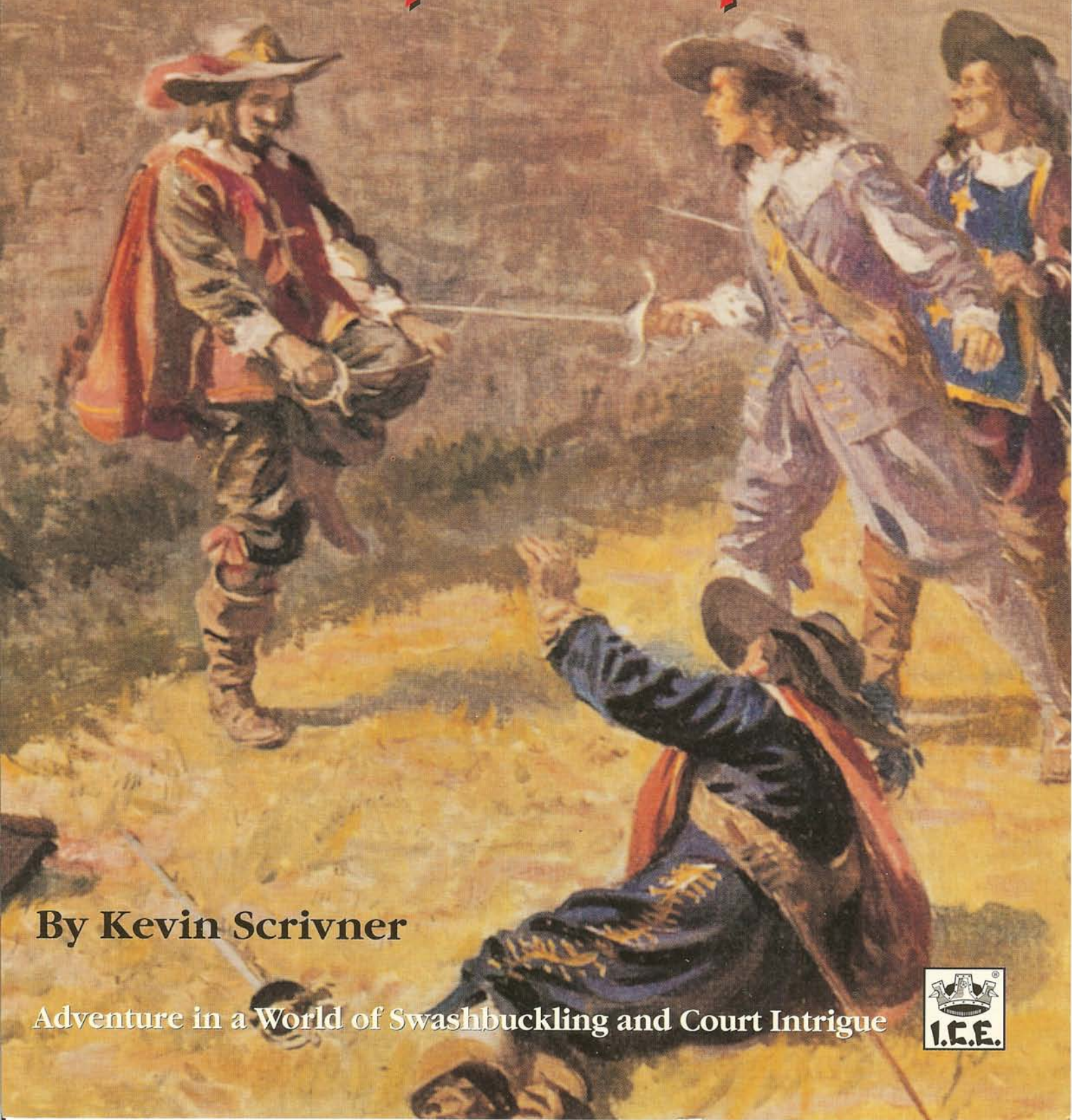


A Genre Book for

RolemasterTM

#1304

*At Rapier's Point*TM



By Kevin Scrivner

Adventure in a World of Swashbuckling and Court Intrigue



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At Rapier's Point

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First U.S. Edition 1993

Stock #1304

ISBN 1-55806-189-4



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Armand “le Souris” caught Count Mancini’s blade with his own, barely. The Count swore.

“You have the manners of a pig,” Armand taunted with a levity he didn’t feel. The Italian was a master fencer, and his rangy build gave him a decided advantage. Armand could hear Mancini’s men pounding on the door.

“I will not be taught manners by lackeys and dwarves,” the Count hissed, aiming a vicious slash at The Mouse’s head. Armand suddenly pitched forward, rolled between the astonished Count’s widespread legs, and spun around to plunge his sabre into the nobleman’s back. Not a tactic worthy of a Musketeer, Armand mused as Mancini fell, gasping, but then he was not a Musketeer, yet. He snatched the papers from the Count’s doublet. The door crashed open. Shouts of anger and dismay followed Armand as he raced for the balcony, dropped into his horse, and galloped away. If only he could reach the French-Savoyard border before Mancini’s henchmen spread the alarm.

Welcome to the world of *At Rapier’s Point*! This book enables **Rolemaster** players to follow in the footsteps of D’Artagnan, Cyrano de Bergerac and the swashbuckling heroes of the silver screen. It provides everything you need to create period characters, simulate 17th Century life and combat, and design adventures in the tradition of Alexander Dumas and Edmund Rostand. Glittering rapiers, sinister schemes, desperate duels, swinging chandeliers, secret passages—*At Rapier’s Point* has it all!

Role players who venture into Moliere’s Paris or Shakespeare’s London won’t have to look for adventure; they’ll have it thrust upon them. Seventeenth Century Europe is an exciting, albeit dangerous, place to live. It is a time of ardent nationalism, religious zealotry and endless intrigues. Adventurers will have to be quick with both their wits and their blades to defend their king, their honor and their lives.

WHAT IS AT RAPIER’S POINT?

At Rapier’s Point is the latest in a series of campaign books designed for use with **Rolemaster**, although it can be used with **Space Master** and **MERP** as well. All you really need to play are *Character Law*, *Campaign Law*, and *Arms Law*. The main difference between this and many other **Rolemaster** campaign books is that magic plays a much more limited role in this genre, and may be wholly absent. *At Rapier’s Point* is meant to be a fairly realistic—not fantastic—game, but guidelines are included on how to blend this material into an existing **Rolemaster** campaign.

Inside is detailed information on how to role play in France and England between 1603 and 1661. French campaigns will include the scandalous reign of Henry IV, his assassination, the puppet rule of Louis XIII under Cardinal Richelieu, and the minority of Louis XIV under Cardinal Mazarin. English campaigns will include the troubled reigns of James I and Charles I, the English Civil War, and the Puritan Commonwealth. Both campaigns pit the players against scheming nobles and powerful religious factions who would love to cut the monarch down to size.

Contained in this book are guidelines on how to create and roleplay stylish swordsmen, with hints on how characters can fight and survive in their Machiavellian environment. Also inside are four full-length scenarios, loads of adventure ideas, notes on the culture and history of 17th Century Europe and stats for over 25

historical and fictional swashbucklers. With this book and the **Rolemaster** system, you can test your mettle against the armies of Spain and the wiles of Cardinal Richelieu.

WHEN IS A MUSKETEER NOT A MUSKETEER?

A distinction should be made between the French Mousquetaires and the musketeers common to all European armies of the 1600s.

A Mousquetaire is a member of the elite French royal household troops, famous for their daring and expensive taste in clothes. The Musketeers are sort of a cross between the U.S. Secret Service and the Green Berets and are under the king’s direct command in time of war. These are the flamboyant swordsmen player-characters will want to emulate. Their English counterparts are the Yeomen of the Guard, stationed at the Tower of London. Until 1640, the Yeoman were an English king’s only standing defense.

A musketeer is a 17th Century infantryman armed with (surprise!) a musket. Musketeers were supposed to mow down charging cavalry but unfortunately they had to hide behind rows of pikemen to reload. Musketeers aren’t nearly as glamorous as Mousquetaires but player-characters shouldn’t despise them too much. They’ll probably start out in the regular forces until their exploits and contacts enable them to join the ranks of the elite.

A NOTE TO PLAYERS

Unfamiliarity with the period shouldn’t discourage players from enjoying campaigning in the world of *At Rapier’s Point*. The 17th Century contains the best of adventure possibilities from other genres. If you enjoy espionage, flashy man-to-man combat, desperate chases through foreign cities, solving or committing crimes, or rescuing damsels in distress they’re all here.

Players should remember that their characters are involved in a ruthless power struggle between their king and his many opponents. They should be careful whom they trust, speak politely to people who have the ability to promote or destroy them, and not boast too loudly about their successes lest they arouse the jealousy of someone more powerful than they are. The characters’ enemies won’t always be obvious, won’t play fair, and may change from foe to friend and back again depending on which way the political wind is blowing.

Also, keep in mind that the American and French revolutions are a long way off. European society places a premium on conformity; those who are too independent or individualistic are considered a public menace and are treated accordingly. You only have the civil rights you can afford to pay bribes for. Kings can and do execute or imprison subjects on a whim, and it is not uncommon for out-of-favor courtiers to be kidnapped and thrown into the Bastille under a false name with no trial or chance of appeal. Monarches can be pretty fickle, too, and tend to forget or ignore the times the adventurers have risked their necks to further royal interests.

A NOTE TO FEMALE PLAYERS

For convenience, all non-genderspecific references in *At Rapier’s Point* use male pronouns. This in no way implies that this supplement is for men only. While the 17th Century was a male-dominated age, women could and did take an active role in politics, literature, and business. Many of them were every bit as flamboyant as their male counterparts! See *The Role of Women* for more information.



2.0 CHARACTER CREATION

2.1 STANDARD PROFESSIONS

Although society in the 1600s is in a period of change in many ways, it isn't altogether different from the way it was before the Renaissance. Many **Rolemaster** character professions are perfectly appropriate for *At Rapier's Point* as long as you keep the historical period in mind and modify their abilities and character backgrounds accordingly. They include:

ROLEMASTER

Fighter	Arms
Rogue	Arms
Thief	Arms
Alchemist	Essence
Animist	Channeling
Seer	Mentalism
No Profession	Varies

MERP

Warrior	Arms
Scout	Arms
Animist	Channeling

ROLEMASTER COMPANION I

Barbarian	Arms
Burglar	Arms

ROLEMASTER COMPANION II

Scholar	Arms
Trader	Arms
Shaman	Channeling
Witch	Channeling/Essence

ROLEMASTER COMPANION III

Bounty Hunter	Arms
Assassin	Arms
Bashkar	Arms
Farmer	Arms
Duelist	Arms
Craftsman	Arms
Cavalier	Arms
Gypsy	Arms
Sailor	Arms
Warrior	Arms
Crafter	Varies
Montebanc	Mentalism
Sleuth	Channeling
The Professional	Varies

ROLEMASTER COMPANION IV, VI, VII

Leader	Arms
Romantic	Arms
Free Thinker	Arms
Seeker	Mentalism/Essence
Creator	Mentalism/Channeling
Cultist	Channeling
Witch Hunter	Channeling

In a historical campaign, Barbarians should be defined as Russian cossacks, African warriors or Native American tribesman; *Conan*-variety barbarians don't fit the genre. Players wanting to run spell users should stick to the above professions and avoid the more spectacular spell lists. Spell users are universally feared and persecuted in a historically accurate 17th Century Europe. Much of the public automatically assumes magic is evil, and the professions survive by seeking powerful patrons or by keeping low profiles. Spell users should be wary of being too open with their abilities even among friends. Alchemists may want to redefine their characters as early Scientists using the guidelines presented below.

In a fantasy campaign, the GM will have to decide how an *At Rapier's Point* setting feels about magic. Having the people in such a setting fear or even disbelieve in magic would make for an interesting change of pace, and may throw spell users off their guard. Spell user persecution could lead to many interesting adventures.

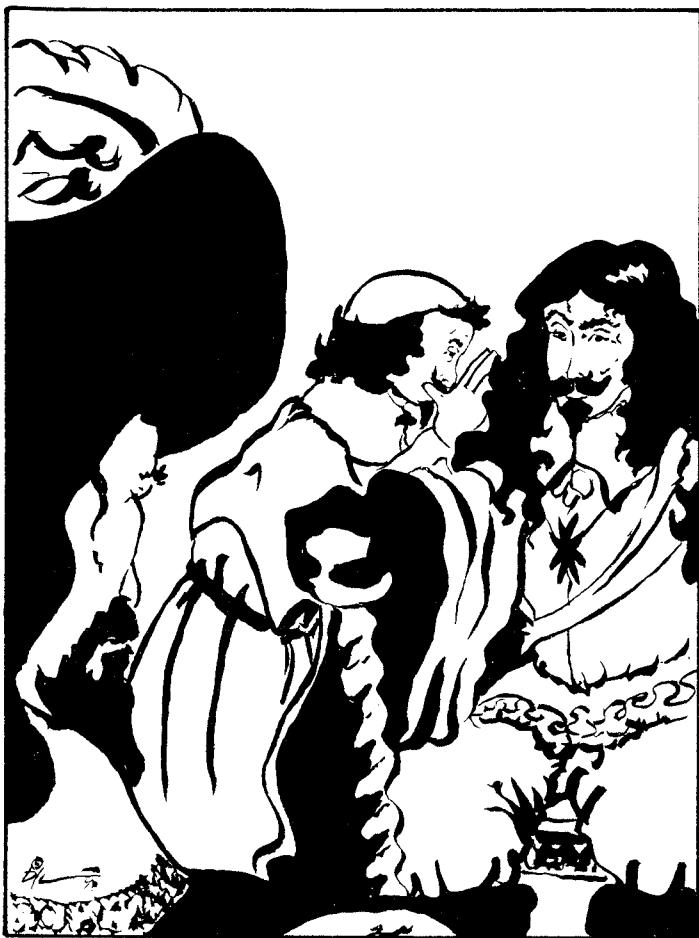
2.2 NEW PROFESSIONS

THE DIPLOMAT (2.2.1)

Diplomats represent their sovereigns before the monarchs of foreign lands. In addition to lobbying and negotiating, they keep an eye out for changes in attitude and public opinion that could signal a shift in foreign policy. A diplomat is closely watched by his hosts because he's suspected of being a spy (he is). The diplomat is monitored less closely by his own government only because distances involved make constant supervision difficult. He's pretty shifty; no tactic is too dirty to use in the name of national security, as long as he doesn't get caught. Diplomats mix with high society, attending all the fancy parties and state functions in order to gather information and develop contacts. They frequently smuggle documents and people in and out of their host nations and are always up to their ears in political intrigue. Unlike other spies, however, a diplomat can't run home once his dirty duty is done; he has to live in foreign territory for years. Often he and his hosts develop a love/hate relationship, trying to outcharm each other while engaging in a long-term battle of wits.

Weapon Skills: 2/6, 3/7, 4, 6, 6, 9, 9, 9, 9	
Maneuvering in Armor: Soft Leather 2/* Rigid Leather 2/* Chain 4/* Plate 8/*	Magical Skills: Spell Lists 15 Runes 5 Staves & Wands 4 Channeling 4 Directed Spells 10
Special Skills: Ambush 2 Linguistics 1/* Adrenal Moves 3/7 Adrenal Defense 10 Martial Arts 4/7 Body Development 2/5	General Skills: Climbing 3 Swimming 2 Riding 2/5 Disarming Traps 4 Picking Locks 3/9 Stalk & Hide 2/5 Perception 1/3





THE NOBLE DE ROBE (2.2.2)

A member of the rising middle class. The wealth and influence of these businessmen and professionals makes them almost a second aristocracy hence their nickname "nobles of the robe." (Traditional aristocrats are known as "nobles of the sword.") Nobles of the robe are often members of Parliament or the Estates General or of the judiciary. They also have a tendency to be Calvinists. At the GM's discretion players may take Special Status such as local judicial powers or wealth.

Civil servants are often on the take; in fact, their greed is proverbial. They aren't paid that much for their official duties, which take time away from their farms or businesses. Meanwhile, they're under social pressure to keep up with the aristocracy in fashion, housing and entertainment. Even relatively honest officials supplement their incomes with myriad fees and slush funds. It's an expected and accepted way of doing business.

Weapon Skills: 2/4, 3/8, 6, 6, 8, 11, 11, 11, 11

Maneuvering in Armor:

Soft Leather 1/*
Rigid Leather 1/*
Chain 2/*
Plate 4/*

Magical Skills:

Spell Lists 15
Runes 4
Staves & Wands 6
Channeling 4
Directed Spells 10

Special Skills:

Ambush 6
Linguistics 2/*
Adrenal Moves 3/7
Adrenal Defense 18
Martial Arts 4/6
Body Development 2/5

General Skills:

Climbing 3
Swimming 3
Riding 2/4
Disarming Traps 6
Picking Locks 4
Stalk & Hide 3/8
Perception 2/4

Other Skills: Refer to development point costs given below for those skills unique to the Noble De Robe profession. All other skill costs are identical to the Rogue's development point cost.

Prime Requisites: Pr/In

Academic Skills:

Heraldry 1/4
Basic Math 1/3
Administration 1/3

Social Skills:

Diplomacy 1/4
Seduction 1/3
Leadership 1/3

Subterfuge Skills:

Acting 2/6
Bribery 1/3

Linguistic Skills:

Trading 1/4
Propaganda 1/4

Level Bonuses:

Academic Skills +1
Subterfuge Skills +1
Linguistic Skills +3
Social Skills +3

Other Skills: Refer to development point costs given below for those skills unique to the Diplomat profession. All other skill costs are identical to the Bard's development point cost.

Prime Requisites: Pr/Re

Academic Skills:

Astronomy 2/5
Demon/Devil Lore 5
Dragon Lore 5

Subterfuge Skills:

Acting 1/3
Bribery 1/3
Falsification 2/5

Social Skills:

Diplomacy 1/2
Seduction 1/3

General Skills:

Play Instrument 2/5

Level Bonuses:

Arms Law Combat +1
Subterfuge Skills +3
General Skills +1
Social Skills +3





THE POET/ACTOR (2.2.3)

Wandering entertainers live by their wits, literally singing (reciting, juggling, performing, etc.) for their supper. They are regarded with a strange mixture of admiration and disdain; people may enjoy the work or performance but consider the artist himself a low-class panhandler. This is true no matter how wealthy or famous a character becomes, and the fact that he spends an inordinate amount of time pub crawling, and sometimes supplements his income with petty crime doesn't help. Poets dedicate poems and plays to wealthy nobles, hoping to get their attention and patronage. Unfortunately, dirty ditties and political parodies sometimes attract the wrong kind of attention, and the poet/actor will occasionally find himself a hunted man. Actors perform their own or others' plays several times a week; careers can be based in a particular city or the actor may wander from place to place. Either way, the pickings are slim, and he'll have to juggle his creative pursuits with a second or third career (adventuring). Female poets frequently write under a masculine pseudonym.

Weapon Skills: 2/4, 4/7, 6, 6, 6, 9, 9, 9, 9

Maneuvering in Armor:
Soft Leather 1/*
Rigid Leather 1/*
Chain 3/*
Plate 6/*

Magical Skills:
Spell Lists 20
Runes 5
Staves & Wands 7
Channeling 5
Directed Spells 12

Special Skills:
Ambush 3
Linguistics 1/*
Adrenal Moves 2/7
Adrenal Defense 9
Martial Arts 3/6
Body Development 2/5

General Skills:
Climbing 2/5
Swimming 2/5
Riding 4
Disarming Traps 6
Picking Locks 4
Stalk & Hide 2/5
Perception 2/4

Other Skills: Refer to development point costs given below for those skills unique to the Poet/Actor profession. All other skill costs are identical to the Bard's development point cost.

Prime Requisites: Me/Pr

Gymnastic Skills:
Acrobatics 1/4
Juggling 1/3
Stilt Walking 1/4
Tightrope Walking 1/5

Subterfuge Skills:
Acting 1/2
Begging 1/3
Disguise 1/2
Mimery 1/3

Social Skills:
Duping 1/3
Seduction 1/3
Leadership 4

Linguistic Skills:
Mimicry 1/2
Ventriloquism 1/3

Level Bonuses:
Acrobatic Skills +1
Subterfuge Skills +2

Linguistic Skills +2
Social Skills +3

THE RELIGIOUS DISSIDENT (2.2.4)

The religious dissident believes the state church is flawed, if not outright heretical, and that only he and his friends can correct that error. To promote reform and win converts he's willing to risk his wealth, his career, even his life.

Dissidents need a good Presence to influence people and a high Self Discipline to keep at in the face of opposition. Because their faith is unpopular—if not illegal—they're adept at passing information quickly and quietly, hiding documents or hunted clergymen, and familiar with the location of safe houses. Faith doesn't preclude fighting ability; dissidents are often fanatical warriors.

A dissident typically adopts a strict moral code to set a good example for the "apostates" he lives among and tends to be, well, puritanical. He avoids the amusements of his companions (drinking, gambling, wenching, theater) but makes up for it by being generally trustworthy and stalwart. He can also generate a lot of excitement for himself and his fellow adventurers: refusing to take off his hat as the king's carriage passes, correcting a tavern full of drunks for swearing, hiding forbidden literature in his companions' luggage, etc.



Weapon Skills: 2/4, 3/6, 4/8, 6, 6, 9, 9, 9	
Maneuvering in Armor: Soft Leather 1/* Rigid Leather 1/* Chain 4/* Plate 8/*	Magical Skills: Spell Lists 12 Runes 9 Staves & Wands 9 Channeling 3 Directed Spells 15
Special Skills: Ambush 3 Linguistics 2/* Adrenal Moves 3/8 Adrenal Defense 14 Martial Arts 3/6 Body Development 2/4	General Skills: Climbing 4 Swimming 3 Riding 2/7 Disarming Traps 4 Picking Locks 5 Stalk & Hide 3/8 Perception 1/4
Other Skills: Refer to development point costs given below for those skills unique to the Religious Dissident profession. All other skill costs are identical to the Fighter's development point cost. Prime Requisites: SD/Pr	
Academic Skills: Demon/Devil Lore 2/5 Phil./Religious Doc. 1/3 Tactics 1/4	Subterfuge Skills: Camouflage 1/4 Hide Item 1/5 Trickery 1/5
Social Skills: Leadership 2/4 Seduction 6	Linguistic Skills: Propaganda 1/2 Public Speaking 1/4
Level Bonuses: Academic Skills +1 Arms Law Combat +1 Subterfuge Skills +1	
Linguistic Skills +2 General Skills +1 Social Skills +2	

THE SCIENTIST (2.2.5)

The 17th Century scientist, unlike his modern counterpart, is a generalist. He dabbles in several different fields but lacks specialized expertise in them, basically because the specifics are just now being discovered. He also tends to be something of a tinkerer because he has to make or even invent his own instruments and apparatuses. His curiosity is relentless: if you swing a club at him, he'll duck but he'll also wonder about the relative densities of wood and the human skull and why objects make that whistling noise when they pass through the air.

Because he asks questions about everything—what is the nature of the universe, where is the soul located in the body, why do people act the way they do—and because he doesn't hesitate to speculate on the ultimate meanings of his discoveries, the scientist makes those in authority very nervous. Some of his conclusions are offensive to church authorities who, as the caretakers of religion and philosophy, have been used to providing all the answers.

Player-character scientists will benefit from a low profile. They'll probably be wise to delay publishing their work, especially if it defies conventional wisdom, if they want to keep their patrons and avoid heresy charges. They are more likely than other PCs to mingle freely with characters of foreign nationality; scientists are already evolving into an international community, and trips to consult and work with foreign colleagues are not uncommon.



Weapon Skills: 2/4, 4/8, 8, 8, 8, 12, 12, 12, 12	
Maneuvering in Armor: Soft Leather 1/* Rigid Leather 1/* Chain 4/* Plate 8/*	Magical Skills: Spell Lists 10 Runes 3 Staves & Wands 3 Channeling 5 Directed Spells 9
Special Skills: Ambush 5 Linguistics 1/* Adrenal Moves 4 Adrenal Defense 14 Martial Arts 4/8 Body Development 3/6	General Skills: Climbing 4 Swimming 3 Riding 3 Disarming Traps 2 Picking Locks 3 Stalk & Hide 3 Perception 1/4
Other Skills: All other skill costs are identical to the Scholar's development point cost. Prime Requisites: Re/In	
Level Bonuses: Academic Skills +3 Arms Law Combat +1	
Linguistic Skills +2 General Skills +2	



2.3 SKILLS

All the normal rules for skill use apply with the additions included here.

WEAPONS SKILLS

Weapon skills in *At Rapier's Point* are handled just as they are in **Rolemaster** with one exception.

There are nine categories of weapons to which the various weapon development point costs must be assigned. They are:

- 1-handed Firearms
- 2-handed Firearms
- Support Firearms
- 1-handed Edged Weapons
- 1-handed Crushing Weapons
- 2-handed Weapons
- Bows
- Thrown Weapons
- Pole Arms

Players wishing to play existing character professions should take the last (highest) skill cost for his weapons and use this cost for the additional categories. This is not to say that the new categories (1-handed Firearms, etc.) must have the highest cost. The costs can be assigned to the categories in any way, just as before. The new professions in *At Rapier's Point* have nine weapon skill costs listed.

Note that, in *At Rapier's Point*, the similar weapon skills rules (*Character Law* 13.1.1 and 14.1.5) apply. Thus, a character's skill rank with a weapon is either his skill rank with that weapon or half his skill rank with a similar weapon, whichever is higher.

GENERAL SKILLS

General skills in *At Rapier's Point* are handled just as they are in **Rolemaster**. There are, however, two additional skills in *At Rapier's Point*: Driving and Marine Piloting.

Actions involving these skills are resolved as Vehicular Maneuvers (VM). See *Special Combat Maneuvers*, Section 4.9.1 for more about this.

Driving (Ag/Qu) (VM) — Just as with Riding, skill ranks in Driving must be developed separately for each different type of vehicle. One skill rank allows a basic understanding of how to control the vehicle. Subsequent skill ranks reflect increased ability and quickness in maneuvers. This skill is only useful with regard to land vehicles such as carriages and horse-drawn carts.

Marine Piloting (Ag/Qu) (VM) — This skill applies to controlling all watercraft, including boats, barges and primitive submarines. Just as with Driving and Riding, skill ranks in Marine Piloting must be developed separately for different types of vehicles.

SPECIAL SKILLS

All special skills are available to players except Martial Arts beyond Rank 1, representing basic brawling ability. Swashbucklers generally settle matters with their blades, not their fists, and an unarmed combatant is at a distinct disadvantage against swords and firearms. The rules for Boxing, Savate and Wrestling haven't yet been formalized, and the Eastern martial arts are closely guarded secrets. Orientals consider Western barbarians unworthy of the knowledge, and Europeans regard Eastern ways as either inferior or of the devil.

Sniping (None) (Special) — Similar to Ambush, this skill allows an attacker using a firearm, thrown weapon or bow to adjust a

critical hit against an unaware target. As with Ambush, Sniping is only possible if the target is unaware of the attacker and the target is basically stationary. If a critical is achieved, the attacker may modify the critical results roll by a number equal to his sniping skill rank.

Survival (SD/Me) (Static Action) — A successful roll indicates that the character has avoided the adverse affect of the environment. One roll is usually made every 24 hours, but frequency and modifiers can vary with the intensity of the environment, the number of people in the group, and any available equipment. Three basic environments must be developed separately: Hot/Moist (Jungle), Hot/Dry (Desert) and Cold (Arctic). This skill includes the ability to forage for food as well as the ability to find or construct effective shelter.

