Streetwise or Engineering (DV 3–4).

Story Beats (Keeper Spend)

- **False Orders** (colors cross at the ford)
- **Ally Turns** (shamed officer flips)
- **Cut Supply Lines** (granary cordon tightens)
- **Camp-Fever** (restless troops)
- **Gear Failure** (*mantlet collapse; wedge-snap rockfall*)
- **Authority Intervention** (lord's reeve arrives)
- **Winter Omens** (first frost early)

Outcomes & Reputation

Success

- **Clean Victory:** Both withdraw honor-intact; PCs gain *Broker's Favor* with both.
- **Pragmatic:** One stays as protector on narrowed charter; PCs gain a *Village String* (ford free).
- **Innovative:** Synthesis adopted; PCs tagged as *banner mediators*.

Failure

- **Village Lost:** Saltmere destroyed; PCs earn a *Black Mark*.
- **Banner War:** Companies clash; *Skirmish Spiral* [6] begins.
- **Patron Wrath:** *Political Pressure* [4] follows the party.

GM Aids

When you want to... (Order guidance)

- **Cool things down:** Call *Bell Dawn Parley* (push Position to Controlled).
- **Re-route a company:** Run *False Orders* (threaten Cohesion).
- **Bind with paper:** Use *Charter Synthesis Workshop*.
- **Make it tactile:** Trigger the *Forgery Mini-Score*.

Quick Reference: Scene DVs

| Scene | Primary Test | DV / Notes |
|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Charter Reading | Wits+Lore | 3-4; +1 die if <i>witness gaps</i> noted |
| Bell Dawn Parley | Presence+Sway | 4; Position +1 if Article Cite + evidence |
| Forgery — Materials | Craft/Subterfuge | 3; sets later Watermark Test |
| Forgery — Language | Lore+Wits | 4; avoid anachronism |
| Forgery — Witness Seal | Diplomacy+Presence | 3; risk <i>Rumor</i> [2] |
| Forgery — Delivery | Subterfuge/Performance | 4-5; on hit, Withdraw 1 Ring or Cohesion +1 |
| De-escalate Spiral | Command+Tactics | 4; clear 1 from <i>Skirmish Spiral</i> |