LANGUAGES

In a historical campaign, English and French will be most useful to the PCs, but other useful European tongues include Spanish, Italian, German, Dutch, Danish and Swedish. The educated elite will speak and write Latin, maybe Greek and Hebrew. Some cultural minorities have their own languages. Examples include: Welsh in England and Breton, Occitan (Provincial) and Basque in France. Note that literacy is not standard in this setting.

SECONDARY SKILLS

Secondary skills are essential to round out player characters so that they truly fit the swashbuckling genre. The skills below are particularly useful to *At Rapier's Point* characters.

Acrobatics (Ag/Qu) (Maneuver) — As in **Rolemaster**. This skill is essential for movie-style swordsman.

Administration (In/Em) (Static Action) — Bonus for determining the flow of power within an organization. This skill enables PCs to figure out who really makes the decisions and gets things done in a bureaucracy (it may not be the person with the fancy title and salary), assisting them in cutting red tape and lobbying. Administration is an essential skill for characters who intend to spend much time at court.

Animal Training (Em/In) — Bonus for training a particular kind of animal.

Appraisal (In/Re) — Bonus for determining or estimating the value of an object or good. Must be developed separately for each specific area of specialization. Areas included precious gems and minerals, farm animals, lumber, and agricultural products such as tobacco or spices.

Bribery (Pr/Em) — Bonus for successfully making bribes, knowing how to approach someone, and knowing how much to offer. This skill is useful for influencing petty and not so petty officials. Bribery also enables characters to ease out of a situation where a bribe is refused. Keep in mind that because someone is bribed doesn't mean that he will stay that way.

Crafting (Re/Ag, Ag) (Static Action) — Bonus for a particular craftsman skill. Different skills must be developed separately. Applicable crafts include: Carpenter, Cooper, Gunsmith, Instrument Maker, Lenscrafter, Saltpeterer, Shipwright.

Instrument Maker gives a bonus for making and calibrating fine instruments such as navigational aids, clocks, barometers, telescopes, etc. Lenscrafter gives a similar bonus for grinding lenses for eyeglasses, telescopes and microscopes. Saltpeterer provides a bonus when mixing gunpowder. Gunsmiths commonly have carving skills, as their weapons are often intricately decorated.



Demolitions (Ag/Re) (Maneuver/Static Action) — Bonus to handle gunpowder in large quantities. A useful skill for determining fuse lengths, placing charges and sapping castle walls without blowing one's self up.

Diplomacy (Pr/In) — Bonus for working successfully with (but not within) bureaucracy such as a government, a crime ring or a large business.

Disarm Foe, Armed (Ag) (Maneuver) — Bonus to remove a foe's weapon with your own. If successful, the opponent must make a successful RR vs. the level (# of skill ranks) of disarming skill used. There are four categories for the user to develop: the first is the primary skill and the others can be used as similar skills at 1/2 skill rank bonus. Each category reflects the type of weapon that the disarmer can go against. Categories: 1-Handed, 2-Handed, Polearm, and 2-Weapon Combo.

Disarm Foe, Unarmed (Ag) (Maneuver) — As above, only with your bare hands. There are five categories to develop: 1-Handed Edge, 1-Handed Crush, 2-Handed Polearm, 2-Weapon Combo.

Drug Tolerance (Co/SD) — Bonus for resisting the effects of any one type of intoxicant, poison, or other chemical substance. Bonus is applied directly to the RR. This skill must be applied separately for each type of drug (e.g., alcohol, arsenic). The character does not have to be conscious to receive the bonus.

Grappling Hook (Ag) (Maneuver) — Bonus when throwing grappling hook and making it stick at the intended target. The hook can be thrown up to 20 feet horizontally and 10 feet vertically per skill rank earned (Strength mods apply). This is handy for sneaking into, or out of, castle strongholds and for ship boarding actions.

Interrogation (In/Em) — Bonus for extracting information from an intelligent source (e.g. a human being). This may or may not include causing the subject of interrogation some discomfort, although in the 17th Century it usually involves elaborate physical torture. An additional +25 bonus is added if the subject is discomforted (mentally or physically).

If the subject is discomforted, however, and the net Interrogation roll is negative, the subject may suffer a major mental or physical injury, or even death. In such a case, the subject should roll a RR (using SD/Co as a modifier) to determine the extent of the injury.

Leadership (PR) (Static Action) — Bonus to inspire and command others to follow you, and to make others believe that you are competent to lead and that you know what you are doing. This includes the ability to raise the morale of those you command. Military characters will need this skill to be successful on the battlefield and to get promotions.

Pharmacology (Me/Re/Em) (Static Action) — Bonus for identifying substances with supposed medicinal value and mixing medicines. Seventeenth Century pharmacists often make diagnoses and prescribe drugs.

Physician (SD/Re/Me/Em) (Static Action) — Bonus for diagnosing illnesses, suggesting prescriptions and treatments. Licensed doctors in the 17th Century do little hands-on work, leaving actual medical care to bone setters, midwives and surgeons with First Aid.

Propaganda (In/Em) — Bonus for influencing others through indirect means rather than by direct speech. Includes the abilities to start rumors and to design large disinformation campaigns.

Quick Draw (Qu/Ag) — Bonus for drawing or changing weapons. In certain cases, a GM might allow a character whose rolls total 101+ more than an opponent's roll to fire a firearm and determine results before the opponent can fire.

Streetwise (Pr/In) — Bonus for dealing with the seamy side of society: how to find the black market, talk to thugs, gain information and so on. Not knowing the language makes this much more difficult. Failing a Streetwise roll can be dangerous because very tough people often don't like people asking questions. A useful skill for Thieves, Rogues, Actor/Poets and other professions that would have opportunity to deal with the criminal underclass.

Surgery (SD/Em/In) (Static Action) — Bonus for performing Reformation style surgery: amputations, bullet, gall stone and tooth extractions, etc. Literally quick and dirty, 17th Century surgery is a last-ditch emergency effort to save a patient's life performed without anesthesia or antiseptics. A surgeon may or may not work with a physician.

Tactics (Re/Me) (Static Action) — Bonus for evaluating military situations and determining the best possible courses of action.

Leadership enables a character to persuade others he knows what he's doing; Tactics actually enables him to know what he's doing in strategic situations. It's possible for a PC to be able to inspire confidence (at least for a while) but be a military incompetent, or to be a brilliant tactician but lack the flair for rousing his men to action. Effective commanders will need both skills.

Toxicology (Me/Re/Em) (Static Action) — Bonus for identifying, isolating, and evaluating and neutralizing the effects of poisonous substances. A useful skill for diplomats and assassins as well as for physicians and pharmacists. Pharmacists commonly have both Pharmacology and Toxicology skills, selling legitimate drugs over the counter to physicians and patients and poisons in the back alley to assassins and politicians.

Tumbling (Ag/SD, Ag) (Maneuver) — As in *Rolemaster*. Like Acrobatics, almost required for movie-style swashbucklers.

Visual Arts (In/Em) — Bonus for creating and comprehending works of art. Skill must be developed separately for each medium (e.g., drawing, painting or sculpture).

2.4 MAGIC AND SPELLCASTING

Magic plays only a minor role in swashbuckling adventures for several reasons. Belief in magic is declining in a historical campaign setting of this genre because of the growth of science and the cult of Reason. Rationalists tend to "pooh pooh" the supernatural, even to the point of becoming atheists. Where magic is believed in, it is vigorously persecuted. The Bible specifically condemns divination and other occult practices; the Reformation may have divided Christianity but it also strengthened the convictions of its adherents. Villages which once supported a local "wise woman" will no longer tolerate such vestiges of paganism. In the public's eyes there is no such thing as a good spell user. Thus, magic is being laughed and burned out of existence.

Magic in the swashbuckling genre is subtle and its effects—curses, divinations, blessings, etc.—are inobvious. The really dramatic effects don't exist. For instance, a witch may be able to turn someone into a frog, but the transformation will happen when the PCs aren't around. Their friend will simply vanish, and the maid will happen to mention she found a disgusting amphibian



flopping around his room. Spellcasting generally requires lengthy rituals and the use of drugs or homemade concoctions. Because of this, some GMs may wish to prohibit actual spell lists in favor of using the Magic Ritual skill presented in *RMC II*. Spell users who do learn lists are restricted to the following in order to reflect the subtlety of their craft.

Witch	Shaman	Animist	Seer
Conjuring Ways	Spirit Summon	Surface Ways	True Perception
Natures Mast.	Spirit Mastery	Natures Lore	Mind Visions
Candle Magic	Spirit Healing	Plant Mast.	Sense Thr.Others
Glamours	Animal Ways	Direct Channel.	Past Visions
Potion Magic	Visions	Animal Mastery	Future Visions
Visions	Trances	—	—
—	Herb Mastery	—	—

Holy Champion, a Cleric's base list from the *Spell User's Companion*, might be appropriate for priests to have, with the following spells removed:

- Champion Aura
- Guarded Temple
- Blessed Speech
- Sainly Stasis
- Sacrifice
- Holy Slaying
- Heavenly Bridge

Ceremonies from the *Rolemaster Companion I* might also be appropriate for priests. The typical Clerical base lists are not.

ALCHEMY

Alchemy in *At Rapier's Point* is a primitive science enabling characters to invent drugs and gadgets, but not true magic items. No wands, staves or rings of power here, although a ring's stone could contain a drug intended to be sprinkled in someone's wine. All effects must have a rational, or at least pseudoscientific, explanation. Thus, an alchemist could produce a potion that stimulated a patient's nervous system, enabling him to run, react or heal faster than normal, but not incredibly so, and there might be nasty side effects. A potion wouldn't enable a character to fly, but a cluster of gas-filled animal bladders might. Alchemists might come up with concoctions that could produce fireballs or ice walls (a flame thrower, dry ice), but the source would be clearly chemical and would have the same fumble factors as all 17th Century technology.

A successful alchemist would also have to have practical, non-magic secondary skills such as Demolitions, Pharmacology, Smithing, Toxicology, etc., to create his gadgets. He'd make that super-sharp sword the normal way, his improved technique and materials providing the OB. Again, no glowing blades floating over his workshop table. Alchemy should be unreliable, outrageous when it works but dangerous or humorous when it fails.

Those with access to the *Alchemy Companion* may want to pay particular attention to the sections on historical alchemy, and may wish to use the professions Tinker, Crafter and Adept rather than the core-rules Alchemist. Such GMs may also wish to use the Smith, Charlatan, Craftsman and Craftsman from that book as well.



3.0 ROLE PLAYING

3.1 CREATING CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

Character background is very important in a genre where an adventurer's fate may be determined by his family name, the province he came from, the cut of his clothes, or by his manner of worship. Social status is everything. It is possible, but by no means easy, for characters to rise above their stations. Players should consider the type of adventures they want to have and the goals their characters aspire to.

Although their paths may cross, Jacques d'Blois, scion of a wealthy family, will move in very different circles than Armand "The Mouse," orphaned on the mean streets of Paris. Jacques could be invited to the party where the Cardinal plans to have the Queen's diamond studs stolen. If he's lucky and marries well, he might be able to become a (distant) member of the royal family, unless he's a Protestant. Armand is likely to stumble onto the Cardinal's hired thugs as they try to smuggle the diamonds out of Paris. If he's clever and frugal, he might become a successful non-commissioned officer in the military or be able to open his own business. From there he might be able to join the civil service. Both characters can acquire wealth, become the king's advisors, save France and get into a lot of trouble doing it, but the flavor of their adventures won't be the same.

CHARACTER ROLES (3.1.1)

Heroes in swashbuckling literature and cinema often fill certain roles or fall into certain stereotypes. Players don't have to use the following types to design their characters, but they can help provide an initial character conception.

THE AVENGER

This character has devoted his life to avenging a grievous insult or heinous crime committed against himself or his family. He's a driven fellow and can be quite ruthless about using other characters to achieve his ends. Some campaigns will revolve around his clashes with the person or group that wronged him, though having to fight this character's enemies all the time can get old fast for the other PCs. Other character types can become the Avenger for a single storyline given a dishonorable attack upon someone they care about. Avengers usually have plenty of combat ability and can be either male or female.

THE BASTARD

This character is the product of a nobleman's indiscretion and is usually reared by a guardian. He may strive constantly to be recognized by his wealthy, influential father, or he may have no idea who his parents are. In the latter case, he sometimes discovers that the villain is his dad just before or during the climactic duel, although this plot twist only works once.

Running the Bastard calls for good role playing because he's a man stuck between two worlds. His social position is awkward; he's not an aristocrat and not a commoner. He has the training and duties of rank but not the privileges and has to endure the whispered asides and sneers of the bluebloods around him. The Bastard

is often madly in love with his guardian's daughter, with whom he has been raised, but familiarity and the attentions of status-laden suitors keep her from realizing this. The Bastard's motive for adventuring is often to prove himself worthy of her, or to expose her fiancé as the selfish jerk he really is. Just as often, the Bastard is kicked out of the house; his guardian disagrees with his career plans or political affiliations, or hazing about his uncertain parentage results in some sort of scandal.

THE CHIVALROUS OUTLAW

This character is separated from the woman he loves when he is accused of a crime he didn't commit. He escapes the authorities to become a feared highwayman or pirate, but is generally kind toward women, children and the downtrodden, turning his exploits into a kind of political statement. Often the focus of a campaign, the Chivalrous Outlaw eventually redeems himself in the eyes of his lover and the law by leading his band of cutthroats against foreigners attacking his country.

THE DISHONORED NOBLEMAN

Scandal has forced this aristocratic character to abandon his name and estate and enter the military "to forget." He's usually serving far from home at a rank below his station. He keeps his former life a secret, though his bearing gives him away, until he can redeem his honor and reclaim his inheritance.

A common plot twist is for the Dishonored Nobleman to discover that the treacherous associate who betrayed his honor is alive and well; in fact, he's the villain who has been mistreating the hero's friends! The character must confront his old nemesis and destroy him, either with swordplay or evidence of the villain's past crimes—or both. The Dishonored Nobleman is a skilled warrior and tactician and may be highly decorated. Characters of this type are usually male but could be a woman in disguise (see The Macho Woman With A Sword below).

THE DUELIST

This character has a heart of gold but a hair-trigger temper. He may be sensitive about a physical deformity or his illegitimate birth, he may have strong opinions about politics or religion, or he may just love a good fight and the attention it gets him. In any case, he's quick to take offense and issue a challenge.

The Duelist attracts trouble like a magnet but he's a good person to have at one's side when it comes. He's very skillful with a narrow range of weapons and maneuvers and knowledgeable about other duelists. He doesn't have to be a fencer; his weapon of choice may be the pistol, or (rarely) he may be a bare-knuckle prize fighter. He's often pursued by relatives of the men he's killed or by young bucks who want to prove they're better and may have a reputation as a troublemaker.

THE EAGER YOUNG BLADE

This character is a kid fresh off the farm determined to make his fortune with his wits and his father's sword. Although clever, he's often overconfident and somewhat naive. The Eager Young Blade tends to offend more cultured PCs with his rustic manners and usually succeeds in getting into a lot of trouble. Typically, he stumbles across and foils an attempted kidnapping or assassination, which earns him a job as a military or private guard and the





undying enmity of the villain. Because of those adolescent hormones coursing through his veins, he tends to be vulnerable to the wiles of femmes fatales.

The Eager Young Blade usually has been taught basic fencing and horsemanship by his ex-soldier father. He's an effective fighter but has plenty of room for improvement and personal development. Characters of this type are almost always male.

THE FENCING MASTER

This character teaches others the manly art of self defense for pay and often has an assistant who runs the academy while he's out adventuring. Unlike the Duelist, the Fencing Master doesn't feel the need to prove anything and usually avoids fights; he may consider it unethical to duel swordsmen less skilled than himself, or perhaps it's not enough of a challenge. When he does draw the sword outside the classroom, he tends to turn combat into a fencing lesson, applauding or mocking his opponent's technique. The need to keep his business afloat prevents him from undertaking long quests. On the other hand, he has a steady income.

The Fencing Master is an expert swordsman, knowledgeable about a wide range of weapons and fighting styles. He's also a good judge of weapon quality and origin. In addition, he has one special maneuver or technique he doesn't teach his students and doesn't use in public very often; it's a form of insurance. The Fencing Master is usually male.

THE FOP

This character is fastidious about his appearance. He's always well-groomed and perfumed, has his hair curled just so, wears the newest styles, and is a self-proclaimed expert on the latest trends in etiquette. The Fop tends to be vain to the point of comic relief, delaying his escape from the cardinal's guards to take one last peek in a mirror. He'll go out of his way to shave during adventures, even though the heroes are wading through a swamp.

Although his prissy manner may cause opponents to underestimate him, the Fop is a lion in combat. He usually goes for the quick kill and is skillful at parrying, the better to protect his precious gold-embroidered doublet and silk shirt. He's also up to snuff on who's at court and current gossip. Fops can be either male or female.

THE INGENUE

This character is a dewy-eyed innocent raised in a sheltered and often privileged home. She tends to be closely watched by a duenna or guardian and is consistently underestimated by villains. Frequently, she's a romantic interest for one of the other PCs.

This is a challenging role to play because the Ingenue, by definition, is rather gullible and has minimal combat ability. She tends to be the target of amorous villains' schemes and may not have the capacity to fend them off. However, the villain doesn't have to use force; she'll cheerfully follow his henchman, believing that she's being taken to minister to a sick old woman.

On the positive side, she's often the first PC to get into the action and the first to find out what's really happening. She's not stupid, and the villain never dreams that she has the ability to foil him. What the Ingenue lacks in swordsmanship she makes up for with a variety of useful skills that enable her to get the drop on the bad guy. Also, she usually has powerful friends in addition to the other PCs: she's the governor's daughter, the dauphin's favorite playmate, the mascot for the fighting 18th regiment, etc.

The Ingenue typically has a high Presence and Intuition and skills such as Public-speaking, Seduction and Stalk & Hide. In addition, she always has some rather unexpected skills such as Contortions or incredible skill ranks with croquet or tennis (Athletic Games) (allowing her to pelt the villain with a painful volley of balls).

If no player is willing to run the Ingenue, she can appear as a NPC. The Ingenue is almost always female; she's the stock heroine for swashbuckling fiction. The occasional male innocents are typically young boys. Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island* is the classic example.

THE LADIES' MAN

This character could have a successful career in his chosen profession if only he would leave the opposite sex alone. His conquests are invariably young wives, betrothed maidens, or lovely young things that are somehow otherwise off limits. The Ladies' Man woos them anyway—to his detriment, successfully—and is hounded by jealous husbands and irate fathers. He may simultaneously entertain several mistresses who may or may not know about each other. Because he gets around so much, he tends to become entangled in other people's intrigues.

The Ladies' Man has to have a high Presence (and probably a good Appearance, if that stat is used) and be quick of tongue and fleet of foot. He's often poor as he spends all his money on flowers, candy, fancy meals and hired musicians. The Ladies' Man can be either male or female.



THE MACHO WOMAN WITH A SWORD

This character defies all social conventions by shedding her petticoats and taking up arms. Her reasons for doing so vary: she's out to avenge her father's murder; she can't bear to be parted from her lover and followed him into the army; the Chivalrous Outlaw is her brother or fiancé; she's an Ingenue who tired of being smothered. The Macho Woman With A Sword is constantly having to prove she's as good or better than any man. She usually deals with masculine prejudice by disguising her sex (which can lead to interesting plot complications, particularly when she falls in love with one of her comrades) or by carving up any man foolish enough to sneer at her.

The Macho Woman has to be good in combat. She's an agile fencer who substitutes speed for strength. She's also usually a crack shot with a pistol. The Macho Woman is often underestimated by her male opponents, and the GM may want to give her a surprise bonus against villainous henchmen who suddenly realize they're fighting a woman. Macho Women are always female, of course.

THE TRUSTY VALET

This character is the roguish sidekick of one of the other PCs. He may be a cowardly Lou Costello, a cynical Sancho Panza, or a self-sacrificing Gunga Din, but he's devoted to his master. It's a good thing, too, because the Trusty Valet gets all the dirty jobs: doing the dishes, cleaning boots, foraging for food in enemy-infested forests, ditching the corpses of those who lose duels with his master. Because of all he has to put up with, he often feels justified in enriching himself at his master's expense and tends to be something of a thief and con man.

The Trusty Valet can be difficult to play because he's subordinate to his master and is typically less skilled in combat than the other characters (except the Ingenue). On the other hand, he has often picked up some rather esoteric, even bizarre, skills during his checkered career that enable him to pull his master's fanny out of the fire time after time. Does this get him a raise? Are you joking?

Some servants stay devoted and obedient to their masters for years. Commonly, however, as the character grows in status and ability (levels) he "graduates" and becomes a full-fledged hero. If this happens, his master should release him from service and get another Trusty Valet. This process is often unnerving for the other PCs, particularly high-status ones, because they may not be willing to accept the former servant as an equal.

Besides occupational skills such as Cooking, First Aid or Sewing, the Trusty Valet usually has some thievery expertise (Pick Locks, Stalk & Hide, Trickery). He's rounded out with skills that reflect his master's profession plus some that are unique, such as skill with a lariat or knowledge of the Basque subculture.

If no one wants to play a sidekick with lower combat ability than the campaign's standard, the Trusty Valet can be a NPC. Many swashbuckling stories will have at least one; in *The Three Musketeers*, every hero had a faithful sidekick. Whether he is a player character or NPC, the Trusty Valet should be very quirky and individual. Sidekicks can be either sex, always the same gender as their masters.

3.2 WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

Any character can have weapons skills because the army is happy to recruit or conscript him regardless of social class. Possessing and using a weapon in public is another matter, however. Weapons of a military nature—firearms and polearms—will usually be carried only by active duty military personnel and will usually be owned by the military unless a character has saved enough money to buy his own. Off-duty soldiers therefore aren't likely to stroll into the local inn toting a musket or halberd, although they might have a personal sword or dagger. Non-soldiers who are conspicuously armed will attract unwanted attention from bystanders and the city guard, as young D'Artagnan found on his way to Paris. This is particularly true if the characters are carrying firearms (carrying a musket while hunting in the country is allowable).

Once a character is out of the military, his opportunity to carry weapons is limited by his social class, both because of what is expected of him and because weapons are expensive. Gentlemen buckle on their sword belts with the same casualness that modern businessmen knot their silk neckties. They can wear their blades openly except during certain periods where weapons are being restricted to discourage dueling. Showing up at a social function without one's sword would be a mistake akin to forgetting to wear one's belt or socks to a board of directors meeting. You might be able to get away with it, but if anyone notices, you'll be embarrassed. Because hunting is the passion of the rich, any character wealthy enough to own a country estate will probably invest in several muskets or even a rifle.

Middle class characters are much less likely to be armed. A judge, merchant or wealthy farmer may have a sword or pair of cavalry pistols on display in his home, but he'll probably only carry them while traveling or on special occasions. These characters, imitating the nobility, also might own a musket for hunting purposes or to discourage poaching on their land.

Lower middle class and poor characters are the least likely to carry swords or firearms. Not only can they not afford weapons, but people of their class are not expected to be armed. If you're poor and carry weapons, people will automatically assume you're a poacher or robber. Low-caste PCs will generally defend themselves with concealable, multi-purpose weapons: knives, staves, farm tools, homemade bills. They should probably think twice about attacking military personnel, although irate farmers have been known to ambush and slaughter unwary groups of soldiers.

Player characters can carry and use whatever weapons they can get their hands on, but the GM should enforce the genre and let them take the consequences. The Paris Police or London City Guard are not going to sit idly by if four to eight men march into town bristling with blades and firepower, and the PCs will probably have difficulty getting the cooperation of innkeepers and tradesmen as well. Of course, dodging the authorities and bullying uncooperative innkeepers to get what you want is appropriate to this genre too.



4.0 COMBAT

4.1 THE BATTLE ROUND SEQUENCE

At Rapier's Point uses *Space Master's* round sequence because of the presence of firearms. Guns or other weapons with a rate of fire of "2/rnd" or "2 bursts" can be discharged in both Fire Phases A and B. Guns and other missile weapons (like bows) that can only fire once per round may only fire in Fire Phase B. Because there are usually no spells or psions used in an *At Rapier's Point* game, the combat sequence is a bit shorter than the one found in *Space Master*. It runs as follows.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 — Fire Phase (A) | 5 — Fire Result Phase (B) |
| 2 — Fire Result Phase (A) | 6 — Melee Phase |
| 3 — Movement/Maneuver Phase | 7 — Melee Result Phase |
| 4 — Fire Phase (B) | 8 — Final Orientation Phase |

4.2 EXCEPTIONS

In addition to the standard *Rolemaster* exceptions, the optional rules for changing targets (*Arms Law* 9.1), missile weapons in melee (*Arms Law* 9.2) and firing while moving (*Arms Law* 9.3) should be used in *At Rapier's Point* games.

The rules for reloading (*Arms Law* 9.4) should also be used, but the Reload Time Chart should be replaced by the one below.

LOADING TIME CHART	
Activity	% of Round
Reload:	
Short Bow	60
Long Bow	80
Reload:	
Match- or Wheellock gun (loose powder)	600
Match- or Wheellock pistol (loose powder)	300
Flintlock gun (loose powder)	300
Flintlock pistol (loose powder)	150
Match- or Wheellock gun (cartridge)	400
Match- or Wheellock pistol (cartridge)	200
Flintlock gun (cartridge)	200
Flintlock pistol (cartridge)	100
Cannon	*800
Other:	
Remove a Cap and Ball Cylinder	50
Replace a Cap and Ball Cylinder	50
Drawing a Weapon	20
Sheathing a Weapon	30
Picking up a Weapon	40
Changing Weapons	50
Shift Weapon to Other Hand	10
* — Up to four characters can work as a team to reload a cannon, thus cutting the time required to 200% activity.	

4.3 FIREARMS

Firearms will have one of three types of firing mechanisms—matchlock, wheellock, and flintlock.

MATCHLOCKS

When the trigger on a matchlock is pulled, an S-shaped cock called a 'serpentine' falls on the priming pan. The serpentine holds the match, a length of smoldering cord which is kept lit during the entire course of a battle. It is the match which ignites the powder in the pan, and hence the powder in the barrel.

Matchlocks are inexpensive and easy to make. They are used by the troops of the world from the early 16th century until the mid-17th century. By the 1620s, they have been made obsolete by the new flintlock guns, but their price and availability keeps them in use.

The biggest problem that matchlocks have concerns the match. It is necessary to keep a length of match lit in order to fire the gun. This can be dangerous when reloading, and disastrous in the artillery train or on the deck of a ship where large quantities of powder are lying about. Your enemies will also have a much easier time spotting you if you are holding onto a smoldering length of cord. The necessity of keeping the match lit also makes matchlocks



nearly useless in the rain. Furthermore, matchlock pistols, though they do exist, are not terribly efficient; after all, you can't keep a lit match in a holster.

WHEELLOCKS

The wheellock's firing mechanism consists of a spring-loaded wheel made of serrated steel, and a piece of iron pyrites. When the trigger is pulled, the wheel spins against the pyrites and sparks fall onto the priming pan. To reset the wheel, a 'spanner' (which looks like a little wrench) is used to wind up the spring. The 'cock' which holds the pyrite must be lowered against the wheel before the gun can be fired (thus 'cocking the gun').

Wheellocks, as opposed to matchlocks, are expensive and require a master craftsman to manufacture. They first appear around the beginning of the 16th century, and are nearly completely replaced by the flintlock by the mid-17th. They are never very widely distributed, being more of a gentlemen's weapon than a common soldier's. They are used by some cavalry units, as the matchlock is almost impossible to use from horseback. In the English Civil War, it is not uncommon for a cavalry trooper to carry two wheellock pistols in saddle holsters, and a wheellock carbine on his belt.

The advantages to the wheellock are many. First, it is now possible to make an effective pistol. Second, wheellocks can be kept loaded and ready to fire. And third, because there is no match involved, they are less effected by weather conditions than are matchlocks (in fact, because the firing mechanism is largely internal, they are even less effected by weather than are flintlocks). The problems with wheellocks are their price—which is exorbitant, and loading—which takes as long as a matchlock.

FLINTLOCKS

When the trigger is pulled on a flintlock, a piece of flint (held in place by the cock) falls on a piece of steel, sending sparks into the pan. To reset the firing mechanism, all you have to do is pull back the cock.

The flintlock was developed before the 17th century. It is in general use after 1620. The militaries of Europe do not really begin to use flintlocks until after mid-century, however. This is surprising in view of the flintlock's many advantages.

The flintlock has a much higher rate of fire than a matchlock or a wheellock. It is easier to use than either of these weapons. And though slightly more expensive than the matchlock, it is far cheaper than the wheellock. This is certainly be the weapon of choice for any self-respecting pirate.

FIREARM DESCRIPTIONS (4.3.1)

MUSKETS

These are long-barreled, muzzle-loading infantry weapons which fire ball-shaped bullets. The longer the barrel, the more accurate the weapon. They must be reloaded between each shot. They're heavy; musketeers often rest them on a forked stick while firing.

CARBINES

This cavalry weapon is essentially a sawed-off musket. Its shorter barrel makes the carbine lighter and easier to handle while on horseback. Carbines typically have flintlock or wheellock firing mechanisms, which also makes them easier for a mounted soldier to use.

RIFLES

These are rare, expensive and somewhat less reliable than available smooth-bore weapons. They are, however, more accurate than a musket or carbine. Because of their expense and uncertain reliability, rifles aren't widely used as a military weapon. They tend to be sporting guns, popular with the nobility.

HARQUEBUS

This is the predecessor of the musket, used by infantry of the previous century. It uses a matchlock firing system and is extremely heavy. A soldier using a harquebus has to prop it up on something. The harquebus is not in general use after about 1620.

BLUNDERBUSS

This is a 17th-Century shotgun. The blunderbuss is about the same length as a carbine, has a large bore, and fires several pellets rather than a single bullet. It is easier to hit a target with a blunderbuss, but its effectiveness decreases rapidly with range. The blunderbuss hits hard at close range, but its effectiveness drops off quickly.

The firearm attack table can be used, but critical strikes are Shrapnel rather than Puncture.

PISTOLS

A single-handed firearm from 1 to 1 1/2 feet long. Pistols are popular cavalry weapons because they are relatively light and easy to use.

CANNON

Cannon come in a variety of sizes and are, in many ways, giant versions of firearms. They can be loaded and fired by crews of up to four people. (See the Warfare section for more details.)

For cannon, use the Support Firearms skill from *Space Master* or the Missile Artillery skill from *RMC II* if you have it. Treat each type of cannon as a separate similar weapon for learning purposes. The skill is based on In/Ag, and gives a bonus to the total combat OB. One-third similar skill bonus may be used on all unlearned artillery types. Reloading a cannon takes eight rounds. A maximum of four people can work on a cannon at the same time, reducing the reload time to two rounds.

RELOADING FIREARMS (4.3.2)

Use the 1-Handed Firearms and 2-Handed Firearms skills from *Space Master*. If you don't have it, treat firearms the same as bows in *Rolemaster* for the purpose of learning costs and as crossbows in combat. Unlike bows, firearms are difficult to use in wet conditions, take much longer to reload, and require regular cleaning and oiling to work properly. Loaded guns get a +10 to fumble in a drizzle, +25 in an ordinary rain, and +50 in a downpour. It is not possible to reload a gun in the rain, though it can be done in drizzle with a +25 to fumble. The GM should give additional fumble modifiers if the weapon has not been maintained.

Reloading a 17-Century firearm is a laborious process no matter what type of firing mechanism the weapon uses. A character measures and pours an amount of coarse black powder down the barrel and packs it in with a ramrod. Next, he rams in some wadding (paper, cloth or whatever is handy), drops in a ball-shaped bullet, then packs in more wadding, which holds the charge in the gun. He primes the firing pan with fine powder to ensure that the firing mechanism ignites the powder in the barrel. After replacing the ramrod beneath the barrel and preparing the firing mechanism, he



is ready to shoot. An experienced musketeer can do this in about 60 seconds (6 rounds in game terms). Pistols are loaded the same way; because of their smaller size, they can be loaded in about half the time.

Matchlock and wheellock firearms require six rounds to reload when using loose powder; flintlock firearms require three. Paper cartridges reduce the reload time to four rounds for matchlocks and wheellocks, two rounds for flintlocks. In a particularly tense situation (being charged by cavalry), the GM may require PCs to make a Static Maneuver roll to determine success. If they fail, they can roll again at the end of the next round until they are successful.

Cartridges, paper tubes with pre-measured powder and a bullet rolled in one end, are available after 1630. To use a cartridge, a character tears open one end of the tube, pours in the powder, then rams in the paper that held the powder. The paper-wrapped ball follows, its wrapping serving as wadding. Infantrymen carry these cartridges on a bandolier across their chests.

VOLLEY GUNS

Don't even think of reloading a volley gun during combat. Each of its 9 to 15 musket barrels must be readied individually. A maximum of two people can work on a volley gun at the same time. In game terms, assuming two people are loading as fast as they can, a volley gun can be prepared in about 15 rounds (2 1/2 minutes). Loading time would increase to 30 rounds (5 minutes) if a single character is loading.

RELOADING STRATEGY

All this definitely should have an effect on characters' combat decisions. In battle, don't fire your guns until you have to. When you do fire them, shoot quickly, draw your sword, and don't waste time reloading. If you stand there trying to reload, you'll likely be cut down before you can finish. Some characters increase their firearms effectiveness by carrying an extra pair of loaded and primed pistols. This is unusual, however, and the GM should give the character who does this appropriate penalties for encumbrance and misfires. The extra pistols could go off when the character doesn't want them to (such as if he falls down) or might misfire after being carted and jostled around for so long.

FIRING BURSTS (4.3.3)

Only possible with massed musket volleys or with a volley gun. Both are one-shot attacks; gunmen must reload in between each blast. It is possible for ranks of infantry to keep up a steady barrage if one rank is loading while the rank in front of it is firing. This requires great timing and cooperation and is difficult to maintain for long during a battle.

A burst can be used in three different ways. An attacker may:

- 1) Spray a restricted arc in front of himself, trying to affect multiple targets.
 - 2) Spray a restricted arc in front of himself, trying to hit a single target and having an increased chance of doing so.
 - 3) Concentrate the burst upon a single target, trying to inflict more damage upon the target than would have been done other wise.
- Each of these options is described below in greater detail.

SPRAYING MULTIPLE TARGETS

A burst can be fired in a 60° arc at Short Range, a 30° arc at Medium Range or a 15° arc at Long Range. The attacker simply picks out two to five targets within the arc, which are relatively close to each other and declares his intentions. Potential targets in the firing arc cannot be skipped so that two widely separated targets (or groups) are only affected by the spray. If the attacker indiscriminately fires a burst at a group of targets, the GM should randomly determine which five targets are being shot at.

Every eligible target is then attacked on the Firearm Attack Table. Halve the attacker's OB, and make a separate combat roll against each of the targets.

SPRAYING A SINGLE TARGET

A burst can be fired at a single target with the sole intention of increasing the attacker's chance of hitting it. The firer gets a +25 to his OB for this attack, but any hit is resolved as a single shot on the Firearm Attack Table.

Additionally, the burst has a chance of affecting up to four other secondary targets. See Section 4.3.4 for more on how to determine the eligibility of secondary targets. Their is no OB modifier for attacks on these secondary targets.

FIREARM CHART

Name	Type	Rate	Fumble	PB	Range (Feet)			Range Modifiers				Armor Modifiers					Critical
					SR	MR	LR	PB	SR	MR	LR	20-17	16-13	12-9	8-5	4-1	
Pistol	1 H Proj	1 per 6/3 rnd	9	10	40	80	200	+10	0	-50	-100	-5	+5	+5	+10	+10	Puncture
Duelling Pistol	1 H Proj	1 per 6/3 rnd	9	10	50	100	250	+10	0	-50	-100	-5	0	+5	+5	+5	Puncture
Carbine	2 H Proj	1 per 6/3 rnd	10	20	100	200	300	+10	0	-50	-75	-5	+5	+5	+5	+5	Puncture
Musket	2 H Proj	1 per 7/4 rnd	10	20	120	250	370	+10	0	-50	-75	0	+10	+10	+10	+15	Puncture
Harquebus	2 H Proj+	1 per 7/4 rnd	11	20	130	280	400	+10	0	-50	-75	0	+10	+10	+10	+15	Puncture
Blunderbuss	2 H Proj	1 per 6/3 rnd	10	10	80	170	350	+20	0	-50	-100	-15	-5	0	+10	+20	Shrapnel
Grenade	Thrown	1 per rnd	6	10*	30*	100*	150*	+100*	+50*	+30*	0*	0	0	0	0	0	Shrapnel
Cannon, Cannister†	Support	1 per 8 rnd	2	10	75	150	300	-25	0	+25	0	0	0	0	0	0	Shrapnel
Cannon, Cannonball§	Support	1 per 8 rnd	2	10	75	150	300	-25	0	+25	0	0	0	0	0	0	Impact

Type: 1 H Proj = One-Handed Projectile; 2 H Proj = Two-Handed Projectile; 2 H Proj+ = Requires forked-rest to fire, otherwise -10 OB.

Rate: 1 per #/ # rnd = First number for Matchlocks & Wheellocks, second number for Flintlocks. Using paper cartridges subtracts 2 rnds from loading time for Matchlocks & Wheellocks, 1 rnd for Flintlocks.

*: For determining thrown accuracy *only*. †: Use the Firearm Attack Table and the Grape Shot attack rules, Section 4.3.4.

§: Use the Grenade Attack Table as 5 pounds of explosive



CONCENTRATING ON A SINGLE TARGET

A burst can be concentrated on a single target with the intention of hitting him with more than one bullet. The attack is made normally on the Firearm Attack Table. Multiply all concussion hits by 150%. Any critical strikes are rolled on the Shrapnel table.

CANNON GRAPE SHOT ROUNDS (4.3.4)

Cannon grape shot rounds (fired from a Cannister Cannon) have a chance to affect more than one target.

If the primary target of a cannon discharge is next to another potential target, that secondary target must be attacked with another (secondary) combat roll if both of the following conditions apply.

- 1) The secondary target is within 5% (lateral displacement) of the range from the weapon to the primary target.
- 2) The attacker has a clear line of fire to the secondary target.

To simulate the reduced effect of a cannon discharge at a secondary target, the secondary combat roll should be made with a +0 OB.

FIREARM ATTACK TABLE

	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
01-0X	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	01-0X
0X-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0X-39
40-42	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40-42
43-45	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43-45
46-48	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	46-48
49-51	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	3	3	2	0	0	0	2	0	49-51
52-54	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	2	4	3	3	2	0	0	3	2	52-54
55-57	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	2	2	4	4	3	2	0	1	4	3	55-57
58-60	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	4	4	3	1	1	5A	4	58-60
61-63	1	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	3	5	5	4	4	1	2	5A	5	61-63
64-66	1	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	5	5	5	5	2	2	6A	6A	64-66
67-69	1	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	5	6	5	5A	2	2	6A	6A	67-69
70-72	2	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	2	3	4	4A	6	6	6	6A	2	3	6B	6A	70-72
73-75	2	4	4	4A	3	4	4	5A	3	4	4	4A	6	6	6A	6A	2	3	6B	7A	73-75
76-78	2	4	4	5A	4	4	5	5A	3	4	4A	5A	6	7	6A	7A	3	4A	7B	7B	76-78
79-81	2	4	5A	5A	4	5	5A	6A	3	4	5A	5A	6	7	7A	7A	3	5A	7B	7B	79-81
82-84	2	4	5A	5B	5	5	6A	6B	4	4	5A	6B	7	7A	7A	7B	4A	6A	8C	8B	82-84
85-87	3	5	5A	6B	5	6	6A	7B	4	5A	6B	6B	7	7A	7B	7B	5A	6B	9C	8C	85-87
88-90	3	5A	6A	6B	5	6	7A	7B	4	6A	6B	7B	7	8A	8B	8B	6B	7B	10C	8C	88-90
Maximum Result for Duelling Pistol																					
91-93	3	6A	6A	7B	6	7A	7A	8B	5	6A	7B	8B	8B	8B	8B	9B	7B	8B	12C	9C	91-93
94-96	4	6A	7A	7B	6	7A	8A	8B	5	6A	7B	8B	8B	9B	9B	10B	8B	9C	13C	11C	94-96
97-99	4	7A	7A	8B	7A	8A	8A	9B	6	7A	8B	9B	9B	9B	10B	11B	9C	10C	15D	13D	97-99
100-102	4	7A	8A	8B	7A	8A	9A	10B	6	7A	8B	9B	9B	10B	11B	12B	10C	12C	17D	15D	100-102
103-105	5	8A	8A	9B	8A	9A	9A	11B	7A	8A	9B	10B	10A	11B	12B	13C	11C	14C	19D	17D	103-105
Maximum Result for Pistol																					
106-108	5	8A	9A	9B	8A	9A	10A	12B	7A	8A	9B	10B	11B	12B	13C	14C	12C	16D	21D	19E	106-108
109-111	6	9A	9A	10B	9A	10A	11A	13B	8A	9A	10B	11B	12B	13C	15C	16D	14D	18D	22E	21E	109-111
112-114	6	9A	10A	11B	9A	10A	12B	14B	8A	9A	10B	11C	13C	14C	17D	18D	16D	20D	23E	23E	112-114
115-117	7	10A	10A	12B	10A	11A	13B	16C	9A	10B	11B	12C	14D	16D	19D	20D	18D	22D	24E	25E	115-117
118-120	7A	10A	11A	13B	10A	12A	14B	18C	10A	11B	12B	13C	15D	18D	21D	22E	20D	24D	25E	27E	118-120
Maximum Result for Carbine & Musket																					
121-123	8A	11A	11B	14B	11A	13B	15B	20C	11B	12B	13C	14C	16D	20D	23E	24E	22D	26E	27E	29E	121-123
124-126	8A	11A	12B	15C	11A	14B	16C	22C	12B	13C	15C	16D	18D	22E	25E	26E	24E	28E	29E	31E	124-126
127-129	9A	12A	12B	16C	12B	15B	17C	24C	13C	14C	17D	18D	20E	24E	27E	28E	26E	30E	31E	33F	127-129
130-132	9A	12B	13B	17C	13B	16C	19C	26C	14C	15D	19D	20D	22E	26E	29E	30E	28E	32E	33F	35F	130-132
133-135	10A	13B	14B	18C	14B	18C	21C	28D	15C	16D	21D	22E	24E	28E	31E	32F	30E	34F	35F	37G	133-135
Maximum Result for Harquebus & Blunderbuss																					

Note: All criticals are *Puncture* except for Blunderbuss criticals, which are *Shrapnel*.

01-0X=Failure: If Failure is rolled, roll 1D10: 01-05=Misfire; 06-09=Fumble; 10=Explosion (see Grenades).



FIREARM/GRENADE FUMBLE TABLE

	PROJECTILE (1-HANDED)	PROJECTILE (2-HANDED)	GRENADE
01-25	Mysteriously, you elect not to fire this time.	A momentary hesitation loses you the opportunity to fire this phase.	Uncertain aim causes you to elect not to throw this phase.
26-30	Your clumsy maneuvers prevent an effective shooting opportunity. Try again next fire phase.	Poor grip and nasty kickback. Take 10 hits (and you miss).	Your slowness with the grenade causes you to delay throwing till next phase.
31-40	Distracted by thoughts of kelp, you fail to fire this round.	You fire the load into the air, then you're stunned for 1 round as you realize your foolishness.	You elect not to throw for a full round.
41-50	Get your eyes checked. Momentary double vision convinces you to wait out the rest of this round (you are at -50 this round).	You fire the load into the ground. Your sheer incompetence costs you 2 rounds of stunned amazement.	Your bag tilts, emptying all the grenades onto the ground.
51-60	The serpentine is caught on your belt. It will take 2 rounds to draw a new weapon or 1-6 to wrest this one free.	Slight sprain to your off-hand wrist causes all further 2-handed attacks to be at -20. You take 5 hits.	Confusion and a personal crisis stun you for 2 rounds.
61-70	Your spastic shooting hits 10 feet short of the target. You are -30 to activity next round.	Break a finger and take 8 hits. You are stunned 2 rounds, and all attacks using that hand are at -70.	A mental lapse: Did I fill this grenade with powder or with rum? gives you pause for 3 rounds of complete inactivity.
71-80	Poke yourself in the eye while trying to get fancy. +8 hits. For 2 rounds you are at -20 activity and stunned.	Trigger slips as you take aim. Make an attack with +0 OB on the closest opponent.	Premature release causes the grenade to sail 30 degrees to the left of the intended target.
81-85	Those pistols are a little tough to get a grip on. You unceremoniously drop the thing and it bounces a good 5 feet away, breaking a non-essential part (still functions, but -50).	Whirling around for no apparent reason, you bash your weapon against a nonaggressive surface and break a non-essential part (still functions, but -50).	You manage to pummel yourself with the unlit grenade and take 8 hits, stunned 3 rounds.
86-90	Ball falls out of the barrel, on which you slip and fall in a comic display. You are down and stunned next round (and red-faced).	Horror at your shooting ineptitude stuns you for 3 rounds.	A rotten throw causes the grenade to travel only half of the intended range.
91-95	Fingers mysteriously entangled in weapon cause you some consternation and 3 rounds of stunned extraction.	Burn yourself on the hot barrel as you fire ineffectively. You take 4 hits and are stunned 2 rounds.	Your exuberant lofting of the grenade gives you a hernia. +15 hits, and you are at -70 until cured.
96-99	While daydreaming, you put your hand in front of the barrel while firing. Lose a finger. +10 hits; 5 hits per round and stunned 3 rounds.	Very poor grip causes you to fire wildly. 20% chance you hit someone from in a 180 degree arc in front of you (roll attack with +0 OB). Your foolishness stuns you for 4 rounds.	A beautiful swing sends the grenade hurtling backwards. You throw exactly 180 degrees the intended direction, roll randomly for range.
100	You artfully spin the weapon in your hand and deal a point-blank attack on yourself (+0 OB). Roll the attack and say your prayers, buddy.	You pull the trigger and empty the gun into your own foot. +20 hits; 8 hits per round. -70 to activity and stunned 3 rounds.	With a puff of smoke and a "foof," the fuse burns in fraction of a second instead of its intended duration. Panic.



USING TWO WEAPONS AT ONCE (4.3.5)

A number of weapon combinations are possible in *At Rapier's Point*. Whenever a character is using two melee weapons together, the GM has the option of using the rules outlined in *Arms Law* 5.1 or those given below. Whenever a character has a firearm in either hand, or a firearm in one hand and a melee weapon in the other, however, the GM should definitely use the rules below.

Whenever a character uses two weapons at once, this will incur heavy penalties to his off-hand weapon. Also note that the attacker should be limited to a single target for that attack unless he's operating in some kind of accelerated mode.

The total OB for a Weapon Combination attack made in a single phase should not exceed the highest OB for one of the weapons being used. For example, if a combatant is using two weapons and has an OB of 20 for one and 60 for the other, the total OB for the weapon combination should not exceed a +60 total. Additionally, the weapon with the lower OB can never have its OB boosted higher than its maximum OB skill bonus.

Example: *Using the specifications given above, a Weapon Combination attack could be made with one attack (the better one) at +40 and the other attack (the worse one) at +20. The attacker's total OB would then still be +60.*

OFF-HAND WEAPON USE (4.3.6)

Weapon skills must normally be developed separately for each hand (e.g., firing a revolver with the left hand as opposed to the right). When a weapon is wielded from an off hand, this is considered to be a similar skill. Thus, the attacker can either use his skill rank with the weapon in the off-hand or half his skill rank with the weapon in his trained hand, whichever is higher.

Additionally, barring ambidexterity, using a weapon in an off-hand incurs an extra -20 OB penalty after all other adjustments and modifiers are taken into consideration.

OTHER FIRING METHODS (4.3.7)

As you might have guessed, not everyone fires pistols one-handed or bothers to use both hands to fire a rifle or musket. For those characters who like to do things a different way, here's a list of the bonuses and penalties they face.

1-HANDED FIREARMS

If a character decides to fire a 1-handed firearm with two hands, he adds +5 to his OB when firing at Medium or Long Range.

2-HANDED FIREARMS

If a character braces a 2-handed firearm on a stable surface before firing it, add +5 to his OB when firing at Medium or Long Range.

If a character tries to fire a carbine with one hand, his attack takes a -20 OB modifier. If a character tries to fire a rifle or musket with one hand, his attack is at -40 OB. In either case, whenever a character fires a 2-handed firearm with one hand, the all range increments of the weapon are halved.

4.4 OVERWHELMING ADVANTAGE

If the GM determines that a combatant has an overwhelming advantage over his opponent, that combatant may be assumed to carry out his chosen action to its fullest extent. Thus, executions and the like can be made without having to consult the appropriate attack chart. A roll should still be made to determine if a weapon failure, etc., occurs.

4.5 GRENADES AND EXPLOSIVES

The only explosive in *At Rapier's Point* is black powder, used for sapping charges and hand grenades.

Sapping charges are casks of gunpowder armed with long fuses. A sapper attempts to tunnel beneath a besieged fortification's walls and place his charges where they will (he hopes) collapse a section of wall when they explode. He then lights the fuse and runs for his life.

Grenades are spherical shells of iron, pottery or heavy glass filled with gunpowder. They have a blast radius of about 25 feet. The fuse is a length of match usually measured to go off after about 5 seconds. To use a grenade, light and throw. This is a bit risky, however. If the fuse is too short or is poorly made, a grenadier can end up blowing himself and his comrades to bits.

Hand grenades see extensive use in Germany, particularly during the Thirty Years' War, but they don't become common in the rest of Europe until the 1680s, well after the period covered in this game. Adventurers may encounter and learn how to use them if they travel in or along the borders of the Holy Roman Empire. Otherwise, grenades will be rare, certainly not standard equipment for the armies of France and England.

THROWING GRENADES (4.5.1)

Explosives produce effects within five Blast Radii determined by the type and amount of explosives. The deadliest effects are found within the first blast radius which is centered on the detonation. Reduced effects are felt further away from the detonation, and the damage threshold for each radius is shown on the Explosives Attack Table.

Although carrying explosives around is extremely dangerous, it's likely that a player will eventually want to try it, and if he does, he'll probably end up wanting to toss it around. Explosives can be thrown at the same time as any other missile weapon: during either of the Fire Phases. Additionally, explosives can be placed or thrown during the Movement and Maneuver Phase.

The attacker must specify where he wants the explosive to land (and then, presumably, detonate). He then rolls and adds his Thrown Explosives OB, the range modifier specified below and any other modifiers applied by the GM. For example, throwing the explosive through an open window could be described as Very Hard to do, and thus would receive a -20 modifier.

THROWN EXPLOSIVES RANGE MOD CHART

Range	Modifiers
Point Blank (1-3 yards)	+100
Short Range (4-10 yards)	+50
Medium Range (11-30 yards)	+30
Long Range (31-50 yards)	+0



Note: An attacker throwing a grenade might want to hit a specific target with it, thus getting a +35 touching bonus during the effect resolution. This is extremely difficult to do. Subtract the opponent's Quickness bonus (if he has "combat aware" and able to move) and an additional -30 to the throwing roll.

If the result of the throwing roll is over 100, the thrown explosive lands as intended. If the result is 100 or less, the attacker must then consult the Thrown Error Table to determine where the explosive did land.

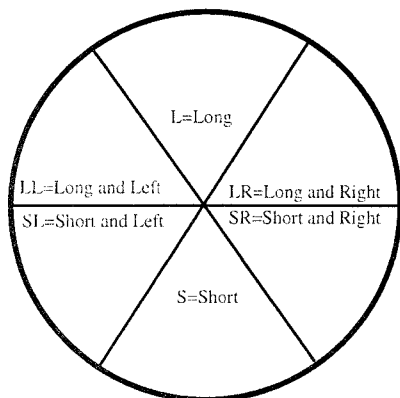
Once the landing point of the explosive has been determined, proceed onto *Blowing Things Up*.

To determine the range by which the throw has missed, use the modified roll and consult the following chart.

THROWN ERROR CHART				
Net Roll	PB	Intended Range		
		SR	MR	LR
101+	0	0	0	0
99-100	1	1	1	1
98	1	1	1	2
97	1	1	1	3
96	1	1	2	4
95	1	1	2	5
94	1	2	3	6
93	1	2	3	7
92	1	2	4	8
91	1	2	5	10
86-90	1	2	6	12
81-86	2	3	8	14
71-80	2	3	10	16
51-70	2	3	12	18
31-50	2	4	14	20
11-30	3	5	17	25
06-10	3	6	20	30
02-05	3	8	25	40
01	4	10	30	50

Notes: All distances are in yards.
PB: Point Blank Range **SR:** Short Range
MR: Medium Range **LR:** Long Range

Next determine the direction of error. For game purposes, assume six possible error vectors. This is especially handy when playing on a hex grid.



Simply roll on the table below. L = Long; LR = Long and Right; LL = Long and Left; S = Short; SR = Short and Right; SL = Short and Left.

ERROR DIRECTION CHART				
1D100 Roll	PB	Intended Range		
		SR	MR	LR
90-100	L	L	L	L
80-89	L	L	L	LR
70-79	L	L	L	LL
60-69	L	L	LR	SR
50-59	L	L	LL	SR
40-49	L	LR	SR	S
30-39	L	LL	SL	S
20-29	LR	SR	S	S
10-19	LL	SL	S	S
05-09	SR	S	S	S
03-04	SL	S	S	S
01-02	S	S	S	S

Using this data, establish the new landing point of the explosive. Then proceed onto the next section to determine the explosion's effect.

BLOWING THINGS UP

Once the location of an explosive has been determined, the actual effects of the explosion are resolved.

Each pound of explosives increases the Blast Radii and damage. A Blast Radius is 2 yards wide for each pound of explosive.

Example: A single pound of black powder within a grenade would have a 1st Blast Radius of 0-2 yards, a 2nd Blast Radius of 2-4 yards, a 3rd Blast Radius of 4-6 yards, a 4th Blast Radius of 6-8 yards and a 5th Blast Radius of 8-10 yards.

Black powder is detonated by a lit fuse. Fuses burn at the rate of about one inch per second, although it's possible for them to burn faster or slower. See *Malfunctioning Explosives*, below, for more about this.

This means that for every second that a fuse is burning, this should be construed to take 10% of a round. A long fuse can take several rounds before detonating.

When the explosive detonates, follow this three step procedure:

- 1) Identify all potential targets. This depends upon the explosive's Blast Radii.
- 2) Determine which Blast Radius each target is in. Ties should go to the farther radius.
- 3) Make a separate effect resolution roll against each target on the Explosive Attack Chart, adding only the modifiers listed on that chart. (Note: The attacker's OB is not figured into the resolution process.)

Quickness bonuses only have effect in certain tactical situations (e.g., target characters dive for cover). The GM must determine whether any evasive maneuver is feasible or even possible.

All criticals due to explosives are rolled on the Impact Critical Strike Table, or if the GM prefers (and the situation warrants it) the Shrapnel Critical Strike Table, provided here.



GRENADE ATTACK TABLE

	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
01-02 UM	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	UM 01-02
03-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	02-30
31-33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	31-33
34-36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	34-36
37-39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	37-39
40-42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	40-42
43-45	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	43-45
46-48	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	2A	46-48
49-51	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	3A	49-51
52-54	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	2	3A	52-54
55-57	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	3A	1	2	3	3A	55-57
58-60	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	3A	1	2	3A	4A	58-60
61-63	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	3A	1	2A	3A	4A	61-63
64-66	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	3	0	0	1	3	0	1	2	4A	1	3A	4A	4A	64-66
67-69	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	3	0	0	2	3	0	1	3	4A	2	3A	4A	5A	67-69
70-72	0	1	1	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3A	0	1	3	5A	2A	3A	4A	5A	70-72
73-75	0	1	1	3A	1	1	2	4	0	1	2	4A	1	2	4	5A	2A	4A	5A	5A	73-75
76-78	0	1	2	3A	1	1	3	4	0	1	3	4A	1	2	4	5A	2A	4A	5A	6A	76-78
79-81	0	1	2	3A	1	1	3	4A	0	1	3	5A	1	2	5	5A	2A	4A	5A	6A	79-81
82-84	0	1	2	3A	1	2	3	4A	1	1	4	5A	1	3	5A	6A	3A	5A	6A	6A	82-84
85-87	0	1	2	3A	1	2	3	4A	1	1	4A	5A	2	3	6A	6A	3A	5A	6A	7A	85-87
88-90	0	1	3A	3A	1	2	4	4A	1	2	4A	6A	2	3A	6A	6A	3A	5B	6B	7B	88-90
Maximum Results For 5th Blast Radius																					
91-93	1	1	3A	3A	2	2	4	4A	1	2	5A	6A	3A	4A	6A	7A	4B	6B	7B	7B	91-93
94-96	1	2	3A	4A	2	2	4A	5A	1	2	5A	6B	3A	4A	7A	7B	4B	6B	7B	8B	94-96
97-99	1	2	3A	4A	2	3	4A	5A	1	2A	5A	7B	3A	4A	7B	7B	4B	7B	7B	8B	97-99
100-102	1	2	3A	4B	2	3	4A	5B	2	3A	6B	7B	3A	4A	7B	8B	5B	7B	8B	8B	100-102
103-105	1	2	4A	4B	3	3A	5A	5B	2A	3A	6B	7B	4B	5B	8B	8B	5B	8C	8C	9C	103-10
Maximum Results For 4th Blast Radius																					
106-108	1	3	4B	5B	3	3A	5A	6B	2A	3A	6B	8B	4B	5B	8B	9B	6C	8C	9C	9C	106-108
109-111	2	3	4B	5B	3	3A	5B	5B	2A	3A	7B	8B	4B	5B	9B	9C	6C	9C	9C	10C	109-111
112-114	2	3	4B	5B	3A	4A	5B	6B	2A	4B	7B	9C	5B	6B	9C	10C	7C	9C	10C	10C	112-114
115-117	2	3A	5B	6B	3A	4A	6B	6C	3A	4B	8C	9C	5B	6B	10C	10C	7C	10C	10C	11C	115-117
118-120	2	4A	5B	6B	3A	4B	6B	6C	3A	4B	8C	10C	5C	7C	10C	11C	8C	10D	11D	11D	118-120
Maximum Results For 3rd Blast Radius																					
121-123	2	4A	6B	6C	3A	5B	6B	6C	3B	4B	4C	10C	6C	7C	11C	11C	8D	11D	11D	12D	121-123
124-126	3	4A	6B	6C	3A	5B	6C	7C	3B	5B	9C	11D	6C	8C	11C	12D	9D	11D	12D	12D	124-126
127-129	3A	4A	6C	7C	4A	5B	7C	8D	4B	5C	10C	11D	6C	8C	12D	12D	9D	12D	12D	13D	127-129
130-132	4A	5A	7C	7C	4B	6C	7C	9D	4C	6C	10D	12D	7C	9D	12D	13D	10D	12D	13D	14D	130-132
133-135	5A	5B	7C	8D	5B	6C	8C	10D	5C	7C	11D	12D	8D	9D	13D	14D	11D	13E	13E	15E	133-135
Maximum Results For 2nd Blast Radius																					
136-138	6B	6B	7C	9D	6C	7C	9C	11D	6C	8C	11D	13D	9D	10D	13D	15D	12E	14E	14E	16E	136-138
139-141	7B	7C	8D	10D	7C	8D	10D	12D	7C	9D	12D	14D	10D	11D	14D	16E	13E	15E	14E	17E	139-141
142-144	8C	8C	9D	11D	8D	9D	11D	13E	8D	10D	12D	15E	11D	12D	14E	17E	14E	16E	15E	18E	142-144
145-147	9D	9D	10D	12E	9D	10E	12E	14E	9D	11E	13E	16E	12E	13E	15E	18E	15E	17E	15E	19E	145-147
148-150	10E	10E	11E	13E	10E	11E	13E	15E	10E	12E	14E	17E	13E	14E	16E	18E	16E	18E	16E	20E	148-150
Maximum Results For Ground Zero																					
151-153	10E	11E	12E	13E	11E	11E	13E	15E	11E	12E	14E	17E	13E	14E	16E	18E	16E	18E	16E	20E	151-153
154-156	11E	12E	13E	13E	12E	12E	13E	15E	12E	13E	14E	12E	13E	14E	16E	18E	16E	18E	16E	20E	154-156
157-159	12E	13E	14E	14E	13E	13E	14E	15E	13E	14E	15E	17E	14E	15E	16E	18E	16E	18E	16E	20E	157-159
160-162	13E	14E	15E	15E	14E	14E	15E	16E	14E	15E	16E	17E	15E	16E	17E	18E	16E	18E	16E	20E	160-162
163-165	14E	15E	16E	16E	15E	15E	16E	17E	15E	16E	17E	18E	16E	17E	18E	19E	16E	18E	16E	20E	163-165
Maximum Results For Cannonball																					
	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	

MODIFIERS

+ 5: per pound of explosive
+40: ground zero
+30: 2nd blast radii

+30: 2nd blast radii
+20: 3rd blast radii
+10: 4th blast radii

-x: Defender's cover bonus
-y: Defender's armor quality bonus
-z: Defender's applicable miscellaneous bonuses



SHRAPNEL STRIKE TABLE

	A	B	C	D	E
01-05	A grazing shot; no extra hits. Your gun just jammed . . . sorry.	You shoot off a piece of foe's equipment. +0 hits.	Hit foe's weapon, destroying it and breaking one of foe's fingers. +2 hits.	Foe is staggered by your effort. He is stunned next rnd. +6 hits.	Foe urinates in fear. +7 hits.
06-10	Just a nick . . . for +1 hit.	+2 hits.	Foe stunned next rnd. +3 hits.	Foe, impressed with your hail of fire, is stunned for 2 rnds. +7 hits.	You have initiative for the next 3 rnds. +10 hits
11-15	+3 hit.	You have initiative next rnd as foe checks for damage. +4 hits.	Hit foe's side in poorly aimed fire. +9 hits. You have the initiative.	Solid hit to shoulder blade. Foe is stunned for 4 rnds and is unable to parry for 2 rnds. He takes 2 hits/rnd. +9 hits.	Foe fumbles weapon and is unable to parry when he is stunned next rnds. +12 hits.
16-20	Foe may not attack next rnd. +4 hits.	Slash foe's side. He must parry next rnd. +5 hits.	Blows to the sides cause foe to parry for 2 rnds. +9 hits.	Foe takes 3 side strikes. He is stunned for 6 rnds and bleeds, taking 4 hits/rnd. +11 hits. Add 10 to your next action.	Grazing head strikes stun foe for 3 rnds. He takes 2 hits/rnd. +13 hits. Add 25 to next attack.
21-35	You gain initiative next rnd +4 hits.	Foe must parry next rnd at -40 as the metal is too close for comfort. +6 hits.	You shatter one of foe's ribs. Foe is stunned for 2 rnds, takes 2 hits/rnd, and is knocked on his back. +11 hits.	Foe hit in hip and along both sides. He is stunned and unable to parry for 4 rnds. is at -45, and takes 2 hits/rnd. +13 hits.	Several ribs shatter in glancing blows. Foe takes 2 hits/rnd and is stunned for 2 rnds with no parry. +15 hits.
36-45	Blow to foot. Foe receives 1 hit per rnd unless armored. +5 hits.	Strikes to calf and hand give +7 hits. Foe is at -10.	Strike foe's knee and calf. Foe receives 4 hits/rnd and foe is at -40. +12 hits.	Foe doubles over with hits to the shin, thigh, and groin. He receives 5 hits/rnd, is prone for 4 rnds and permanently sterile. +15 hits.	Arm and leg strike. if armored, foe takes +12 hits. If not, he takes +17 hits and is bleeding at 4 hits/rnd, is at -40 and stunned for 10 rnd.
46-50	Glancing shots to back of foe's neck. Foe must parry next rnd at -30. +5 hits.	Strike to the back and upper arm. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 2 rnds. Foe receives 2 hits/rnd and +8 Hits.	Strike across foe's back and buttocks — ouch. He takes 2 hits/rnd and is stunned for 3 rnds. +13 hits.	Strikes to lower back paralyze foe's legs. He is down (at -80 to all action) and taking 4 hits/rnd.	Multiple back blows send foe flying 10 feet. Unable to parry, foe is stunned for 12 rnds. He takes 6 hits/rnd and is at -70. +19 hits.
51-55	Two strikes to foe's collar area. He is knocked back parrying at -20 next rnd. Foe receives 2 hits/rnd and +6 hits.	Foe hit in side and upper arm. +10 hits. He is stunned for 3 rnds and takes 5 hits/rnd.	Foe staggers and parries for 3 rnds after receiving minor wounds to the chest and groin. Foe receives 3 hits/rnd and +15 hits.	Major wounds to foe's chest. He and is stunned and unable to parry for 3 rnds. He takes 5 hits/rnd. +19 hits.	Foe knocked back with chest strikes. Aorta damage causes 20 hits/rnd. Lung lacerations will suffocate foe in 4 rnds. He is prone, meanwhile. +21 hits.
56-60	Two shots to foe's leg. If armored, +4 hits. If not, +10 hits. Foe is stunned for next 3 rnds.	Two strikes to the thigh and one to the forearm sadden foe. Foe receives 4 hits/rnd and +11 hits. Foe is stunned 3 rnds and unable to parry. He is at -50.	Foe stunned for 5 rnds by strikes to the calf and thigh of both legs. He is down and taking 5 hits/rnd and is at -50. +16 hits.	You lacerate foe's thigh and shatter a hip joint. He is in a week long coma taking 5 hits/rnd. +22 hits.	Both thighs and groin very severely slashed. Foe takes 10 hits/rnd, is down and stunned for 20 rnds. +23 hits. Embarrassing.
61-65	Hit along wrist. Foe receives 2 hits/rnd. Foe is stunned next rnd. +10 hits.	Blows along forearm and opposite shoulder. Arms less than useless. Foe receives 4 hits/rnd and 12 hits.	Foe drops possessions after being struck in the arms. Foe takes +17 hits, stunned 5 rnds, -25 on actions, and bleeds. Receives 6 hits/rnd Give up.	Foe loses hand, and arm is severely mangled. He is unable to parry for 5 rnds and is stunned for 20 rnds. Receives 6 hits/rnd. +24 hits.	You deliver ugly wounds to foe's arms and shoulders. Limbs are useless. Foe is at -60, stunned, and unable to parry for 5 rnds. +25 hits.
66	Strikes to shoulder/collar area. Foe is stunned for 5 rnds and arm is useless. Activity at -30 and foe receives 4 hits per rnd. +55 hits.	Elbow shattered with forearm left dangling. Foe receives 6 hits/rnd as foe sees this and passes out.. +20 hits.	You cut foe down at the knees. Foe is immobilized and at -100. Receives 10 hits/rnd and foe is stunned for 12 rnds.	The side of foe's head springs 3 leaks. Too late to call a plumber; he's dead. Very gory.	You expose foe's chest cavity appropriate for pre med anatomy course. He is dead. +15 to your next action.
67-70	Blow along neck, upper chest and arm. Foe knocked down stunned for 4 rnds. Foe receives 4 hits/rnd. +17 hits.	Neck and arm strikes cause 6 hits/rnd and +14 hits. Foe at -20 and stunned for 5 rnds.	Multiple strikes along the upper body Foe is struck for 8 rnds and cannot parry for 4 rnds. Receives 2 hits/rnd and +20 hits.	Shoulder smashed. Foe spins back 10 feet. He is stunned and unable to parry for 7 rnds. Arm is useless. Receives 6 hits/rnd. +26 hits.	Muscles and tendons in foe's arm and leg are torn beyond recognition. He takes 12 hits/rnd and is down for 20 rnds. +28 hits.
71-75	Tendons in both legs are slashed. Foe is at -50 and is taking 4 hits/ rnd. He is out for 2 rnds and stunned for 5 more. Too bad	Foe's leg riddled. He is at -50 with 4 hits/rnd and also stunned for 5 rnds. +17 hits.	Leg muscles and tendons slashed by strikes to calf and thigh. Foe stunned and unable to parry for 8 rnds, takes 5 hits/rnd, and is at -75. +25 hits.	Hits in the shin, knee, hip, and side, down foe in a convulsive heap. He is down for 24 rnds and at -90. He takes 8 hits/rnd. +27 hits.	Foe loses both legs to your razing assault. He is in shock, taking 14 hits/rnd, and will die anyway in 6 rnds. +30 hits.
76-80	Foe's left side and arm are perforated. Foe is at -40, stunned and unable to parry for 6 rnds. Foe takes 3 hits/rnd and +18 hits.	Foe's left arm takes multiple lacerations. Receives 3 hits/rnd and operates at -40. Foe is stunned next rnd and cannot parry. +18 hits.	Blows to both arms and chest break several indigenous bones. Foe is stunned for 12 rnds, takes 8 hits/rnd, and is unable to parry. +27 hits.	Strike destroys foe's weapon and neatly separates his arm from his bod. Foe is in shock and prone taking 8 hits/rnd. +30 hits.	Bone splintered form one shoulder to the other. Additional thigh wound. Foe is prone taking 14 hits/rnd and equipment is destroyed. +32 hits.
81-85	Foe pummeled in the side and hip. Immobilized until aided. He takes 6 hits/rnd and +20 hits.	Strikes to the side and leg. Foe experiences 9 Hits/rnd for bleeding. Stunned and unable to parry for 5 rnds before passing out from shock. +21 hits.	Several side and back wounds cause foe to parry in a stunned state for the next 13 rnds. Foe takes 9 hits/rnd and +28 hits.	Severe blows to foe's side and abdomen. Foe is stunned and unable to parry for 5 rnds. He is taking 10 hits/rnd and is at -95. +32 hits.	Witless loser charges you as you sever his spine, hand, and lacerate the side of this head. He falls in a heap, quite lifeless.
86-90	Hit foe's back and upper leg. He is bloody and knocked 10 feet away. Foe unable to parry for 5 rnds. 6 hits per rnd, and +18 hits.	Strikes blow away ear and pierce hip. Foe at -30, cannot parry for 2 rnds, stunned for 6 rnds, and takes 8 hits/rnd. +27 hits.	Foe knocked down. Strikes kill an unarmored foe. Otherwise, he is stunned, unable to parry for 12 rnds, receiving 9 hits/rnd. +30 hits.	Sent spinning, foe is struck in the spine, the kidneys, and he loses a hand. This one is history in one rnd. +33 hits.	Disemboweling stream of metal pummels foe's leg, abdomen, and chest. He lapses into unconsciousness before dying in 4 rnds. +35 hits.
91-95	Foe loses one ear, and nose is lacerated. Hearing at -50. Stunned for 10 rnds if armored or out 3 hours if not. Foe receives 5 hits/rnd and +23 hits.	Impacts to middle and upper back, and back of head. If unarmored, foe dies; otherwise, he is stunned for 10 rnds. Takes 8 hits per rnd and +25 hits.	Foe makes an excellent ventilator with holes in the leg, side, and chest. He expires in 1 rnd. +32 hits.	Several strikes take out the liver spleen, and intestines Poor slob fights for one messy rnd then drops. +34 hits.	Spinal shot induces a bizarre twist. Arteries in chest and arm also severed. Foe is paralyzed and dies in 3 rnds. +40 hits.
96-99	Malicious blow to foe's face. He loses nose cheekbone and a part of his skull. Foe is in coma until revived. Receives 4 hits/rnd and +25 hits.	Foe brutalized in strikes to the side, cheek, neck, and brain. Foe dies in 2 prone rnds. Add 10 to your next attack. +35 hits.	Foe knocked back 15 feet without an arm, and with gashes in the neck. He is paralyzed by a broken spine and dies in 8 rnds. +35 hits.	A classic example of unanesthetized surgery. You remove a plethora of vital organs. A bit sloppy. Foe is out and dies in 3 rnds. +35 hits.	A Steady stream nails the sucker in brain, neck, heart, abdomen, and groin. Your allies within 50 feet add +10 to their next attacks. You are out of ammunition.
100	Hip is destroyed. More importantly, the head is messily separated from the shoulders. Bye.	Poor sucker is without the lower half of his body and has a hole where his eye was to boot. It was quick.	Foe takes strikes to the chest, and face. Lungs fill with blood, making breathing difficult. Poor fool expires in 3 messy rnds.	Foe hit in the heart and brain for a prompt demise. Good shot. Add +20 to your next attack	Foe bursts into a bloody pulp. Yuck.



MALFUNCTIONING EXPLOSIVES (4.5.2)

Grenades can malfunction if the attacker rolls a failure on the attack table and then rolls a Weapon Malfunction.

When an explosive malfunctions, roll on the table below.

EXPLOSIVE MALFUNCTION CHART

Roll	Result
≤50	Dead Fuse
51-100	Slow Fuse
101-150	Fast Fuse
151+	Explosion/Delay/Dud

Dead Fuse: The fuse has gone out. Roll 1D100 again. On 1-50, the fuse stays out permanently. On 51-100, the fuse starts up again.

Slow Fuse: The fuse takes twice as long to burn.

Fast Fuse: The fuse burns twice as fast.

Explosion: If the grenade is within reach of the person lighting it, a stray spark detonates it immediately. If the grenade is out of the lighter's reach, the fuse burns normally until it gets to the grenade, where it apparently goes out. Roll a 1D100. On 1-25, the grenade is a "dud" and will not detonate. On 26-100, the grenade detonates after 1D10 seconds.

4.6 FENCING

Fencing is much more complex than medieval swordsmanship. Swashbuckling melee combat emphasizes light weapons that can be used to strike quickly and accurately and a lack of armor (because firearms are quickly making it obsolete). To simulate this, use the rules for parrying and for using a weapon in each hand. A character is assumed to be right or left handed; he can train to use a weapon equally well with either hand at twice the effort. He can also attack (or parry) against a single target with two weapons in one round, but any weapon he uses with his off hand gets -20 OB. However, he can choose not to attack with his off-hand weapon but to use its bonus to parry. If the character uses part of his OB for parrying, he must decrease both of his weapons' OBs by that amount.

FIRST STRIKE (4.6.1)

Simulate the relative quickness of fencing weapons by giving the following bonuses to Quickness when determining first strike. Don't forget to include the bonuses for weapon length in the modifiers. Assuming two opponents have the same Quickness, the character with the longer weapon will tend to strike first.

Smallsword	+20
Rapier	+15
Longsword	+10

WEAPON BREAKAGE (4.6.2)

Fencing weapons are more likely to be broken than their heavier medieval counterparts. Use the Combat Use Breakage procedure when a character is facing an opponent with a blade heavier than his own.



4.7 OTHER WEAPONS

BOWS (4.7.1)

Archery has become rare in Western Europe; guns have made bows obsolete as a military weapon. However, many nations in the Islamic world and the Orient still rely on archers extensively, as do tribesmen in Africa and the Americas. Adventurers will primarily encounter archery while traveling overseas.

Arabs and Orientals use sophisticated composite recurve bows, some of which can be fired from horseback. African, American and Indonesian tribesmen use simple longbows.

MELEE WEAPONS (4.7.2)

AXE

Some infantry units carry one-handed axes instead of swords. The axe is useful for cutting firewood and for felling and preparing trees for whatever use the army wants to put them to. It's equally handy for breaking skulls in battle. Use the Handaxe Attack Table.

BAYONET

This is a dagger attached to the base of a cone-shaped wooden plug. When the plug is jammed in the muzzle of a musket, it transforms the gun into a 6-foot polearm. The bayonet, first used by French infantry in 1647, is understandably popular with musketeers because it enables them to defend themselves from mounted soldiers. There are drawbacks, however. If the plug is too tight, the bayonet can't be removed, making the gun useless. If it is too loose, the blade could fall out just when a soldier needs it most. Use the Polearm Attack Table.

BROADSWORD

This is a refinement of the medieval broadsword. It has a heavy double-edged blade and a basket hilt that completely encloses the sword hand. The hilt can be used for punching. The broadsword is primarily a cavalry blade and is quickly being replaced by lighter weapons.

CUTLASS/SABER

Whether this weapon is a "cutlass" or a "saber" depends on whether it's being used on land or sea. Either way, it's a short, heavy blade, sometimes slightly curved, with a single cutting edge. The cutlass is primarily a chopping and slashing weapon. It has a heavy basket hilt similar to that of the broadsword above. The cutlass is popular with seaman but sees lots of use on land also. Use the Broadsword Attack Table, subtracting 5 from OBs versus ATs 1-12, and adding 5 to ATs 17-20.

DAGGER

There are an infinite variety of these, some for cutting, some for stabbing, some for throwing. Knives make useful sidearms when one can't afford to be seen wearing a sword. They're easily concealed, and can also be used as off-hand parrying weapons in a fight.

EPEE/FOIL

These are light weapons blunted for fencing practice. Both have cup hilts and highly flexible blades. The major difference is that the epee has a triangular blade with no cutting edge while the foil has a rectangular double-edged blade. These blades could be danger-

ous if sharpened, but they generally won't be seen outside the fencing academy training room. Use the Rapier Attack Table, subtracting 10 from all OBs. All criticals are Puncture.

KRIS

An Indonesian dagger with a ridged serpentine (wavy) blade. Characters probably won't see one of these outside the Spice Islands. Use the Dagger Attack Table.

MAIN-GAUCHE

The main-gauche is a left-handed blocking weapon featuring a knuckle guard. It is used in concert with the rapier as a means of deflecting an opponent's blade, especially among the French. Its hilt can be used to deliver a punch like the hilt of the broadsword above. The main-gauche is not much used after 1640.

LONGSWORD

Similar to a rapier but with a longer (40") and heavier blade. It is often used in battle, where its weight can be brought to bear. It is used in the same way as the rapier and is a common cavalry sidearm. Use the Broadsword Attack Table, but subtract 5 from OBs versus ATs 1-8 and add 5 to OBs versus ATs 13-20.

RAPIER

The rapier, developed from the Italian stiletto, is the primary fencing weapon. It has a long (36") straight double-edged blade designed for thrusting. The hilt is often elaborate, with loops for the fingers and cups to protect the hand.

SCIMITAR

A heavy convex saber-type weapon with the edge on the outside curve. It's standard issue in many Moslem nations.

SMALLSWORD

A gentleman's dress sword which appeared in the middle of the 17th Century. It has a simpler hilt than the rapier and a shorter blade (around 30"). Use the Short Sword Attack Table.

HALBERD

A short polearm approximately 6 feet long. Its business end usually involves some combination of axe and pike; some versions have barbs useful for hooking an opponent's weapon, or the opponent. The halberd is a crowd control weapon used by guards, police and assorted deputies. It's not often seen on the battlefield. Use the Polearm Attack Table.

LANCE

An 8-foot cavalry polearm with a spear-like tip, used to impale targets a horseman is charging. Fairly rare, the lance is considered obsolete, but it's still the cavalier's best defense against pikemen.

PIKE

The standard infantry polearm: a 16- to 18-foot shaft tipped with a heavy iron point. It's used to ward off charging cavalry, although once an opponent gets past the tip, the pikeman is in trouble. Pikes are heavy, unwieldy weapons which require a lot of practice to handle well, especially in concert with a row of other soldiers. They're used only on the battlefield; in close quarters an 18-foot pole isn't very practical. After the introduction of the bayonet in 1647 the pike is gradually phased out. Use the Polearm Attack Table, adding 10 to all OBs, but prohibiting use in actual close combat.



BOARDING PIKE

A naval weapon 6 to 8 feet long used to repel boarders. It has a narrow blade with a cross-piece to prevent it from becoming stuck in a foe. Use the Pole Arm Attack Table.

UNUSUAL MELEE WEAPONS

BATON

The baton is simply a short cylindrical length of wood held in the left hand and used to deflect an opponent's blade. It is not really a battle weapon, rather more of a formal fencing weapon. Its use is primarily taught by Italian fencing masters. Use the Club Attack Table.

BUCKLER

A small metal shield carried in the left hand, used to deflect an opponent's blade. It can also be used to deliver a punch, like a cup hilt. The buckler is a formal fencing weapon, not a battle weapon. Use the Bare Fist Attack Table (or use the rules for Shield Bashing in *RMC IV*)

CLOAK

In addition to being a stylish garment, a cloak can also become an impromptu defensive weapon in a fight. A swashbuckler using a cloak keeps it constantly moving to conceal both his blade and himself. The cloak can also be used to perform a Disarm maneuver and can be snapped at an opponent like a bullwhip. How effective a cloak is depends on its length and weight—and how much OB a character expends to keep it moving. If using a cloak for defense, it adds 10 to the parry bonus of a character *if he is parrying*. Disarm Foe: Armed, skill can be used with a cloak. It can also be used to attack using the Whip Attack Table, subtracting 30 from all OBs.

GAROTTE

This is any strong rope, scarf, chain, cord, etc., which is looped around a victim's neck with the intention of strangling him. The garotte chokes a victim into unconsciousness or death and does no good against any other part of the body. A whip or lariat can be used as a garotte.

This method of attack is most effective when the victim is surprised. This isn't a very fair way to fight, but for those who don't care about honor it's a good weapon to resort to. Use of the garrote should be treated like a Maneuver rather than as an attack, with any applicable defensive bonuses of the victim subtracting from the maneuver. The attacker should make a maneuver based on Strength and Agility (optionally, a skill can be developed using the same development point cost as Subdual), with the GM assigning a difficulty. The result on the Maneuver Table (usually a number) should be subtracted from 100, and divided by 10. This result is the number of rounds that a person must be strangled by the garrote to produce unconsciousness. Twice that amount will result in death. If the result is not a number, but a success result, the time taken is 1 round. The attacker can do nothing while strangling, or the maneuver is wasted.

HOE

A farming tool with a long, wooden haft and a flat iron or steel head, the end of which is bent at 90 degrees to the haft. Many farmers have been forced upon occasion to turn this gardening implement into a tool of self-defense. Use the Polearm Attack Table, subtracting 15 from all attacks.



LARIAT

This is a long rope made from either twisted grass or braided rawhide. When thrown, the running noose at the business end of the rope keeps a flat, open loop.

Lariats are used by Spanish peasants, particularly in the colonies, to control herds of cattle. They're largely unknown to other Europeans, even to upper-class and urban Spaniards. Thus, an opponent who attacks with a lariat will usually achieve total surprise. This weapon is very rare, and should largely be restricted to Spanish cattlemen; characters will have to give the GM an excellent reason for the fact that they know how to use it. Use the Whip Attack Table, with all Criticals being Grapple.

PICKS

These are miners' tools, used to dig for coal, iron and other ores. They have wooden hafts and a slightly curved, two-pronged, T-shaped metal head. Use the War Mattock Attack Table, subtracting 10 from all attacks.

PITCHFORK

This is a large fork with two to four prongs, normally used to pitch hay with. The haft is wooden. The business end can be wooden but is often of iron or steel. This weapon is popular with farmers and grooms. Use the Spear Attack Table (cannot be effectively thrown).

QUARTERSTAFF

This is simply a roughly cylindrical length of wood approximately six feet long. It's one of the most innocuous of weapons because it appears to be merely a large walking stick. A trained user, however, can employ it with vicious effect.

The quarterstaff costs far less than most weapons, and one can be quickly crafted from a limb in a pinch. An axe handle has also been effectively used as a quarterstaff.

Note that quarterstaves are not commonly used in swashbucklers, at least not in ones set in the 17th Century. Characters should be able to provide the GM with a good reason why they know how to use them properly.

SCYTHE

This tool is normally used to harvest grain, but farmers have been known to put it to a more deadly use when protecting their land. It has a long, slightly curved wooden haft with a handle for the rear hand sticking up from it at a 90 degree angle. The sharp curved blade which juts from one side of the haft cuts only on the inside edge and stabs with its vicious point. Farmers expecting trouble sometimes sharpen the outside edge as well. Use the Polearm Attack Table, subtracting 5 from all OBs.

WHIP

This is basically a long bit of woven strands of rawhide attached to a wooden handle, the kind used by carriage drivers to manage horses with. Whips are usually carried coiled up on a thong at the side of the owner's belt. This weapon can be used as a garotte (see above).

4.8 ARMOR

Soldiers during the 17th Century wear much less armor than did their medieval predecessors, primarily because firearms have reduced armor's effectiveness. They generally wear an open-faced steel helmet and some sort of torso protection, and that's it. As a

rule, officers and mounted warriors wear more and heavier armor than do infantry. Mounted soldiers may add heavy thigh-length boots to protect their legs. Many infantryman, including musketeers, wear only helmets.

Mounted soldiers generally wear some sort of Cuirass, plate armor that covers their torso and overlaps their hips (AT 17). Infantry, if they wear armor, are protected by rigid-leather Buff Coats, which cover about the same hit locations (AT 9).

Besides being hot and heavy, armor slows a soldier down in combat. This is a liability in a age where speed and mobility are gaining importance. Characters will usually wear armor only when going into battle or when on guard duty. Otherwise it's too much of an inconvenience.

4.9 SPECIAL COMBAT SITUATIONS

VEHICLES (4.9.1)

All driving or piloting of any type of vehicle, whether a stage-coach or a sailboat, is done using the Vehicular Maneuver Chart.

USING THE CHART

First the GM determines the difficulty of the chosen maneuver/course, taking into account all pertinent factors. A roll on the table is then made. Most of the text results are self-explanatory, although some GM interpretation may be necessary, depending on the nature of the vehicle. If only a percentage is given, it must be interpreted in direct reference to the maneuver.

Normally, one roll is made per hour of regular travel. Any special maneuvers simply require an additional maneuver roll.

When rolling an hourly movement, a result of 100% mean that the craft has travelled the exact distance is was intended to according to the speed chosen by the PC. A lesser or greater percentage indicates the percentage of the intended distance actually travelled. There could be many reasons for a particular penalty or bonus: good weather, bad weather, minor equipment failure, traffic, lousy road conditions, rough terrain, and so on.

When a special maneuver roll is called for and the result is a percentage, it usually indicates the percentage of the maneuver which has been completed in the given time span—generally a ten-second round. More than 100%, means that the maneuver took less than 10 seconds to perform. For example, 200% means the maneuver took 5 seconds.

If less than 100% is achieved, roll again to determine the extra percentage of time the maneuver consumed.

HORSE-DRAWN VEHICULAR COMBAT

Note that due to the structure of most wagons, it's fairly pointless to attack the vehicle itself. It's impossible, for instance, to blow out a carriage wheel, and a bullet or arrow into the side of a coach really doesn't affect the vehicle's performance much.

The most common tactic used to stop a horse-drawn vehicle is to shoot the driver. Each time a driver suffers a critical hit or is rendered unconscious, he must make a Driving roll to maintain his grasp on the reins. If he succeeds, he manages to retain his grip on the reins and, if he's been incapacitated, they can easily be taken up by another character.

If he fails, the reins fall from his hands and land on the horses' harness. This is a problem.

VEHICULAR MANEUVER ROLL MOD CHART

Difficulty	Modifier
Routine	+30
Easy	+20
Light	+10
Medium	+0
Hard	-10
Very Hard	-20
Extremely Hard	-30
Sheer Folly	-50
Absurd	-70
Insane	-100
Driver/Pilot Condition:	
25-50% of Hits taken	-10
51-75% of Hits taken	-20
76%+ of Hits taken	-30
For each Hit/rnd	-5
Each limb out	-10 to -30
Stunned	-50
Drunk/Drugged	-10 to -50
Weather:	
Raining	-10 (or more if heavy)
Sleet/snow/hail	-20 (or more if heavy)
Fog	-5 (or more if heavy)
Darkness:	
Vehicle has lights	-10
Vehicle does not have lights	-50
Combat:	
Vehicle under fire	-25
Land Only:	
Surface wet	-10
Surface snowy	-30
(-10 more for each 6" up to 1 yard)	
Surface icy	-50
Marine Only:	
Each foot of wave height	-5
Each 5 mph of wind	-5
Speed:	
This is up to the GM, as the "safe" speed varies greatly with the conditions. Its generally easiest if this element is simply figured into the difficulty of the maneuver.	

To recover the reins, a player must crawl or leap onto the harness, grab the reins and get back up onto the vehicle proper. This requires an Acrobatics roll each round the character is on the harness or moving between the vehicle and the harness, plus an Acrobatics roll to grab the reins. If the character slips at any point, chances are the wagon will pass harmlessly over him, as wagons typically have a wide wheelbase and quite a bit of ground clearance. He still takes damage from falling off of a moving vehicle (see below).

FIGHTING ATOP A MOVING VEHICLE

Fighting atop a moving vehicle is not easy. First off, all ranged combat is at -10. And if a vehicle is moving over half its full speed, all ranged combat fired from it is at -20.



VEHICULAR MANEUVER CHART

Roll: Result

-201: Total disaster. The vehicle flips over, direction and severity of impact dependent upon vehicle and situation. Most likely it's badly damaged, as an occupants well might be.

(-200)-(-151): Driver loses control of the vehicle and it veers wildly. If anything is within 50 yards in a direction reasonable considering the craft's current motion, the vehicle smashes into it before the driver recovers. All occupants are stunned 3 rounds (if not already dead).

(-150)-(-101): A badly executed attempt causes the vehicle to weave dangerously 1D10 yards to one side. Figure the details. Good luck.

(-100)-(-51): Cruel abuse of the vehicle damages the steering system. Move is 50% successful, and the vehicle is at -50 for any future maneuvers until repaired.

(-50)-(-26): Panicked confusion on the part of the driver causes the vehicle to slow to half speed, unless that's what he was trying to do, in which case it speeds up to half again faster.

(-25)-0: Driver suffers a lapse and fails to perform the maneuver, instead continuing on as before.

1-10: 10%. Slowly, but surely.

11-20: 30%.

21-30: 50%.

31-45: 70%.

46-55: 90%.

56-85: 100%. You succeed, barely.

86-125: 110%. You have time to sigh with relief.

126-165: 120%.

166-185: 130%.

186-200: 150%.

201-225: 150%. Great move. Add +10 to all occupants' rolls for the next 3 rounds.

226-275: 200%. Artful maneuver displays your mastery of the vehicle. Add +20 to all occupants' rolls for the next 4 rounds.

276+: 200%. A brilliant move which earns the driver a skill rank in driving this type of vehicle. Add +30 to all occupants' rolls for the next 6 rounds.

The most dangerous part about fighting under such circumstances is that a good blow can knock a character off of the vehicle. Anytime a character suffers a critical hit, he must make an Acrobatics roll to stay atop the vehicle, or over the edge he goes.

Anytime a character is knocked backwards, check to see where he lands. If he lands partially on the vehicle, he must make an Agility roll to stay on. Otherwise, he's fallen off.

FALLING OFF A MOVING VEHICLE

When a character falls off of a moving vehicle, he rarely actually falls under its wheels. It's up to the GM to use his common sense to determine whether or not this happens. Obviously, if the character falls off the back or either side of the vehicle, he won't

be run over by it; he must fall off of the front. If this does happen, roll a 1D10. On 1-3, the character is run over by the vehicle. He takes damage both from the fall and from the trampling (see below).

Otherwise, the only damage the victim takes is from his landing. To figure out how much damage a character takes, simply add +1 to the roll on the Fall/Crush Attack Table for each mph the vehicle is moving.

Falls from atop vehicles should have their maximum results moved up one class. Thus a fall from atop a 9' tall coach would actually have a maximum result not of 105, but of 120.

DROPPING OR LEAPING ONTO A WAITING HORSE (4.9.2)

This flashy but dangerous (and potentially humiliating) maneuver assumes the character has Animal Training skill, a well-trained horse and sturdy buttocks. Acrobatics, Adrenal Move (landing) and Tumbling skill would also be handy.

To leap into the saddle, the character signals his horse by voice or hand. A successful Animal Training roll assures that the horse will stay put. He then makes a running jump and vaults off the horse's hind end. If he makes his Agility or Acrobatics roll, he lands in the saddle, the horse's trappings and strength absorbing the impact.

If the character blows his Animal Training roll, the horse sensibly moves out of the way. The character lands on his face on the ground and takes damage from the Fall/Crush Attack table, unless he makes a successful Tumbling roll. Particularly nasty GMs might have a horse kick at or attempt to trample a character who fails his Animal Training roll.

If the character misses his Agility or Acrobatics roll, he side-swipes or slams full into the horse, depending on how badly he blew it, before falling on his face. This may not injure the horse but it will very likely be painful for the character.

To swing or drop into the saddle from a rooftop or balcony, as above, the character must make a successful Animal Training roll to get the horse's cooperation and a successful Agility or Acrobatics roll to land where he intends. An average horse's strength will enable it to catch without injury characters who drop from 15 feet or less. Characters who attempt this maneuver from greater heights risk killing themselves and crippling their mounts.

Characters who try this stunt on a regular riding horse will scare the beast out of its wits. The GM should have the steed react appropriately.

SWASHBUCKLING MANEUVERS (4.9.3)

Movie swashbucklers perform all sorts of outrageous maneuvers: swinging from chandeliers and ship's rigging, scaling ivy-covered balconies like monkeys, leaping on and over furniture during swordfights, parrying the blows of three opponents at once without even working up a sweat. How much your characters use these maneuvers depends on the type of campaign you are playing. If you are playing a historical campaign, tone it down a bit. If you are playing a fictional-type (i.e., fantasy or cinematic oriented), then encourage players to try acrobatic moves. If it sounds plausible, let them try, and even if it doesn't—that is what the Absurd column on the Maneuver/Movement chart is for!



Below you will find a guide to the maneuvers used by swash-buckling characters and how they work in game terms. This is by no means a complete list. If you think of something flashy and daring, try it, using the systems below as a guide.

Characters must have Acrobatics to perform these maneuvers. Tumbling is also useful.

SWINGING

Use the Acrobatics skill to determine the success of a swing. If you miss your roll, you didn't land where you intended. If you really miss your roll, you may have landed on the deck 50 feet or more below your feet.

Reference the Maneuver/Movement Table. The number result indicates how far off target the character is. Subtract the result from 100. If the result is 0 or negative, then no problem, you made it. If the result is positive, then this is the percentage of the total distance swung that you missed by. For example, the GM determines that the swing you want to attempt, 50' from your rigging to a spar on the enemy's ship, is Extremely Hard. You roll an 84. Looking at the table, this gives a result of 30. Subtracting 30 from 100, it becomes clear that you missed your target by 70% of the total distance, or 35'! Boy, are you in trouble.

CURTAINS

Curtains and wall-hangings in the 17th century are made to keep out drafts. As a consequence, they are very heavy. Yanking a curtain atop a group of angry pursuers is a classic swashbuckling maneuver.

Use the character's Strength Bonus when rolling on the Light column of the Maneuver/Movement table. The numbered result is the percentage of your pursuer(s) that is covered by the curtain. A covered character must also roll on the Light column of the Maneuver/Movement Table, using his Strength Bonus, the result indicating how much of him is uncovered. This percentage is cumulative. Thus, if a character who is 100% covered gets a result of 30, then he is still 70% covered and cannot preform any other action until he is uncovered. While covered, he is considered prone for combat purposes.

SAIL- OR TAPESTRY-SLIDING

This maneuver is accomplished by sticking a dagger or other sharp instrument into a sail or tapestry and then 'riding' it down. In theory, the dagger allows you to control your fall.

This is an acrobatics maneuver, rolled on the Hard column of the Maneuver/Movement Table. Failure indicate that you fall. A numbered result indicates the percentage of the total distance that you wanted to slide that you actually did slide.

RUG YANKING

Rug yanking is another way to throw off your pursuers. You yank the rug from under their feet, and they fall down in a heap.

Use the same procedure as for Curtains, above, except you use the Medium column of the Maneuver/Movement Table, and your opponent(s) is not covered, just prone. A number result indicates the percentage of your pursuers that fall down if there is more than one, or the chance that a single pursuer will fall.

THROWING THINGS

This involves throwing things in your opponents' faces. This type of attack does no damage, but can distract your opponent long enough for you to skewer him. The object you throw must be at least head-sized, or the substance must spread over a head-sized area.



To determine the results of a thrown item or substance in your enemies face, first make a roll on the Medium column of the Maneuver/Movement Table to see if you hit. A successful result (100+) indicates that you hit your opponent in the face. He will be stunned for a number of rounds equal to: $1 + (\text{table result} - 100) / 10$. Thus, if your result was 140 (wow!), your opponent would be stunned for $1 + (140 - 100) / 10$ or 5 rounds.

MASS COMBAT (4.9.4)

There are many opportunities for player characters to get involved in large battles in *At Rapier's Point*. Battles involve thousands of mounted and foot soldiers, and a group of characters could find themselves facing scores of opponents at one time. This will quickly become a tedious mess if the GM tries to set up the positions of all the combatants on battle maps and game out every single conflict with the regular *Rolemaster* rules. Of course, if the players enjoy detailed battlefield simulations, the GM could adapt *War Law* to simulate early modern warfare and let them go for it.

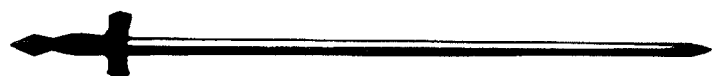
If the GM doesn't want to go to all that trouble, he should let his players decide where their characters will be during a fight. For instance, if a group of glory-hungry PCs decides to cut down the

enemy's battle standard and carry it off as a trophy, let them make a slow, combat-packed journey through enemy ranks, each adventurer confronted by two or more opponents at a time. Near the flag, let them encounter the enemy commander, famed for his cunning and swordsmanship. How they perform against their opponents will determine how the rest of their forces are doing elsewhere.

If the heroes are wading through their opponents, slaying the enemy left and right, then their forces should be doing the same all over the battlefield. If they are having a slower go at it, the enemy is in danger of repulsing their side's attack. If the characters are wounded, captured or killed, then their army is being forced back, maybe even routed.

It isn't necessary to game out every moment of the battle. The GM may have the PCs do some fighting, then narrate for a while, using how well the characters are doing as a guide. Battles can last all day or several days. Gaming every minute would probably be no fun.

If the characters are defeated, that doesn't necessarily mean they are dead. Have them wake up in the dungeon or cellar of an enemy-appropriated castle or church, prisoners of war. Escapes are very important in swashbuckling fiction.



5.0 GAMEMASTERING

At Rapier's Point provides everything necessary for several adventures. But when you'll played the scenarios it contains, what then? How to keep the players entertained and having fun? And what does it take to create a wide-reaching campaign of numerous interconnected adventures?

The pages that follow contain some material to help you be the best GM you can.

5.1 GETTING STARTED

As an *At Rapier's Point* GM there are several things you need to know before you begin your first game. Armed with this information, you can then make educated decisions about what kind of game you want to run. Note that no matter what kind of interesting notions you may have about the way you want to run your campaign or how you want it to evolve, you should never underestimate the effect your players will have on its development.

First of all, what is swashbuckling adventure? A swashbuckler is a braggadocios, devil-may-care soldier from the era when war was (supposedly) a glorious affair fought among gentlemen according to certain generally accepted notions of honor. Swashbuckling stories are military or semi-military historical adventures featuring daring swordsmen who defend their nations during times of political and social turmoil. Frequently, there is a romantic subplot; in some tales, the love story takes center stage.

This is a very flexible genre, and historically-based adventures can take place anytime, anywhere in the Western world from the late Middle Ages until about 1900. By then, swords, horse cavalry, gallantry and aristocratic officers were obsolete; the American Civil War of the 1860s was the first modern war in both weaponry and attitude. Military men who retained the old notions of glory and wars fought "by the rules" were among the first killed in World War I.

Obviously, a fantasy campaign based on the swashbuckling genre is even less limited in setting or scope.

Common historical swashbuckling settings include:

- 16th Century. The Age of Exploration. The nations of Europe are rediscovering the world and competing with Spain for control of these new lands.
- 17th Century. The era of religious wars in Europe, colonization in the Americas, and widespread piracy on the high seas.
- 18th Century. The American and French revolutions dominate this period. There are plenty of innocents to be rescued, and masked or disguised heroes make their appearance. There's also plenty of colonial action as the nations of Europe fight to maintain and expand their holdings in India, Africa and other exotic locations.
- 19th Century. In the early part of the century, the focus is on the Napoleonic wars in Europe and the War of 1812 in America. Many adventures are naval ones, since swords and cavalry are increasingly rendered ineffective on land by improved firearms and cannons. There is some action mid-century in the remaining Spanish colonies, where gentlemen still settle matters with their blades. The genre's last gasp occurs in Central Europe of the 1890s, where backward Balkan nations vie for prominence and harbor old fashioned military theories and methods.

At Rapier's Point is set primarily in the 17th Century, the era popularized by the novelist Alexander Dumas, Sr. who practically created the modern swashbuckling genre. It covers the period of time from the crowning of King James I of England in 1603 to beginning of the personal rule of Louis XIV of France in 1661. Most historical campaigns should be set in France and England, although there is no reason that characters can't venture beyond these boundaries. Europe, indeed the world, was a very busy place, and both France and England had dealings with areas as distant as China and the Americas.

Part of this book describes the history, culture and geography of 17th Century France and England. You should know this material backwards and forwards, and things will run more smoothly and have greater authenticity if your players are familiar with it, too.

Seventeenth Century society was neither democratic or egalitarian. Politics, religion, social status and gender—ignored or glossed over in many role-playing settings—have a major effect on play. Those in power felt it their duty to persecute or even kill those whose views they disagreed with; it was a matter of societal self-defense. Handle this in your campaign with discretion and a delicate touch.

As you read over this entire book, keep in mind that you're going to have to make several decisions that will affect the nature of your game. How do you want to handle religious zealotry and bigotry? How lethal do you want combat to be? How powerful do you want the characters to be in relation to the world around them?

Do you want to be realistic or tongue-in-cheek? Historically accurate or faithful to swashbuckling novels and films instead? Will you work in elements of fantasy? Do you want to run a single game, several episodic games, or several adventures strung together into a continuing campaign? If you want to run a campaign, how long do you want it to last?

By the time you finish reading this book, you should have answers to all these questions, or at least something definite in mind. The only rule here is to make decisions about these things and then stick to them.

5.2 DESIGNING SCENARIOS

How is a GM supposed to come up with an adventure, particularly on a week-to-week basis? The easiest way is to let someone else do the work and use an already-written adventure, such as those in the back of this book.

Eventually, the GM will want to create his own scenarios. These can be tailored to a group's specific strengths and weaknesses and can be blended easily into the rest of the campaign. Although time-consuming, designing scenarios will eventually be the most fun for both the GM and his players. It's not that hard. Ideas are everywhere.

Check with the players, the types of characters they want to run. A troupe of wily actors will have different adventures than military swordsmen. Character sheets generate ideas; make use of those character backgrounds.

Study the history, culture and NPC sections of this book for potential conflicts that you could work into exciting plots. Conflict is the basis of plot, and the 17th Century bristles with conflict.





Read a good swashbuckling novel or rent a cloak and rapier movie. A few are listed in the back of *At Rapier's Point*. You might not want to steal from these sources verbatim—the players may have seen that movie or read that book—but the bits you glean can spice up a scenario of your own.

Role-playing adventures shouldn't be puzzles so intricate that even Agatha Christie couldn't figure them out. On the other hand, they should be more than a random series of combat situations with a treasure at the end. Give the players a goal to reach, a problem to solve, a mystery to figure out, and have it be something they can't accomplish by muscle alone. Everything in your scenario should lead toward that goal. In a sense, all scenarios are mysteries because you, the GM, know more than the players do. Leave them little clues to follow but if they haven't picked up on these in the past, have similar clues pop up in more than one place, or be more obvious. ("Forsooth, I just stumbled over a body! Someone must have been murdered!") Make sure that everyone in the group has something to do: the Jesuit scholar has old manuscripts to study, the duelist has thugs to skewer, the diplomat has courtiers to bribe or seduce. Use the old five Ws and an H from English class to put together adventures for your players:

- Who are the bad guys? How many of them are there, and how organized are they? What resources do they have, and what limitations are they working against? Because the villain creates the conflict that drives your scenario, he sets the tone for the whole story. Milady de Winter will produce a different set of adventures than a Paris street gang. Again, the tougher the bad guys are, the greater the sense of accomplishment the PCs will get from the scenario.

- What are the villains up to? They should have an overall goal they are working toward: overthrowing the king, controlling all the vice in London, profiting from a war or trade sanctions against the Dutch. They shouldn't run around committing crimes at random, unless it's an effort to distract the players from what they are really doing. Small schemes (stealing the Queen's studs) should build toward the bad guys' main project (influencing the King's foreign policy). Even in an episodic campaign, recurring villains should have a basic something that they are trying to accomplish.

- Why do the bad guys do what they do? Villains have motivations too. Because they are by definition selfish, wicked and greedy, the bad guys need an even stronger reason to work together and stay together than the PCs do. What keeps them from slitting each other's throats? What common threat do they face, what common dream do they share? In some ways this ties into the bad guys' main goals. A band of highwayman and a group of rebels may both plot to raid a merchant wagon train; because one party is motivated by greed and the other by politics, the way they treat the merchants and the way they dispose of the loot may be very different.

- Where does your scenario occur? Sure, in *At Rapier's Point* adventures are generally set in 17th Century France or England. But does the adventure take place in a city or in the country? Does the action occur near the adventurers' Paris headquarters, or must they travel to the provinces or to Holland to confront their opponents? All this has an effect on who the characters run into, what resources they need to accomplish their ends, and how readily available help is. These things also affect the mood, the



feel, of the scenario. A Musketeer adventuring in Paris can count on intimidating the local commoners, may mingle with high society, can get by on a modest budget, and may be rescued from a jam by a group of fellow Musketeers who happened to be passing by. If he travels to Scotland, however, he has clout with no one, needs a lot more money, and is totally on his own.

- When does the scenario take place? Does the action happen during the day or at night? What time of the year is it? Seasonal weather can slow the PCs' travels or prevent them from traveling at all; it can conceal them from their enemies or keep them from escaping. Also, what year does it occur? Time period determines what famous people the PCs can encounter, what important events they can get tangled up in, and what technology they have available.
- How are the bad guys planning to carry out their scheme? This is the nuts and bolts of your scenario. Here are all the details of the master plot, the goofs and clues that can warn the PCs that something is going on. As GM you can't prepare for every possible situation that could arise but you should know where you want the scenario to go and have a general outline of main events leading up to the climax. The players may not follow your itinerary, but at least they won't be wandering around aimlessly.

Standard parts of a scenario include:

- 1) Introduction: This is where the GM reveals the problem to the PCs and gives them the information they need to start the adventure. The king's love letters to a foreign queen have been stolen or an insolent stranger at the inn questions the characters' breeding. If necessary, this is where the PCs band together as a group for whatever reason. They are assigned to the same regiment or are hired by the same stage manager.
- 2) The Plot Thickens: In this phase, the characters generally suffer setbacks, run into blind alleys, or discover that the job they've set out to accomplish won't be finished quite as soon as they'd hoped. Perhaps their information isn't entirely correct, or perhaps other groups are seeking the same goal.
- 3) Climax: This is the exciting conclusion of the adventure, where the central problem is resolved. It usually involves a dramatic confrontation with the villain, often resulting in a personal duel with him.
- 4) Epilogue: This is where the GM ties up any loose strings left over from the climax. If someone was injured, the GM determines what happened to him. If a mystery was solved, the GM tells what happened to the culprit. This is also where the GM can introduce or point out existing clues leading to the PCs' next adventure.

At *Rapier's Point* adventures should be action-packed, with some type of fight going on all the time. Exaggerate. Opponents don't just draw their swords, they leap forward shouting "En garde!"

5.3 RUNNING THE SCENARIO

Once you have come up with a scenario, its time to run it for your players. Keep the following things in mind while GMing. They are equally applicable to original or published scenarios.

PACING (5.3.1)

Keep the scenario moving! Don't let the adventure grind to a halt just because one character wants to escort his mistress home. If you

have to deal with this individual alone for a period of time, the other players' minds will wander off and any kind of continuity or suspense you've been striving to build will wander off, too. No one player should be able to dictate the actions of the entire group, and its generally best to keep your characters together.

If you need to run an encounter with just one part of the group, don't make the other players leave the room unless you absolutely have to. Let the others watch and enjoy the interactions between you and the characters involved. This helps keep everyone entertained. However, remind the watchers that their characters are privy only to the information that they personally have, not the knowledge that the players have picked up by watching another group of players.

Make these interludes brief. If possible, cut back and forth between groups of characters. Done properly, this can give the players a sense of synchronicity linking their characters together. It can build suspense, cliff-hanger fashion, if you leave one group of PCs in an unresolved jam while you switch to what happens next with the other group.

Don't let the players become too confused about what to do or where to go next. There should always be at least one clear cut course of action, even if it's an undesirable one. This helps the players feel as if they've got a grasp on the situation, even if they don't, and prevents them from getting frustrated.

CLIMAX (5.3.2)

Never neglect the ending of an adventure. An exciting, action-packed scenario can be ruined by a dull or unsatisfying climax. Don't be afraid to manipulate events to ensure that the end of your story is a rousing one, worthy of the PCs' time and effort.

Try for a climactic confrontation: a war, a decisive duel, a battle of wits, a startling discovery. Maybe the characters lost this time; if so, give them a chance to solve the problem in the next adventure.

Try to resolve the plot as cleanly as possible. Tie up as many loose ends as possible. Whenever possible, the PCs should succeed in foiling the blackmailer, rescuing the kidnapped maiden, sabotaging the enemy's chances of a surprise invasion.

5.4 HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Can the player-characters alter history? That depends on their importance to the campaign world (See *Swashbuckling Campaigns*) and on the GM's discretion. In general, however, yes they can, as much as any individual can change the course of history. Characters can cause specific events but they can't change the direction a society is going unless the timing is right. Minor variations in history should be fairly easy. For example, by 1642, Richelieu is sick and worn out. It doesn't much matter whether the PC is a physician who prolongs the cardinal's life a few months or whether he is an assassin who ends it early; Richelieu isn't going to last much longer anyway. Sweeping changes are much more difficult. Cromwell deposed the king but was unable to establish a republic in England. As soon as he was out of the way, another monarch was invited to rule. Meanwhile, the Three Musketeers were able to rescue each other from Cromwell's troops but were unable to prevent the execution of Charles I. Similarly, PCs can invent all sorts of gadgets and expound all sorts of ideas but these probably won't catch on with the public at large.



6.0 THE SWASHBUCKLING GENRE

Twilight painted Paris in shades of gray as Jacques d'Blois stepped away from his mistress' doorstep, smugly brushing away breakfast crumbs from his doublet. A hoarse, "Monsieur?" from the nearby alley stopped him short. D'Blois groped for his rapier and backed toward the center of the muddy street as a cloaked figure materialized from the darkness. "Monsieur D'Blois, you will accompany me, please." The chevalier drew his rapier in answer, but his grim smile faded as three masked, black-garbed swordsmen appeared from the shadows, weapons ready. "You will learn," the cloaked man growled, "not to take His Eminence's summons lightly."

6.1 ADVENTURES

Adventures in *At Rapier's Point* often revolve around protecting the king or the king's honor and thereby increasing one's own status and favor at court. Acquiring wealth is nice, too, (Musketeers are notorious for high living on low pay) but this usually is accomplished by performing tasks that please the monarch. Patriotism and honor ultimately are of greater value than gold.

Defending an absolute monarch is harder than it might seem. The rulers of both France and England are opposed by powerful religious factions even though theoretically the church and state are one. This often puts characters in the uncomfortable position of having, in effect, two bosses with conflicting interests.

Below are common historical and fictional adventure types.

MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

Musketeers are professional soldiers: they won't have to look hard for a fight. Europe is constantly at war. When they aren't storming a Huguenot stronghold or putting down a Roundhead uprising, characters can assist rebel forces battling their nation's enemies. Foreign troops also have the annoying habit of claiming part of an adventurer's homeland as their own. And foreign kings are usually looking to hire mercenaries.

COURT INTRIGUE

Both nobles and church officials are alarmed by the growing power of absolute monarchs and are always trying to discredit, blackmail or assassinate them (12 assassination attempts were made on Henry IV, the last one successful). Conspiracies are extremely common, and characters can get enmeshed in affairs of state merely by eavesdropping on a tavern conversation, challenging an insolent gentleman to a duel, or by courting that pretty seamstress whose cousin works at the palace. Adventures of this type will involve exposing conspirators, preventing the plot from working, or hiding evidence of a monarch's improprieties. Or the characters themselves may be the conspirators, trying to replace the king with his younger brother or oust a minister grown too influential for his fellow courtiers. Of course, if they fail, the character's chances of survival are pretty slim.

ESPIONAGE/DIPLOMACY

In addition to meddling in each other's civil wars and grabbing chunks of each other's territories, monarchs are continually

trying to place their nephews or granddaughters on each other's thrones. This is a real problem because most of Europe's royal families are related by blood. The characters, as diplomats, can determine whether their nation's allies are going to break the treaty or send covert aid to the rebels. They can also rescue out-of-favor royal relatives, assassinate scheming nobles, or warn the king of an impending invasion. Especially adroit or greedy characters might try to work both sides of the fence. Double and triple agents were common, though their careers often didn't last long.

CRIME

Organized police forces are rare, jobs are few, and cities are swollen with the poor. This is the era of the highway robber, the master thief and the pickpocket. What better way to stem one's negative cash flow than to rob the merchant's mansion or stake out a stage route? Adventures of this sort emphasize speed and stealth, avoiding or outrunning the king's guards. Picking the wrong person's pocket can also involve the characters in court intrigue or espionage. It isn't only the rabble who commit crimes either. Noblemen, their wealth and influence waning, sometimes take on the guise of a highwayman to fill their coffers, defy the king's authority, or just get some excitement. Or characters could be members of the pitifully inadequate Paris police force trying to stem the tide of lawlessness in a city where riots and uprisings are the most popular forms of entertainment.

6.2 SWASHBUCKLING SUBGENRES

Before play begins, the gamemaster should determine what kind of campaign he wishes to run. This has an effect on the power level of the player characters and NPCs and on the type of adventures these characters will get involved in. The swashbuckling genre in an extremely flexible one, its prime ingredients being fancy swordplay, political instability, and a difficult romantic relationship between two of the characters. Swashbuckling elements can be found in settings as diverse as sword and sorcery epics, wild west adventures, regency romances and space operas.

THE LITERARY SWASHBUCKLER

Examples

The novels of Alexander Dumas, Sr., Rafael Sabatini, C.S. Forester, Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Ouida's *Under Two Flags*, Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda*.

Characteristics

This is the "typical" swashbuckler, if there is such a thing. Adventures bear some semblance to historical reality, although the facts are never allowed to get in the way of a good story. The characters are larger than life but not impossibly so. Heroes can be duty-driven patriots or amiable rogues, but they're generally out to make their names and fortunes with their swords. A person's birth and political/religious affiliations affect his chances of promotion but generally don't sour his relationships with his friends. Opponents are usually villains but occasionally they are merely people whose goals conflict with those of the characters.



Conventions

Audacity, courage and cleverness are the keys to getting ahead. Hard work and thrift alone won't enable one to rise in the world. The characters will have to undertake dangerous missions and commit bold exploits to gain the favor of those who can grant them status and wealth. The odds are stacked against them, and they'll often have to overcome superior foes with their wits rather than their rapiers. Even straight-laced characters like Horatio Hornblower usually have a trick or two up their sleeves.

Personal honor and loyalty to one's comrades are key virtues. "All for one, and one for all!" Characters defend both their reputations and their friends with their lives. To be shorn of either is worse than death. Villains are people who have sacrificed their honor and betrayed their associates to get ahead and invariably meet a grisly fate.

When the heroes lose, they lose big. Missions tend to be all or nothing affairs. When the good guys succeed, they are named governor, get a royal pension and the girl and all the associated perks. When they fail, however, they fail just as spectacularly. The lover loses the woman he cherishes, forever. The courtier must flee the country or face prison or execution. The nobleman is stripped of his title and lands. The soldier goes down fighting, a heroic, but often grim finale.

The Universe

Life favors the good, but only if they seize the opportunities it presents. "God helps those who help themselves." Gutless and guileless people will quickly be exploited by those who are more powerful or cunning than they are. The good guys win most of the time but success isn't guaranteed. The tone is generally positive but can turn grim when fate turns against the heroes. If they preserve their honor, however, the good guys can die content even when they fail.

THE TECHNICOLOR EXTRAVAGANZA

Examples

Most swashbuckling movies, from the silent era to current hits such as *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, but especially the films of the 1940s and '50s.

Characteristics

Outrageous exploits and unabashed heroism are the order of the day. Religious affiliations and political complexities are ignored. Patriotic heroes get to defend king and country from villains they can love to hate.

Conventions

The heroes are acrobats worthy of the Ringling Brothers/Barnum & Bailey Circus. They swing from chandeliers and ship rigging, slide down bannisters and tapestries, pull rugs out from under foes or drop wall hanging upon them, and climb balconies and trellises like monkeys.



The villain invariably attempts to force the sweetheart of one of the good guys to marry him. The plot revolves around the characters' efforts to rescue her before the lecherous fiend can stage the ceremony. It never dawns on the villain that he could have his way with the lovely lass without a marriage license, at least not until the heroes are storming the castle to rescue her.

Enemy guards are clumsy oafs. A single good guy can hold off at least three villainous minions at a time (if you're Douglas Fairbanks or Errol Flynn, bump that up to six, or twelve!). Guards are lousy marksmen who get their wits gathered enough to fire only when the hero is out of range. In melee combat they have an absurd tendency to line up single file so that a lone hero can dispatch them one at a time. A good guy character needn't kill them, however; he can often baffle them with a bunch of fancy footwork, causing them to endanger one another. On the down side, there are usually hordes of guards, and they frequently succeed in capturing the good guys by overwhelming them with numbers.

The hero defeats the villain in a climactic personal duel. The character whose girlfriend was threatened must battle the villain one-on-one. His companions and the villain's henchmen don't interfere; this is a grudge match, and neither the hero or the villain would forgive anyone who tried to help.

The Universe

True love conquers lechery. The good guys always win, and in spite of numerous cliffhangers, most of them survive. Secondary characters may perish to provide a touch of pathos, but any grimness is offset by a healthy dose of comic relief.





heroes' actions and rewards them once the bad guy is beaten. Captain Blood, Robin Hood and Zorro all fight the local authorities but they never question the need for sheriffs, colonial governors or kings. When chivalrous outlaws do oppose the king himself, it's because he's a selfish jerk, and there is a more worthy candidate waiting in the wings.

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS SWASHBUCKLER

Examples

Sinbad the Sailor, Son of Sinbad, Arabian Adventure, The Thief of Bagdad.

Characteristics

Similar in all respects to the Technicolor Extravaganza, except in a pseudo-Islamic setting. Replace rapiers with scimitars and plumed hats with turbans and you're ready to go. A villainous prince/court magician/vizier usurps the throne of the characters' city and forces the princess (whom one of the heroes has fallen for) to marry him. Unlike most swashbuckling subgenres, which ignore the supernatural, this one occasionally allows magic as long as it doesn't steal the hero's thunder. The focus is still firmly on the dashing, acrobatic swordsman, and the characters never have magical abilities themselves.

THE CHIVALROUS OUTLAW SWASHBUCKLER

Examples

Captain Blood, The Sea Hawk, The Spanish Main, Scaramouche, The Adventures of Captain Scarlet, any Robin Hood or Zorro flick.

Characteristics

A variation of the Technicolor Extravaganza in which the characters are decent men forced to become outlaws by a greedy, unscrupulous authority figure. The story revolves around their attempts to harass the villain, rally the common folk against him, and bring his crimes to the attention of higher authorities, usually the king.

Conventions

The characters' crimes are a form of social protest. Even though they're brigands or pirates, the characters are kind to the poor and underprivileged. They choose their targets selectively, protect women and children, and are generally patriotic.

Sometimes you've got to break the law to uphold justice. The characters defy unjust authority to preserve the way things should be. Once the bad guy is defeated and rightful order is restored, they usually settle down and become law-abiding citizens again.

The Universe

With a courage and good leadership, the common man can triumph over injustice. Important to this is the fact that the system itself is assumed to be good; the villain is a local aberration. There's always an upright, legitimate higher authority that endorses the

Conventions

The heroes are of exalted birth but can't take advantage of it. One of the characters is secretly the rightful heir, sent away at birth to protect him from the villain (he may or may not be aware of this). Or, he's the usurped monarch, and the other characters are his loyal followers.

Both the characters and the villain are seeking a talisman that will either make or break the bad guy, depending on who gets it first. Obtaining it usually requires a journey to a distant, exotic lost city or kingdom. Travel, however, is usually rather quick due to magical gadgets, see below. (No years' long, Lord of the Rings type quests in this subgenre.)

Magical gadgets. Flying carpets, mysterious lamps, mechanical horses, and mystical rings are discovered, used and lost by the characters with astounding regularity. Many of them are limited-use items: the genie of the lamp grants three wishes and abandons the characters, the Eye of Allah ruby answers only one question per customer, etc.

The Royal Harem. Despite numerous guards, the characters manage to visit it several times to woo the princess. The girls rarely give the heroes away; they're bored, enjoy the male attention, and delight in the opportunity to pull one over on their captors.

Genies. The characters usually encounter at least one disgruntled djinn but manage to trick him into helping them. He's a crafty, dishonorable fellow, though, and will attempt to fulfill their requests in the most literal and inconvenient manner possible. Fortunately for the heroes, he always has some type of vulnerability: he's cowed by the name of Allah or fears being confined in his bottle again.



The villain's magic is limited. He can spy on the good guys, turn some of them into animals and hypnotize the princess, but he can't kill the characters directly by magical means. This forces him to engage in the obligatory climactic duel with the hero. Unlike wizards in other fantasy genres, the Arabian Nights villain is usually quite athletic, so crossing swords with him is a challenge worthy of the heroes.

The Universe

"As Allah wills." The characters' seemingly haphazard efforts fulfill the terms of an ancient prophecy predicting the villain's downfall and usher in a new golden age for the campaign city.

HISTORICAL CAMPAIGNS

Examples

Dumas' Valois *Romances* trilogy, *The Mission*, *Christopher Columbus* (TV miniseries), *Peter the Great* (TV miniseries).

Characteristics

The Historical Campaign is very Machiavellian in tone, focusing on a ruthless quest for favor and wealth. Adventurers should watch their backs and probably keep a wary eye on each other as well. The player-characters' family backgrounds and political-religious affiliations have a major effect on play, and the GM should emphasize the police state aspects of France. If you want to run a gritty cloak and rapier saga, this is the subgenre to choose.

Conventions

Opponents may be the "good guys" by modern standards, groups and individuals who hold to such radical ideas as religious toleration, representative government and social equality.

It's not what you know, but who you know. Social contacts are essential to getting ahead and can cushion the blow when you mess up. Unless you're good at currying favor with the powerful, you may never get a chance to prove yourself no matter how skilled you are.

The villain may be the king, the Pope, or the system they represent. Life isn't fair, and sometimes injustice is institutionalized in state and church bureaucracies. Characters who stand up for what is right may get run over if they aren't careful.

The Universe

Grim and unforgiving but surprisingly positive. Despite harsh living conditions, people have hope for the future. Philosophers are sure education and science will eventually solve society's ills. Religious dissidents are confident that God champions their cause and that they are the heralds of a new era of piety and faith. With the religious wars at an end, folks have a brief respite to rebuild and prosper before the War of Spanish Succession shatters hopes for peace. America beckons as a promised land for malcontents and merchants.

Twists

At *Rapier's Point* characters can, with some effort, find themselves involved in campaigns that aren't strictly of the swashbuckling genre. The 17th Century is a busy place. Also, genre elements can spice up campaigns that have nothing to do with our world or history.

Historical Fantasy

Seventeenth Century Europe is a place where magic, if it exists, is limited, persecuted and in decline. Non-human races and bizarre creatures are extinct or in hiding. Aggressive Christianity and

growing Rationalism have done a good job of making the Continent very mundane indeed, but this need not be so of the rest of the world. Who knows what wonders and terrors merchant adventurers and diplomats could encounter during their travels? The Ottoman Empire, with all its Arabian Nights possibilities, isn't that far from France. India, Africa, China and the Americas are just beginning to be explored by Europeans. The pagans aren't bound by the PCs' faith or skepticism, and these exotic lands can be the source of all sorts of arcane puzzles for adventurers.

Or perhaps Western European folk beliefs have a basis in fact. Magical creatures are on the wane, and the authorities want to ensure that they stay that way. The PCs, as agents of the Inquisition or the Protectorate, are busy hunting down reported fairies, witches, werewolves, ghosts, ogres or even an occasional Lovecraftian horror. Conversely, the PCs could be non-humans who are actively pursued and persecuted by the authorities.

Another approach is to assume that many of the hoary legends associated with things and places are true. Merlin awaits, trapped in a mystic Brittany grove. The cavern in central France feared by the locals really is the entrance to Hell. If Spanish agents succeed in poisoning the Tower ravens, Britain will fall. Don't tell the PCs what's going on; let them find out the hard way. A campaign like this should play like any other swashbuckling game—until pranksters steal the London Stone and the city starts coming unglued. Maintain the aura of uncertainty. Some legends are accurate, others should be pure hokum, and maybe others are misinterpreted by modern hearers. This prevents the adventurers from solving their problems merely by looking up the local crone and listening to her stories. Also, while the PCs may gradually come to believe that there's something to those ancient traditions, the authorities for the most part should consider them as nothing but old wives tales. This forces the characters to deal with situations on their own rather than calling upon the royal guard.

Pirates

At *Rapier's Point* adventures flow naturally into those of the Campaign Classic *Pirates* but require some minor adjustments to do so. Musketeers focuses on Europe before 1660 while *Pirates* concentrates on the colonies after that time.

Pirates were active off the coasts of France and the British Isles in the early part of the century, but by the late 1650s both nations had navies of sufficient strength to discourage them. Pirates of this era will be small operators trading at bases in Ireland, Spain or North Africa, and many of them are Irish or Turks. American piracy will become big business in the 1660s, when the French, English and Dutch colonies will use buccaneer fleets to break Spanish dominance in the Caribbean.

Characters have plenty of reasons to travel to the colonies, where they can be waylaid by pirates or take up the "sweet trade" themselves. The relative political stability produced by strong, in-charge monarchs means ambitious PCs will have less freedom of action and reduced opportunities for self-improvement at home. The enclosure movement means middle and lower class farmers will find it harder than ever to own their own fields. Religious stability means that characters who aren't Anglican or Catholic will face increasing pressure to conform. In America, they have the chance to worship as they please, be their own bosses, and to actually own their own land. There's that lucrative trade with the colonies to be exploited, legally or illegally. To relocate, however, the PCs will have to sacrifice some of their status and the opportunity to be before the king's eye. In America, their success will depend on good management skills and hard work rather than on their social contacts.





The Wild West

Try setting adventures in the colonial period. The West isn't quite as far west, but the major elements are still there: the lawless frontier, disputes over land and livestock, gutsy and greedy men hunting for gold, hostile Indians, rivalries with Spanish (or French) settlers, characters forced to defend and depend on themselves. Both English and Spanish colonists are raising cattle using much the same methods as cowboys did two centuries later. Pistol duels are slower and more formal, and swordplay is as important as gunplay. If anything, this earlier frontier is more challenging; there is no cavalry to rescue you if things really go wrong.

Swashbuckling adventures in Spanish colonies can take place at a much later date. Spanish settlers retained a quasi-feudal social structure, and gentlemen continued to carry swords and engage in duels into the 19th Century. The Zorro saga is set in Old California of the 1840s.

The *Outlaw* genre book may be of use for a game such as this.

The Far East

In China, the Ming and Chi'ing courts are tolerating Western Western traders and welcoming missionaries and scholars. Clever, open-minded Europeans have even obtained important cabinet posts. In Japan, Tokugawa shoguns will receive merchants and missionaries until 1638; there are at least 300,000 Christian converts. After that time, Japanese Christians will be ruthlessly persecuted to prevent them from having any political influence. Japanese who leave their homeland after 1638 will not be allowed to return for fear they will contaminate Nippon's culture with foreign ideas. Commercial opportunities are lucrative but limited

in both nations because the bigoted and boisterous Portuguese have given Western "barbarians" a bad reputation.

The PCs can be shipwrecked European seamen or banished ronin. In either case, they are foreigners struggling to maintain honor in an alien culture. They will face language barriers, racial and religious prejudice, and general disdain from their host country. They can win respect by demonstrating their culture's unique skills and knowledges.

The *Rolemaster Oriental Companion* offers a great deal of information regarding role playing in this genre.

Science Fiction

Though not strictly a historical genre, this deserves some attention. Swashbucklers have been invading the cosmos since Cyrano de Bergerac, and characters such as Flash Gordon, Luke Skywalker and Miles Vorkosigan have been keeping the sword-play in the stars tradition alive. Elements of the swashbuckling genre can be easily inserted into a sci-fi campaign. Imagine a medium-tech police state with corrupt officials, lots of political intrigue, and rigid social classes. Technology is reserved for the upper classes and guns are restricted to the military. Honor-obsessed gentlemen of quality ignore body armor and settle their disputes with blade weapons (such as electrified foils). Player-characters are surrounded by spies of rival governments and corporations as well as agents of their own nation (planet, vacuum city-state, system, etc.).

Swords in space may sound silly at first, but can be quite logical when you think about it. First, it may be traditional. Army officers of some nations wore daggers as part of their dress uniforms until well into the 20th Century, and gentlemen in a space society with a strong aristocratic heritage might well keep blade weapons around for show. Of course they'll be taught how to use them. Second, blade weapons are excellent for stealth missions. You're just a dead if you're stabbed, and it's a lot quieter. That's why spy stories are called cloak and dagger, after all. All sorts of "primitive" weapons were employed during the Vietnam War. The heroes of *The Prisoner of Zenda* had the arsenal of a pre-World War I kingdom at their disposal but chose sabers because they didn't want to alert the public or the villains to what they were doing. The villain armed his minions with polearms and such because he didn't trust them with guns. Third, high-tech energy weapons may be as dangerous to the user as to the victim. A blaster powerful enough to pierce personal armor might also pierce the fragile walls of pressurized vehicles and bases, resulting in explosive decompression. Thus, the cutlass could return as the favorite weapon of starship boarding parties.

6.3 NPC ROLES

When your gallant adventurers foil conspiracies or plot ones of their own, they'll run into non-player characters who will hinder or help them. Villains and allies can be almost anyone, but like the PCs, NPCs in swashbuckling stories tend to fall into certain roles.

VILLAINS (6.3.1)

THE COMMANDER

A senior officer has taken an intense dislike to the PCs for some reason: perhaps they have insulted him, they've questioned his orders, they've made him look bad in front of his senior officer or the regiment, the heroine loves them instead of him. The Commander looks for every excuse to court martial the adventurers and



generally makes life miserable for them. He assigns them to menial or suicidal tasks, withholds commissions and promotions, and attempts to goad them into insubordination with capricious orders. The Commander is most common in campaigns featuring a Dishonored Nobleman hero. He's usually an irredeemable jerk but occasionally the PCs can win his respect (and a break) with extraordinary heroics in combat.

A variation on the Commander is the Brat, where the offended superior is the dauphin or the infant. The royal rug rat torments the heroes until he is threatened by the Kingmaker, Lusty Nobleman or Sinister Advisor (see below). Then he begs them for help.

THE COURT FAVORITE

The Court Favorite is the monarch's best buddy and confidant and has gained an inordinate amount of influence over royal policy. He dips liberally into the national treasury and gives consistently bad counsel, but in the king's eyes he can do no wrong. He can be either an effete snob or a homicidal swordmaster. Because he's in so tight with you-know-who, he's very hard to tackle directly. The PCs will have to unobtrusively short-circuit his schemes while they seek some way to discredit him. If they can show up his incompetence enough times, the nobles will begin to demand his removal. Favorites of either sex are appropriate.

THE DUELIST

This villain is very similar to PC Duelists, only evil, and may cause them to question their motives and tactics. A bully, he'll follow the adventurers around demanding that they fight him. If they won't, he'll attempt to provoke them by questioning their parentage and picking on their loved ones. The Duelist can be a scenario's main villain, but most of the time he's a hired blade for someone else.

THE GOVERNOR

Most common in campaigns centered around a Chivalrous Outlaw character, the Governor is a powerful local official with little royal supervision who afflicts the peasants with high taxes, bullying guards and petty laws. He's always the person ordered to bring the hero in. Usually, his capacity to do so is limited by his own incompetence or that of his men or by the scarcity of men, horses and weapons (he embezzled the budget for such things). The Governor commonly becomes a personal nemesis for at least one of the PCs. His dishonesty often catches up with him when his obsessive pursuit of the the adventurers impairs the performance of his other duties.

THE JILTED MISTRESS

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," and the Jilted Mistress is wealthy and influential enough to vent that fury effectively upon the PC who rejected her. While she'll rarely confront the heroes directly, she'll usually be around to gloat when she gets them in trouble. Her tactics include telling the PCs' other enemies everything she knows about them, starting rumors, sabotaging court appointments, intercepting or rerouting their mail, kidnapping the current mistress, anonymously sending them poisoned wine, or hiring assassins. She's usually an implacable foe. In stories where she is working with other villains, the Jilted Mistress sometimes has a change of heart when she realizes that her ex-boyfriend really is going die unless she intervenes. Villains of this type are usually female but can also be male.

THE KINGMAKER

This character is an ambitious aristocrat with lots of connections. He leads a conspiracy to force concessions from the king or to replace him with someone more easily influenced. Sometimes the Kingmaker has royal pretensions himself. He's always smooth and sophisticated, oozing with cultured menace, and is the type to make snide remarks about the PCs' breeding during the final duel. His arrogance and vanity are often the keys to his downfall. In adventures with multiple villains, the Kingmaker is frequently the rival of the Court Favorite(see above) and the Sinister Advisor (see below), and their mutual treachery causes their defeat. Kingmakers can also be women, though females will usually hire a Duelist to do their bloodletting for them.

THE LUSTY NOBLEMAN

The Lusty Nobleman has the hots for a female PC or one of the heroes' NPC lovers, and he won't take no for an answer. He's always handsome, rich, romantic and charming and often has a status advantage over the heroine's other suitors, including PCs. His evil nature doesn't become apparent to the heroine until well into the adventure, when it suddenly is revealed to her that he has a mistress, is holding his kid brother hostage, is already scheming to spend her dowry, sold his grandmother to the Turks, has had four other wives who died mysteriously, etc.

Lusty Noblewomen are known as Femmes Fatales and behave like the Jilted Mistress when the PCs fail to succumb to their charms. Occasionally, the PCs will encounter the Lusty Monarch. When this occurs, they have two options: 1) Flee the country and become Chivalrous Outlaws and Dishonored Noblemen, or 2) Ask the heroine what she'd like as a wedding gift.

THE NOSEY LANDLORD

This sniveling wretch is the proprietor of the PCs' apartments and is a spy for the campaign's major villain. He may be a helpless pawn or a willing agent serving out of greed. He'll search the PCs' rooms, set up ambushes, and notify the major villain of their movements. Usually he's a wimp who flees to his employer when discovered, though his master will despise and discard him. If the Nosey Landlord is under the villain's thumb, he may beg the PCs for help when they find him out, sending them on a quest to rescue his daughter, destroy his criminal record or pay off the mortgage to his farm. Landladies are equally effective in this role.

THE SINISTER ADVISOR

He can be the regent for a boy king or the chief minister or consort of a mature monarch, but the Sinister Advisor is the real power behind the throne. Unlike the Court Favorite, who is merely greedy, the Sinister Advisor is gradually and systematically usurping royal authority. He's a power-hungry schemer with long-range plans. The monarch may be ignorant of what's going on, but relations with the advisor are often less than cordial.

This character is typically difficult to defeat. He may outwardly defer to the king's wishes, then change the orders while His Majesty's back is turned. He performs all sorts of dirty deeds in the king's name. Because he often oversees the hiring, firing and training of the palace guards, the Sinister Advisor may be capable of holding the monarch prisoner in his own home! Ousting him usually requires a successful coup or revolution. The Sinister Advisor is usually a man but could also be an evil queen mother or mistress.



THE SURVIVOR

Defeated villains sometimes have a relative, lover or henchman who comes back for revenge. The Survivor may be as evil as his master, or he may be a good person bound by honor and patriotism to retaliate. In the latter case, he may be unaware of the villain's crimes and views the PCs as callous murderers. If the heroes can persuade him that he's in the wrong, a difficult task, he may satisfy himself with wounding one of them or may fight to lose, allowing them to slay him. Of course, evil Survivors don't care whether the villain deserved his unsightly end or not.

Occasionally, a Dishonored Nobleman PC has committed some atrocity in his secret past that justifies the avenger's quest, at least in his own mind. Should he add to his crimes by killing his pursuer or confront the Survivor and try to make amends? As above, the PC may choose to accept the Survivor's challenge but not defend himself. He may or may not survive, and the incident will give the scenario that sense of melodrama and tragedy so common to the genre.

A variation of this is to have the Survivor hunting a respected nobleman or official rather than the PCs. The adventurers act to stop the assassin but discover that the target has an ugly secret in his past that makes him worthy of death. Do they obey the letter of the law or allow justice to take its course?

THE VICTIM

Like the Nosey Landlord, the Victim is a spy for the campaign's chief villain. She's a damsel in distress set up to be "rescued" by the PCs so that she can get close to them and find out what they're up to. She, too, can be either a frightened pawn or a clever agent. The GM shouldn't overuse this ploy or the adventurers will stop aiding people who need their help, but it can be quite a shock for a character to discover that the grateful lass who has become his mistress is on the villain's payroll.

ALLIES (6.3.2)

THE COMMANDER

This fatherly senior officer is willing to give responsible adventurers helpful advice on how to deal with political intrigues and who can be trusted at court. He'll help them cut red tape and cover for them in sticky bureaucratic situations. Once in a while, he might even give them leave so they can resolve matters elsewhere, as long as they don't abuse the privilege. Of course, if they prove to be reckless troublemakers and betray his trust, he could become the vengeful Commander described above.

THE FENCING INSTRUCTOR

If one of the PCs isn't filling this role, the Fencing Master may be around to provide training, information on notorious Duelists, and tips on how to beat their techniques—all for a reasonable fee, of course. If a hero is down and out and has the requisite skill, the Master might offer him a job as his assistant.

THE HONORABLE OPPONENT

This character has clashed with the PCs sometime in the past and has learned to respect them even if he isn't overly fond of them. Maybe he is a rival, someone who survived a duel with them or a reformed villain. No matter what his origin, he'll occasionally do them a good turn for honor's sake—it is the proper thing to do among gentlemen—though he'll spurn any attempt at gratitude.

THE INSIDER

Because of her job at the palace/officer's club/port authority the Insider can keep PCs up to date on the latest gossip. She works closely with those in power, though she's ignored because of her servant status, and is usually eager to tell the adventurers what she knows to elevate their opinion of her. Unfortunately for her, the Insider knows too much and is often targeted by conspirators.

THE LOVESTruck HENCHMAN

One of the villain's servants, maybe his Trusty Valet, falls for one of the PCs and is willing to betray his boss to make points with her. He usually stays in the villain's service, torn between love and fear of discovery, where he can keep feeding the heroine information. The Lovestruck Henchman dies pretty quickly if his boss finds out what he's up to; at the adventure's climax he may sacrifice himself to protect his beloved, giving the PCs a chance to clobber the villain.

THE GUARDIAN

This is the proverbial rich uncle, a relative or legal guardian of one of the PCs whose lavish patronage comes with strings attached. He's generous to a fault, but he's also stubborn and very particular about matters such as politics, religion, marrying within one's class, and the direction his ward's career should take. If the PC does or says things he disagrees with, the Guardian will argue and plead and finally disinherit, or threaten to disinherit, him. Once his ire is raised, the Guardian will order his lackeys to throw the adventurers out. And he'll mean it, at least until his temper cools.

6.4 SWASHBUCKLING BITS

There are a number of elements common to the swashbuckling genre, regardless of setting. Some of these "bits" are listed below. Use them freely.

Ambushes: No matter what the characters' task is, someone will want to hinder them. That "someone" could be political factions, personal enemies, foreign troops or bandits. Enemies will attempt to predict the PCs' travel route and get set up for the kill ahead of them. Adventurers should never assume that mishaps on the road are bad luck or coincidence; there's usually a plan behind it.

Betrayal: Be careful whom you trust! Politics forces many alliances, even marriages, of convenience with rivals and opponents who may turn traitor at the first opportunity. In addition, mistresses, servants and fellow guardsmen may be working for the other side.

Castles: Imposing architecture is a symbol of state authority. Castles always demonstrate the power and status of their owners, and some nobles own more than one. Chateaux can be brooding medieval fortresses where a rebellious noble can hole up with his followers. Cardinal Richelieu went out of his way to ensure that these were damaged or destroyed. Frequently, however, castles are plush luxury homes where military utility takes second place to stylish decoration and modern amenities.

Chandeliers: Besides giving necessary light, they're often strategically placed to provide acrobatic heroes with a quick getaway. Chandeliers are also useful for dropping on unwary groups of enemy soldiers.



Cloaks: Flowing overgarments are useful as impromptu disguises or as off-hand defensive weapons. They also wave gallantly in the breeze when heroes leap from balconies onto their waiting steeds.

Damsels in Distress: They're forever being forced into unwanted marriages, stalked by lecherous noblemen, or hounded by political factions because of the sensitive knowledge or position they possess. All damsels in distress are seeking powerful protectors, such as the PCs. However, the damsel's goals may differ considerably from the adventurers'.

Divided Loyalties: Duty demands painful choices. When responsibilities conflict, whom does a cavalier obey? His king? The Pope? His commander? His mistress? Or, perhaps, his conscience?

Dueling Over Trifles: Swashbucklers are a touchy lot, eager to take up the sword against anyone who offers a real or imaginary offense against their dignity. Some characters start fights merely because they enjoy the attention.

Horses: Equines are the transportation of the rich and powerful and provide cavaliers with much of their glamor. Unlike cowboys in Western Hero, however, musketeers are very unsentimental about their mounts. Cavalrymen sacrifice horses freely in battle, and couriers will ride their horses to death if they are unable to get fresh mounts.

Inns: They serve as a combination pub, restaurant, hotel and social center. Characters can come here to relax, meet friends, and catch up on the latest gossip. Inns are a good public place for PCs to encounter NPCs, both helpful and harmful. Depending on its management, an inn can be a respectable lounge for businessmen and local politicians or a seedy gambling den haunted by highwaymen and swindlers. Soldiers tend to frequent the latter, where they can get more cheap wine or ale for their meager pay.

Rapiers: These light thrusting blades, later supplanted by the smallsword, are status symbols and extensions of a gentleman's masculinity. Few men of quality leave the house without one, and every son of the upper classes receives rudimentary fencing lessons even if he plans to go into a "peaceful" profession such as law or the clergy. A true gentleman will break his rapier over his knee rather than surrender it to an enemy.

Rivalries: Musketeers have an almost boyish tendency to group together; their company or regiment becomes an extended family, social club, sports team and street gang. Intense, not always genial, competition exists among these groups. Typical rivalries are Mousquetaires versus Cardinal Richelieu's Guards or Gascons versus everyone else.

Rigged Pistol Duels: Pistol duels aren't common until the end of the period and are more frequent among seafaring types. Duels between sailors are refereed by the ship's captain, who often doesn't care to lose essential crewmen to interpersonal squabbles. To preserve both honor and lives, canny captains sometimes secretly load the dueling weapons with powder only. Because the captain has final say on the outcome, the duelists have to be content with blasting each other with soot.

Suave Villains: PCs meet their share of common ruffians, but the chief villain is often an elegant, smooth-talking aristocrat all the more sinister because he's so polite. After all, it's the well-bred, upper crust NPCs that have the wealth, influence and resources to really put a kink in the adventurers' plans.

Scandals: Gentlemen are protective of their honor but they're typically also addicted to wine, women and gambling. This puts them in a vulnerable position, and enemies can endanger their

reputations by producing their stolen love letters and bastard children or by calling their debts. Women have reputations and secrets, too. Opportunities for blackmail are rife.

Secret Messages: "Please, please, as you are a gentleman, burn this letter!" With all the skullduggery going on, there are a lot of private letters in circulation that the communicants would rather not fall into the wrong hands. These include military orders, business papers and love letters. Characters can outflank foes by intercepting their mail, be led into traps by phoney messages, or risk having their own letters stolen. The writers and readers of secret messages often guard against deception by developing certain code words and phrases that can be worked into the text and by sealing letters with personal, closely guarded seals. Couriers may or may not know what they are carrying and are subject to robbery and kidnapping.

Secret Passages: It seems that every castle, manor house or hotel has at least one secret passage. Old palaces are riddled with them, farm houses have their "priest holes," and some villages have networks of tunnels beneath their streets. Secret passages are built to assist clandestine activity. Diplomats use them to conduct business without being seen, nobles use them to sneak off for a night of pleasure, dissidents use them to hide outlawed clergymen, presses and literature, smugglers use them to store contraband goods. The current occupant or owner of a building may not know all of its secrets, but there's usually an aged servant around to chuckle about how much use that hidden door got in the old days.

Ships: Seagoing vessels are romantic settings unto themselves with their billowing sails, exotic destinations and valuable cargoes. Sailing ships are also a microcosm of society. Well-fed, aristocratic officers exercise brutal discipline over lower-class sailors who are packed into dark, damp holds and fed bug-infested hardtack and token amounts of wormy salt pork. Voyages take months or years to complete. Minor irritations have plenty of time to fester into mutinies. Crews are also sometimes seduced by the promise of a free and easy life of piracy.

ROMANCE

Romance is an important part of many swashbuckling tales; in some it is the driving force. Male heroes are ever rushing to their mistresses' rescue or fleeing into a life of adventure to escape the memory of rejection. Heroines scheme to win their preoccupied husband's affections, advance the careers of their lovers, or distract the villains with their womanly charms. The purpose of introducing romantic love into your campaign is, of course, to generate plot complications. However, a characters' spouse, mistress or dashing suitor should be much more than kidnap fodder. In addition to a sense of belonging and emotional security, a well thought out lover can provide:

- A steady income. In the 17th Century, the basis for love and marriage is economic. Whether the player characters are male or female, they can expect to call upon their romantic interests to provide cash or equipment in a pinch. With the exception of Athos, the Three Musketeers were quite shameless in mooching off their girlfriends after they'd gambled away their salaries at the card table. Success at this, of course, depends on the romantic interest's resources and the PC's people-handling skills. The character can't be too greedy or obvious and must carefully reassure the romantic interest of his undying devotion to her.
- Information. Having a friend on the inside of the palace is often useful. A strategically placed romantic interest can supply a character with court gossip, rumors of the foreign policy trends



or arrest warrants issued. The romantic interest can also introduce the adventurers to important people, those in the know or in the money who can tip them off, bail them out or help them get that promotion.

- **Political influence.** As the old adage says, "It's not what you know, but who you know." Characters who manage to snag the interest of highly placed nobles or court officials will probably come to share the VIP's aura of power. They'll be courted by lobbyists and prospective office holders and might be able to sway the romantic interest toward their view of how things ought to be done. This has its risks, though. The romantic interest could decide the player character is getting "too big for his britches" and banish or imprison him. Also, if the romantic interest falls out of favor, the PC is in trouble, too.

The course of true love never does run smooth, however. Lovers operate on a double standard: the PC is expected to be totally devoted to his mistress (for female PCs, to her suitor) but the romantic interest will always keep a mercenary eye out for someone with more wealth, better looks, more eloquence, or a higher social status. This makes maintaining a mistress or entertaining a suitor like having a second job. The PC must spend a certain amount of time and money each week amusing the romantic interest, writing her letters and composing poems, buying her gifts, serenading her window, etc. Women expect men to go out of their way to impress them, to woo them with verses and tokens of affection, to duel other suitors for the privilege of calling on them. Men expect women to be witty, chaste, demure, and to bring a respectable dowry. Lovers of either sex will expect the PC to be musically talented, able to play an instrument or sing or both. If the adventurer fails to do these things, the romantic interest could easily dump him and spill all his deep, dark secrets to her new lover, usually the PC's worst enemy or professional rival.

Yes, falling in love can truly complicate a poor Musketeer's life. In addition to the ordinary difficulties above, romantically inclined swashbucklers often encounter one or more of the following problems:

- **Romantic interest is betrothed or married to someone else.** In an age where marriages are often arranged by parents for economic or political reasons, this is a fairly common predicament. If the love interest is betrothed, the PC will have to persuade both her and her father that he's the better man, usually by performing some heroic (and lucrative) task. Because this requires him to go adventuring, there's always the risk that dad will marry her off in his absence. Female PCs will have to stall father's favorite with quibbles and half-promises, arrange clandestine meetings with the guy they really like, and maybe run away from home to go adventuring themselves. If the object of the character's affections is already married, the task becomes more difficult. While affairs are winked at by society, the PC will still have to sneak around behind the spouse's back to avoid scandal or a challenge to a duel. Cuckolded husbands have also been known to send their wives to distant relatives, to imprison them in convents or to disinherit them, none of which are in the PC's interest.
- **Romantic interest is working, or appears to be working, for the other side.** That pretty maid the Musketeer has been courting may be an agent of Richelieu, or members of her family may be, or she may be the cardinal's niece. The cavalier may learn that the girl he's given his heart to is (gasp!) a Fifth Monarchist. In swashbuckling fiction, the general's daughter invariably falls for the dashing highwayman that her father is pursuing. Rela-

tionships of this type are even trickier to handle than those above. The PC may not discover the love interest's connection to his foes until after he's committed, and he can't be sure where her loyalties lie. Did they really meet by chance, or was he set up? What will he do when he has to choose between love and duty? What will she do? Male PCs will have to sneak through enemy territory to deliver kisses and sonnets. Female PCs will have to arrange secret meetings, destroy or conceal love letters, and help their boyfriends escape.

- **Romantic interest is of a different social class.** Social status is the key to economic security and career advancement. Because of this, most people want to marry someone of the same class or of a higher social class. This causes problems for the PC lover, whether he's a lord who's become attracted to that winsome country lass or a humble tailor who's set his sights on the squire's daughter. If the PC is in a superior position, he may have a mansion and lands to keep up and will need a wealthy spouse to help meet his overhead. If the PC is female, she'll normally want someone who can give her the kind of life she's been accustomed to. The PC's relatives will quickly point this out and may threaten to disinherit the character if he marries below his station. He'll also have to deal with the snide remarks of his peers about how clumsy and ill-mannered his romantic interest is. If the PC is in an inferior position, he'll face the opposition and insults of his "betters" and will have to persuade the romantic interest and her parents that he can take care of her and has qualities that make up for his lack of status. Or he may go adventuring to try to improve his status. Female PCs will have to zealously guard their



virtue to prevent the romantic interest from using them before marrying someone else and will have to persuade the romantic interest that they can uphold the responsibilities of a lady of quality. Low status PCs always face the risk that the romantic interest will prefer someone of a higher rank or will be forced to marry someone else.

Not every character should have a mistress. It requires a player who is not easily embarrassed, who doesn't mind role-playing complicated interpersonal situations, who won't be squeamish about singing a love ditty or reciting a poem at the gaming table. The GM should give him experience bonuses for doing so. It shouldn't be attempted by combat connoisseurs. Romance may slow down the pace of your campaign, especially if several characters have lovers, but it will make the campaign richer and more detailed.

Characters with a lot of gall may try to maintain several lovers at once. To do so will take finesse, large amounts of cash, and most of the PC's time. The character will probably have to keep each of his romantic interests a secret from the others, and if he slips up he risks losing their affection and gaining their wrath and vengeance. Only the wealthiest and highest ranking people, such as the king or his relatives, can afford to openly keep several mistresses at once. Even then, the PC will have to persuade each of them that she's the one he really loves.

There are several ways to handle the game mechanics of running a romantic interest. The romantic interest could be an NPC run by the GM. This way it's easier to control the plot twists the lover creates and to keep secrets from the players. The character won't know his girlfriend is a double agent or has been blackmailed into compromising him until something nasty happens. On the other hand, handling the romantic interest as an NPC could tend to focus the game session on just one player or even on the GM, which might bog things down. Alternatively, the romantic interest could be run by one of the players as his primary character or as a secondary character. This encourages greater interaction among the players and gets the group more involved in romantic subplots. However, it requires the cooperation of more than one player to run. It's harder for the GM to pull surprises on the group because at least one of the players knows what is going on. To avoid this, the GM and the romantic interest character could pass notes back and forth or could play out their subplot while the other players are taking a break. The GM will also have to be careful to treat the romantic interest as full-blooded PC rather than as a typical helpless NPC extra.

In addition, it wouldn't hurt for the PC to have some sort of advantage or disadvantage associated with the romantic interest. This ties him more closely to his lover, forces him to make more of a commitment rather than saying, "Oh well, I'll find someone else," when a problem or danger is encountered. This could be handled by background options such as Special Abilities, Special Wealth, or Special Status. The GM might grant the adventurer background options that are only his as long as he remains associated with the romantic interest. If anything bad happens to

her or if he dumps her, he loses status and his commission in the Royal Guard, access to her fortune and chateau, good relations with their influential mutual friends, etc.

Sir Terrance Ambrose Windham burst, cursing, from the mansion where Vanessa's father had just demanded that he make an honest woman of her. He continued to curse while he mounted his horse and galloped through the grounds and onto the main road. The effrontery of the man! Sure, he enjoyed Vanessa, but he'd marry whom he chose when he chose, and hopefully not anytime soon.

The horse stumbled, nearly throwing him. Windham yanked the reins savagely, and found himself sprawled in the middle of the road listening to the beast's retreating hoofbeats. He staggered to his feet and gingerly brushed himself off. His temper cooled in the night air, and when a breeze rustled the branches of a nearby stand of oaks, Windham regretfully realized he'd left his cloak and his rapier behind. He paused, wondering whether to walk home or go back to retrieve his things, and heard the shuffle of feet on the road. He turned to see a lone figure approaching him in the gloom, a being with the brawn and beard of a man but the stature of a boy.

"Well met, Terrance Windham," the stranger called.

Windham eyed him suspiciously. "What the devil do you want?"

"Terrance, Terry," the stranger said reproachfully, "'Tis a foul thing you've done, to debauch a maid and abandon her."

"And what business be it of yours, you undersized jackanapes?"

The "jackanapes" thoughtfully stroked his moustache with a thick finger. "Well now," he said softly, "I am what you might call an interested party. I'd not have it said that Tim Twinings saw his own grandniece dissipated and had nothing to say about it."

"Well now yourself, Tim Twinings!" Windham returned, beginning to feel warm again. "I'll do as I damned well please, and I'll do it without the meddling of the likes of you."

"Am I to take it that you have no intention of wedding the lass?" Twinings stepped closer; the moon came from behind a cloud, revealing his grim mouth and lighting his eyes uncannily. Windham began to be afraid and hated himself for it.

"You can take it that I'll see you in hell ere the banns are said for me and Vanessa McGuire!"

At this, Twinings' frown twisted into a smirk. "You never said a truer word, Terrance Windham." As the man's malicious chuckle grew into a triumphant laugh, Windham's nerve broke and he fled. Behind him, Twinings shouted, "At him lads!" The Night stillness exploded into a terrifying medley of shrieks, howls and squeaky laughter. Something tangled Windham's legs.

He fell.



7.0 ADAPTING “AT RAPIER’S POINT” TO AN EXISTING FANTASY CAMPAIGN

Adapting *At Rapier's Point* to an existing *Rolemaster* campaign is less a matter of game mechanics than of attitude. Standard fantasy settings, whether they're based on medieval Europe, ancient China or some other mythos, have certain assumptions and conventions that are rarely, if ever, questioned by the people who dwell in them. A high king/emperor appointed or descended from deity maintains nominal authority over a class of nobles, who lord it over the common people within their feudal holdings. The peasants toil to supply the king and their local ruler with food and materials in return for protection. Men are weak, frightened beings surrounded by powerful supernatural forces they can neither control or understand. Even kings depend on the priests for guidance and protection in dealing with the unknown. People are indoctrinated to obey and respect their “betters,” honor the established religious authorities and maintain the traditions of their fathers. Every man knows his place in society and acknowledges this as the way things should be even if he chooses to try to buck the system; Robin Hood opposed Prince John but never questioned the need for a king. Villains accept these conventions, too. They aren't so much trying to overthrow the existing order as to put themselves on top of the heap. Wars occur, territory changes hands, dynasties rise and fall but the people's world view doesn't change, and life grinds on pretty much as it always has.

7.1 CHANGES

To run a *At Rapier's Point* campaign, you're going to have to rock the boat, initiate social change, destabilize your campaign universe, or at least a portion of it. At the heart of a good swashbuckling campaign is the anarchy generated by a society in transition, a world where the old ways don't work quite like they used to. There are four areas where this change needs to occur.

RELIGIOUS/INTELLECTUAL UPHEAVAL

The agents of change can be reformers pushing a back to basics approach to the campaign's traditional faith, missionaries promoting a new religion, or atheistic philosophers who stretch their quest for truth beyond the bounds considered proper. They can be men and women of admirable courage and conviction, as with the Protestants in John Foxes' *Book of Martyrs*, or obnoxious troublemakers, as with the Children of the Light in Robert Jordan's *The Eye of the World*. What they have in common is the unshakable conviction that they are right, the tendency to ask lots of uncomfortable questions and the moxie to defy the setting's established spiritual and political authorities. They also tend to be more egalitarian than the society around them, at least within their own ranks, and they won't shut up or give up even in the face of persecution.

This affects everything else in your campaign. The campaign's existing religious leaders and magic users will eventually be forced to either join or oppose these iconoclasts; they won't be able to ignore them. In areas where the new faith takes hold, once respected priests and priestesses of the old religion may find themselves feared and hounded as warlocks and witches; once sacred animals and places may now be considered evil. Govern-



ment officials and warriors who are usually rather laissez-faire about such matters may be forced to get into the act when their tax revenues drop, when their followers serve with less deference or refuse to perform tasks for moral reasons, when the discussion strays from spiritual topics to politics, public health or social justice. As people learn to ask questions and think for themselves, they'll be more open to new ideas, making further changes possible.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

This occurs when someone—king, noble, or commoner—violates the unwritten rules about relations among the classes. The king, tired of squabbles among the nobles or anxious to quell rising discontent among the people, may decide to consolidate and centralize his authority. He may seek to exercise powers that aren't traditional or that haven't been used in generations. He may try to bypass the nobles by seeking financial support from rich merchants or the cities or by appointing regional officials answerable to him alone. Usually, the king is weak compared to the nobles. He may not have an independent fighting force, or it may be small or of questionable loyalty. He may be underage or a wimp, dominated by a regent or chief advisor. To accomplish his ends, the monarch



needs a Mousquetaire-like elite: tough, loyal fighters who can operate without much field support and are under his personal command.

It's unlikely that the aristocracy will sit tamely by while the king flexes his muscles. On the other hand, the nobility could decide to expand their powers at the king's expense. Perhaps they want greater autonomy to decide religious issues within their own fiefs. Maybe royal fund-raising efforts are decreasing their revenues. They might feel that the monarch should remain a figurehead and let them run things; after all, they're more familiar with local conditions than he is. If they can't get the king to see things their way, nobles might seek to oust him and his advisors while looking around for a more malleable candidate.

Finally, the common people might throw a wrench in the political works. Movements of this sort will generally be led by merchants and tradesmen of the wealthy middle class, who have time to think about politics and the growing influence to act on their ambitions. Tired of the caprices of their lords, they might support the king and urge him to exercise more local control. If the king himself is unreliable or irks them with taxes and import duties, the merchants could agitate for a written legal code to replace traditional, or common, law. They might also demand a written constitution detailing what the king and the nobles can and can't do and ensuring protection for themselves (but not necessarily for anyone else). More radical malcontents might seek to establish a republican or democratic government, run by themselves, of course. Both forms of government have ancient roots, but by the time of the campaign they are probably considered impractical and, especially in the case of democracy, harmful. Naturally, the king and the nobles won't willingly go along with any scheme that threatens to diminish their powers. Even listing their current and traditional powers in writing is suspect; there's a lot of freedom in ambiguity.

FASTER COMBAT

Something has to happen to change the way warfare is conducted. Swashbucklers shed traditional armor and adopted puny blades and fancy moves for a reason. Historically, that reason was the introduction of firearms, which made heavy armor not only ineffective but a hindrance in battle. Warriors had to develop a faster, more precise, method of combat to survive.

The advent of firearms also meant that anyone could become a soldier fairly quickly. Learning to use a gun didn't take years of practice, and the need for a caste of elite fighting men (knights) diminished. Kings could get a larger army in the field more rapidly than before, but the process was more expensive than ever before because the yeoman-soldier was too poor to buy his own weapons and equipment. This caused problems for the king and for the citizens he tried to extract money from, increasing social and political instability. The new armies were both more and less loyal than the traditional knights. They were less likely to be alienated from the monarch by personality conflicts, but they also lacked a personal commitment to him and expected to be paid on a regular basis. Once they'd served in the army, it began to dawn on farmers and laborers that they could now defend themselves from the lords who had oppressed them, and civil uprisings and revolts became more common.

If you don't want to introduce gunpowder into your campaign, there are other things that could have the same effect on man to man combat. Depending on where the campaign is set, climate could make the wearing of a hot, heavy metal suit impractical. In a tropical or desert setting, heat strokes would be a greater danger than sword strokes. Armor is also a liability in seafaring campaigns; if you get knocked overboard, you automatically sink!

There's always the "Damascus steel" approach: foreign metallurgists have discovered a new alloy or forging process enabling them to make blades that slice through conventional armor like cheese. The metal is rare enough or difficult enough to work with (or the new forging method is complicated enough) that making an armor suit isn't feasible. The miracle weapons are highly sought after trade items. Because the metal is stronger and more expensive than previous alloys, thinner, lighter swords are coming into vogue.

Or, a famous swordmaster has developed a fighting style designed to pierce the vulnerable spots in regular armor. However, practitioners of the new style need all their Quickness and Agility to take advantage of it and can't afford to be slowed down by heavy armor and weapons.

The presence of magic users alone could cause a change in combat methods. Because a significant portion of the population is running around hurling fireballs, energy bolts and poison clouds at fighters, the latter adopt "hit 'em first" tactics rather than be roasted in the shell, so to speak. Lighter weapons and armor would (theoretically) enable a warrior to strike before a mage could finish mumbling his incantation. This was often the case in Robert Howard's *Conan the Barbarian* stories.

Perhaps the campaign universe is being invaded by exceptionally agile beings. Knights, waddling around like turtles, are unable to counter their lightning attacks. A new, unencumbered battle method is needed to defeat the creatures.

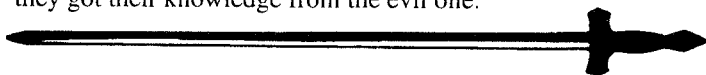
MAN IS DOMINANT

In many campaigns, mankind is the new kid on the block, struggling to cope in a world peopled by ancient races and awesome supernatural beings. The loremasters and elvensmiths may lament that things ain't what they used to be, but nonhumans have the glittering cities and advanced technology that makes the PCs gape, and they're numerous enough and powerful enough to put humans in their place if a serious disagreement arises.

In a swashbuckling campaign, however, man is beginning to gain the upper hand, or at least achieve parity. The rise of the new faith or philosophy is diminishing the power and influence of the old gods. Nonhumans really are declining. Magic and mermen and monsters are still around, but the shoe is on the other foot now and the ancient races know it even if humans don't. This change of status, plus the religious changes described above, can have several affects on the way the fantasy elements in your campaign are handled.

Magic is still powerful but those who use it tend to be much more secretive. The public, which has always regarded magicians with awe and caution, may now regards them with fear and prejudice. The court seer isn't merely hanging around because he wants to have a hand in the king's policies. He needs royal patronage to protect himself from being lynched. Magic users will be less likely to advertise their abilities; they'll be reluctant to mention occult matters in casual conversation and probably won't wear their ceremonial robes in public. Their spells, too, will tend to be subtle rather than flashy. Instead of hurling a thunderbolt at an enemy, a magic user will cast a wasting spell on him from ambush. Either way, the opponent dies, but in the latter case it's much harder to identify the responsible party.

The reason for this change is that belief in and worship of the old gods is declining. The public assumes that all magic is Channeled, whether it actually is or not, and because the old gods are now considered evil, magic is too. Newly converted, the populace is eager not to slip back into paganism; thus legitimate physicians and scientifically oriented alchemists sometimes face suspicion that they got their knowledge from the evil one.



Men will rub elbows with nonhumans less than in standard fantasy campaigns, and most PCs will be humans. As competition for land and resources increases, the other races will likely become even more mysterious and secretive than they were before. Competition could build into mutual mistrust and resentment. Nonhumans will generally stick with their own kind, and when they encounter the PCs they may be capricious at best. The characters shouldn't be blasé about meeting the Good People; it's a momentous and potentially dangerous event. If actual hostility exists between a human community and nearby nonhumans, the latter will probably adopt guerilla tactics: stealing food, kidnapping children, ambushing lone travelers, demanding favors from isolated families in return for leaving them alone, etc. Nonhuman PCs allowed by the GM can expect to contend with prejudice and misunderstanding.

There are several ways to reflect this change of status. First, humans believe that nonhumans are extinct or are imaginary beings created by old wives to frighten children. An encounter with real live "other" people will be a genuine surprise, a surprise the PCs may not be prepared for. The authorities will be inclined to be skeptical, forcing the heroes to resolve the situation on their own and in ways the law might not approve of. Second, the government believes in the other races and is determined to make sure that their decline continues. The PCs are empowered to hunt down and bring to justice witches, thieving mound dwellers, etc. Third, the PCs are nonhumans, hounded and feared by the society around them, struggling to survive. They may be fugitives or wanderers, seeking to locate and aid others of their kind. Or they may dwell stealthily among humans, concealing their identities, quietly maintaining their subcultures in private.

Huge and/or mindless monsters will be rare in a swashbuckling campaign. As the human population grows, obviously dangerous creatures will be either killed or driven off. There won't be a goblin or werewolf under every bush. Even exceptionally powerful beasts will find humans enough of a nuisance to make relocation worth their while. Monsters which survive near human communities will have to be smaller, swifter and smarter; otherwise the their erstwhile victims would gang up on them and destroy them. The monster may be a Gaelic water terror, but he'll transform himself into a charming young man in order to approach his winsome prey. The local loup garou knows exactly what he's doing: his victims are the tax collector and daughter of the neighbor who refused to sell him that prize cow. Villainous critters will also tend to be well organized. If they're solitary, they'll take care to scope out the territory before they strike. Many of them will seek safety in numbers; the PCs will run into several of them at once, or a slain monster will have comrades lurking nearby, waiting for the opportunity to avenge him.

THE GROWTH OF SCIENCE

The country these changes are happening in will tend to be the most socially and technologically advanced land in your campaign. Citizens with the new questioning attitude will tend to gather, re-examine, and categorize the knowledge of their forefathers and will begin to seek new and better ways of doing things. They'll question the way the world works: Why does wood float and iron sink? Where do birds go in the winter? How does a fire turn fuel into warmth? Where do the stars go in the daytime? To find out the answers and test their theories, scholars will have to invent all sorts of new equipment and instruments, some of which may be useful for other purposes as well. This emerging group of scientists generally won't be Thomas Edisons—they're interested in lining their pockets and satisfying their relentless curiosity, not in helping

the common man—but the king or nobles may commission them to undertake projects that may eventually benefit the average citizen.

Changes in technology shouldn't be radical ones. The scholars and artisans involved are, after all, part of the tradition-bound culture they're living in. Most of the changes will be improvements on existing technology—solving old problems in new ways. An inventor probably won't be able to make an automobile, but he might develop a faster, smoother-riding coach.

Use the guidelines on creating magic items (*Spell Law*, Section 9.0) to simulate these technological improvements. Wands, rods, staves, and rune paper don't fit the genre. They should be rare medieval leftovers or completely absent. Potions, however, are very handy for simulating the drugs and poisons available to swashbuckling-era alchemists, chemists and diplomats. These insidious concoctions can be sprinkled or injected from rings, soaked into or dusted on books and manuscripts, added to cosmetics and condiments—administered to a victim or patient in almost any devious way a player or the GM can devise. Likewise, the rules for magic objects can be used to simulate a wide variety of technological gadgets. The science involved doesn't have to be strictly accurate according to 20th Century knowledge, but the inventor should at least come up with a plausible explanation for his new toy.

7.2 WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE: MIXING HISTORICAL AND FANTASY CHARACTERS

The above guidelines have been general. Now let's get specific and assume the GM wants to install a 17th Century kingdom right next door to his established fantasy realm. How will Reformation swashbucklers and scholars interact with fantasy swordsmen and sorcerers? How will the GM combine magic and technology? And how will historical soldiers handle mythological monsters without the aid of magic?

ROCKY RELATIONS (7.2.1)

Daily life hasn't changed that much between the Middle Ages and the 17th Century. You could deposit an average medieval farmer, beggar or artisan in Reformation France and he wouldn't feel out of place. Commoners from the two milieus—fantastic and historical—shouldn't have much trouble interacting with each other. They share the same poverty, the same superstitions, the same servitude to the upper classes. The techniques and hardships of their professions have remained the same from generation to generation. Because of the social changes discussed previously, however, middle and upper class characters will have a tougher time getting along with each other.

Educated post-Renaissance Europeans consider themselves enlightened for having rediscovered Greco-Roman art, literature and learning and will tend to have a superiority complex toward "backward" fantasy characters. The Renaissance elite believe they are more intellectual and sophisticated than their medieval predecessors—and in some ways they are right. They are more literate, their ships are more seaworthy and their navigation instruments more accurate, their populations are swelling due to better medical care, their armies are larger and equipped with fearsome new weapons, and their capitalist corporations are better able to finance



extended ventures into the unknown. However, 17th Century savants will retain this attitude regardless of how sophisticated their fantasy neighbors actually are. Remember how 16th Century explorers looked down upon advanced civilizations in Japan and South America?

Upper caste fantasy characters, for their part, will view 17th Century PCs as pretentious snobs and insufferable braggarts. They will become alarmed by the dangerous ideas discussed by Renaissance eggheads and the revolutionary faith promoted by Reformation missionaries. They'll definitely resent being considered "heathens." Also, because historical characters seem weak at first (dainty manners, dinky swords, little armor, no magic), fantasy folk may not take them seriously until they prove themselves in combat. Knights and Musketeers share a similar code of honor and love of military glory. However, fantasy paladins will view the landless Musketeers as pretenders to nobility and will question their loyalty because they fight for pay. Musketeers will regard the knights as ill-mannered boors who have no appreciation for painting and poetry.

Spell casters and nonhumans will have a tougher time interacting with historical characters. As discussed elsewhere, 17th Century folk approach magic with a mixture of moral outrage and fear. To them, all magic is demonic in origin and using it is therefore an act of defiance against God. Dabbling in the occult not only endangers one's own soul but threatens those around one. Persecuting a wizard is thus an expression of piety and patriotism. Reformation types may accept magical help when desperate but they'll generally avoid wizards and will disassociate themselves even from persons who fraternize with suspected magicians. A benevolent magic wielder who claimed his powers were from God might gain a following among the poor but he would be monitored and harassed by a suspicious Church.

Association with nonhumans is also frowned upon by 17th Century citizens. The nonhuman races are strange and elusive, they may be demons in disguise, and they certainly may have bad habits with which to corrupt God-fearing gentlemen. Trafficking (conducting business) with the fairies is almost as bad an offense as witchcraft. Historical characters either don't believe the races of faerie exist or are too frightened of them to persecute them. Instead, they'll use a mixture of avoidance, bribery and flattery to attempt to placate nonhumans while they keep their distance. Nonhumans generally won't be able to move openly in Renaissance society. They'll have to operate quietly, at night or in disguise, concealing their differences and supernatural abilities. Historical PCs who travel to fantasy cities teeming with strange beings may have attacks of xenophobia.

Magicians and nonhumans may regard zealous Reformers as bigots. However, 17th Century people really aren't less tolerant than fantasy characters. Remember the inter-species mistrust and backbiting in *Lord of the Rings*? The Fellowship of the Ring managed to hang together only because its members faced a common enemy. In the same way, historical PCs will eventually adjust to the existence of magic and mythological beings even if they don't like them. Also, the culture shock is mutual. Imagine an elf lord's reaction when he discovers his daughter has been converted by the Jesuits or a wizard's response when his apprentice wants to skip traditional lore and study at a modern university instead.

These potential conflicts by no means prevent Renaissance and fantastic societies from enjoying profitable cultural and financial exchanges. What it does mean is that characters from either milieu will have more role-playing opportunities than ever before. In 17th

Century Europe, France, England and Spain managed to wage war upon each other without inhibiting the activities of traders, tourists and scientists. A nation's worst enemy was often its best trading partner and favorite vacation spot. Musketeers will apply this same ambivalence toward neighboring fantasy fiefdoms. They won't allow their convictions to prevent them from enjoying themselves or acquiring a pocketful of gold.

PIETY VS. PAGANISM (7.2.2)

Cosmology is one of the most difficult aspects of combining the historical and fantasy genres. It determines how the PCs view the world, the nature of good and evil, whether magic exists and how it works if it does. Much fantasy literature assumes that paganism is the norm (Robert Howard's *Conan* stories), ignores or glosses over religion (Tolkien's novels), or presents a world in which Christianity has a tenuous influence at best (the Arthurian saga). Swashbuckling literature, folklore and some historical fantasies, however, assume that whatever the planet's previous spiritual condition, all bets were off after the first Easter. Christ is supreme, the old gods are dead, and magic (if it exists at all) is rapidly fading.

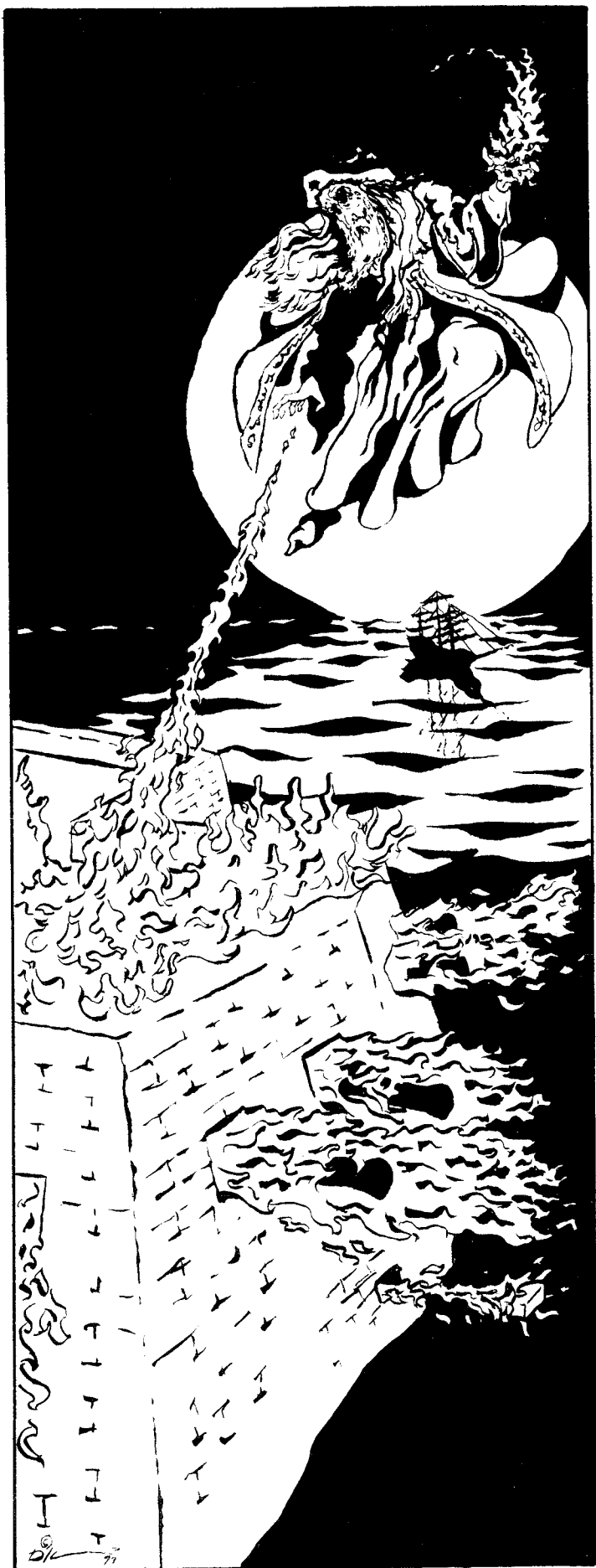
For game purposes, we'll assume that the swashbucklers are right but that the transition isn't instant or universal. In fact, it's directly tied into how aggressive and committed the Christians are in spreading their faith. Magic, monsters and faerie races thrive in pagan lands but will begin to weaken and disappear once missionaries make significant inroads. The true faith provides believers some protection from supernatural harm but sinners and the unconverted are affected by magic normally.

This process can be seen in the Arthurian legends. Celtic Christianity in the 5th and 6th centuries was a rather laid back affair. Galahad and Percival were devout believers but Arthur himself only paid lip service to the new religion, kept a Welsh seer as an advisor, and had a half sister who was either a fairy or a witch or both. In later centuries, however, the Roman church introduced a more missions-minded faith. Gutsy preachers like Saint Patrick persuaded converts, chased away evil spirits and beasts, and gave nonhumans an ultimatum: baptism or banishment. Faerie folk who were baptized received Christian souls and became more and more like humans until they were assimilated into the general population. Those who refused went into hiding, where they dwindled in size and power, becoming increasingly wretched and feral.

In showdowns between pagan enchanters and Judeo-Christian clergymen, faith will cancel magic. Destructive blasts will boomerang, summoned creatures will flee, and curses simply won't work. If this seems unfair, keep in mind that ministers and rabbis don't have flashy offensive capabilities, only the authority to banish evil. (Magic, any magic, is condemned by both Jewish and Christian scriptures.) Divine protection assumes that the clergyman in question is living up to his creed and maintaining a morally upright lifestyle. If he sins or compromises his faith, magic will affect him just as it would any pagan.

Also, this protection doesn't shield the man of God from natural attacks. Elijah humiliated the prophets of Baal by calling down fire from heaven but ran from Queen Jezebel's guards. Paul of Tarsus struck Elymas the sorcerer blind but was beaten up on a regular basis by pagan mobs. Saint Patrick could strip leprechaun lords of their powers but couldn't prevent Irish pirates from capturing and enslaving him. In the same way, movie magicians never seem to be able to clobber the swashbuckling hero with spells; they're inevitably forced to call out the guards or duel the smart aleck themselves.





FIREBALLS VS. FIREARMS (7.2.3)

Magic and science produce powerful, and incompatible, technologies. Magic is a Bronze Age methodology inhibited by “cold iron,” which is why spell casters rarely wear metal armor. Musketeers’ scientific technology, on the other hand, makes liberal use of iron and steel. Gadgeteers of the two disciplines might be able to duplicate effects but shouldn’t be able to combine physics and metaphysics in the same device. In some cases, it may not be possible to counteract one technology with the other. For example, spells that affect living tissue or simple tools may be useless against machines. A magical shield may stop arrows but not bullets. Or enchanted armor may be impervious to bullets, unless the bullets are silver and have been blessed by a priest. Magically-inflicted wounds may heal only when treated by magic. The GM will have to decide these matters on a case-by-case basis.

Because of this incompatibility, students of one discipline will be generally ignorant of the other; a carbine will be as mysterious to a wizard as a magic wand is to a cavalryman. Enchanters and inventors don’t know how each others’ gadgets work and should be equally unprepared. Reformation PCs won’t have protective amulets and won’t necessarily know to duck when a sorcerer starts reading his rune paper aloud. They’ll react to spells with horror and shock. However, knights and mages won’t automatically know to run when a grenade lands beside them. Fantasy characters who scoff at “defenseless” musketeers will get a few surprises of their own when cannonballs hit them from beyond bow range or when gunpowder-driven bullets pierce their plate armor. Even if a sorcerer deduces enough to ignite an artillery crew’s powder magazine, he may not anticipate the strength and blast radius of the resulting explosion.

Musketeers balance the power of spells with the speed and precision of their fighting style, with the long range of their firearms and with the conviction that they are fighting for God against evil. This added morale provides a small, ever-present defense against spells involving ego domination or character corruption. Thus, an evil sorcerer might be able to incinerate a devout swashbuckler but he couldn’t hypnotize him, read his mind or enslave him to wickedness.

In addition, magicians traveling in swashbuckling regions will discover their powers are weakened by the unbelief of the people around them. This skepticism reduces magic’s effectiveness or makes spells more difficult to activate. Minor spells will still work but wizards’ most powerful and destructive conjurations will fizzle or will produce unexpected—even ludicrous—results.

Likewise, science-based technology will gradually break down as 17th Century characters voyage through fantasy realms. This process is subtle and insidious: gadgets will work fine at first but over time navigation instruments will begin giving inaccurate readings, clocks will cease to keep proper time, and firearms will jam and misfire with increasing frequency. Adventurers’ high-tech tools will tend to fail them just when they need them most.

For examples of this phenomenon, see C.S. Lewis’ *The Magician’s Nephew* and *The Hero of Varay* series by Rick Shelley. In the former, the White Witch loses her spells (but not her superhuman strength) when transported to Victorian England. In the latter, an American college student discovers that 20th Century devices he takes for granted don’t work in the world of Faerie.



DRAGOONS AND DRAGONS (7.2.4)

Reformation PCs respond to monsters with extra fear and loathing; such creatures are unexpected and are visible manifestations of the evil one. Fantasy characters may be terrified of monsters, too, but at least they start out with the concept that such things exist. However, medieval and 17th Century characters respond differently to their fears.

The typical fantasy mindset in dealing with a monster is to avoid its habitation or placate it until a hero shows up who is tough enough to slay it. The paladin, seeking glory, tackles the creature singlehandedly or with a small group of friends; greater risk means greater glory. He also favors direct confrontation with the beast: it's the macho thing to go toe-to-toe with a creature more powerful than yourself. Fantasy folk sometimes tolerate monsters because they regard them as deities or divinely appointed guardians to be honored or at least bribed. Occasional victims are unfortunate but necessary sacrifices to the god.

Musketeers, on the other hand, regard monster slaying as more a matter of pest control than of personal heroics and have no religious qualms about dispatching eldritch beasts. Once they know a monster is in the region they won't rest until it is destroyed. They'll call out the army, systematically comb the area, and ambush the creature with overwhelming firepower. They don't have any compunctions against ganging up on the critter and won't feel dishonored if they suffocate it by collapsing the entrance to its lair with a petrard or blast it to bits with an artillery bombardment. Nonmilitary PCs share this group mentality when dealing with monsters. It's a movie cliché, but they really will raise a hue and cry and call out the entire village to rout the loup garou or ogre that has been plaguing them. Fiends who don't mind attacking lone travelers will think twice when confronted by an irate mob armed with torches and pitchforks.

As noted above, technology can duplicate magical effects: demolitions experts can engineer their own fireballs and destructive blasts, chemists can concoct exotic new drugs, and monster armor that is proof against swords and arrows may be less effective against bullets and artillery shells. Even if a 17th Century musket can't injure a particular fell beast, the noise and smoke is likely to startle it. It may run from the unexpected sound and smell even if the bullet merely stings.

Unlike their fantasy counterparts, 17th Century characters will use the scientific method—observation, deduction and experimentation—to attempt to figure out what makes monsters tick: “Hmmm, so a dragon can belch fire only five times before loss of lighter-than-air gases forces it to land” or “Dissection demonstrates that a troll can't parry a Spanish riposte because its muscular structure prevents it from moving its arms that way.” If the PCs' solution is creative and plausible, the GM should allow them to get away with it. This, however, forces the GM to decide how things work. For instance, if a dragon's flame is magically generated, the only defense will be a shield made of the creature's own cast-off scales. On the other hand, if dragonfire is the product of natural gastric processes, the PCs might be able to quench it by tossing a sack of baking soda into the monster's maw right before it burps on them.

7.3 SAMPLE FANTASY SETTING: GAULICA

HISTORY (7.3.1)

Gaulica, the campaign's main stomping ground, was until a few years ago a motley assortment of fiefdoms dominated by its powerful neighbor, the Andalusian Empire. However, the rise of a new monotheistic religion coincided with a rebellion led by a charismatic duke, Lord Paluz. He united the region using the new faith to forge a national identity, freed Gaulica from Andalus' control, and was proclaimed king by the clergymen he'd protected from persecution. The clerical hierarchy retains influences from the old polytheistic priests, “sanitized” for new faith. A reform movement has arisen demanding purge of “pagan” practices, including magic. Foreign powers hope to use reform movement to their advantage but the Paluz administration has kept it in check so far. Public opinion is against magic. Spell casters are persecuted unofficially as subversives and foreign sympathizers, even though Queen Morgo retains a seer as an advisor. As a result, magic is in decline and technology is being imported from the Republic of Flondar. Nonhumans still dwell in Gaulica but they're keeping out of sight and some are considering emigration.

Mere weeks ago, King Paluz was assassinated by an adherent to the old religion; an investigation into rumored foreign involvement has bogged down. Queen Morgo rules as regent on behalf of her 6-year-old son, Stephanus. She's being advised on everything from foreign relations to farming by her pet seer, Lord Ragah, and palace gossip claims she's near to dismissing her husbands ministers. Ragah has been baptized but Church officials fear he's insincere, and Paluz's cabinet officials don't like the thought that they could soon lose their jobs or worse. Both queen and cabinet seem more concerned about consolidating their power than protecting the nation's fragile independence. Palace troops are loyal to the queen, who hopes to use them to keep Ragah and the cabinet in line should they turn on her. Meanwhile, the captain of the guard has secretly sworn personal fealty to the boy king. His men are determined to defend Stephanus from regent and ministers until he is old enough to rule.

COSMOLOGY (7.3.2)

According to Gaulica's new spiritual leaders, there is one all-powerful, all-knowing Creator distinct from his creation, served by angels. He is opposed by a fallen archangel and demons. The struggle is not an equal one; good is more powerful than evil. Evil's weapons are deception, ignorance and fear. Other “gods” worshipped in the world are imaginary frauds or demonic imposters. “Magic” is either primitive science cloaked in mumbo-jumbo (Essence) or a demonic counterfeit for the Creator's miracles (Channeling).

GEOGRAPHY (7.3.3)

Physically, Gaulica is a large chunk of continental peninsula, screened from its neighbors by mountains. It is landlocked on its west coast by Republic of Flondar; seas to east are dominated by Andalusian Empire. Wide, fertile plains separate mountain ranges, well-watered by numerous rivers. The nation has a temperate climate which tends toward subtropical in the east. The mountains are heavily forested. The Western Sea is cold, the coast rugged and eerie; the waters of the Eastern Sea are warmer, and the coast features sunny golden beaches.



CULTURE (7.3.4)

Four ethnic groups make up Gaulica's residents: northerners, southerners with a heavy Andalusian influence, mountain folk with a culture separate from anybody, and marsh gypsies. Northerners are the dominant group; they supported Paluz, gaining influence and wealth, and theirs is the language used at court. The nation's educated elite speaks and writes in Northern. Most of the population is illiterate, and peasants usually speak Southern, a fractured version of the royal tongue mixed with many Andalusian words and idioms. Because of the differences in language, wealth and lifestyle, commoners frequently exhibit a marked disrespect for authority and delight in outwitting the ruling class. Mountaineers and gypsies have their own languages. Society is patrilineal and generally male-dominated except among the mountain folk, whose harsh living conditions encourage them to respect anyone who can work hard. Social order is basically feudal but a growing middle class is redefining the social structure. There is some class mobility, although roles are strongly defined. The poor can become indentured servants, criminals are sentenced to hard labor, but slavery as such not widely practiced.

The Church's complex clerical hierarchy wields considerable political influence. There is a tradition of saints, often female, who rescue the land from enemies. The populace is generally devout but resents the wealth and ease enjoyed by the upper clergy. The old religion retains believers in the mountains and in some regions of the south.

A mixed economy is made possible by abundant natural resources: fertile fields, mountain iron ore and lumber, plateau orchards, dairy cattle and sheep, hot mineral springs and volcanic materials. Technology is early industrial; there is a gradual introduction of bulky, fragile machines and gadgets from Flondar. Cannon are in military use, and palace troops are armed with matchlock firearms. Problems at home, the lack of a navy, and the barrier mountains have prevented Gaulica from using its new weapons to attempt continental conquest... so far.

Paluz ruled as an absolute monarch and the queen is attempting to do the same. To assist with this, the military is under direct royal control rather than being farmed out to feudal lords in the usual medieval fashion. The nobility is rapidly being pushed aside by a ballooning middle-class bureaucracy, which really runs the country. Judges and officials buy their offices from Queen Morgo and must satisfy her as well as justice. Gaulica's legal system is complex; fees for everything. There are no civil liberties but some religious liberties as long as one is a monotheist. Foreign relations flip-flop regularly as neighboring countries would love to gobble up the newly forged kingdom.

FOREIGN NEIGHBORS (7.3.5)

ANDALUSIAN EMPIRE

Gaulica's southern neighbor is her major antagonist: a rich and powerful empire beginning to collapse under its own weight. Andalus combines the worst qualities of the Spanish and Ottoman empires. It's aggressive, has a brutal authoritarian government, but is hampered by the inefficiency and corruption of its regional officials and the general decadence of its citizens. It lacks firearms but boasts the campaign world's largest army, navy and merchant marine, supplemented by privateers and pirates. Most of its attacks on Gaulica are naval because the mountain passes between the two nations are few and easily defended. Currently, however, the empire is attempting to use diplomacy and guile to undermine

Gaulican sovereignty. It's busy fighting the Republic of Flondar; Emperor Tergius doesn't want to fight two wars at once and feels the unstable Gauls can't remain free for long anyhow.

Imperials worship a pantheon of demonic "gods" headed by a principal chieftain. Their highly centralized government is overseen by an emperor who is obeyed as a god; Tergius is the chief priest of the state religion as well as a political ruler. A warrior-priest caste runs the bureaucracy and hoards most of the nation's wealth. Slaves make up a significant portion of the work force, including the military, and the slave trade is a major contributor to the economy. Tergius himself fought his way up from foreign captive to army captain to Imperial Guardsman before staging the coup that made him emperor. Imperial scholars have advanced the disciplines of mathematics, philosophy, medicine, navigation and astronomy. However, they haven't applied their knowledge to technology or the problems of daily life because slaves do all the manual labor. Why do they need machines?

Andalus is a land of dry, stony hills and mountains and has a semi-arid Mediterranean climate like Spain or Italy. Its major industries are beef cattle, tanning, sheep, grapes and exotic fruits. Its dirt-poor population is widely dispersed, providing many areas where magical beings and creatures can dwell free from human interference.

Andalus' role is that of the "bad-guy" fantasy nation. PCs can travel here if they exercise caution but their reception will tend to be chilly, unless their host is a merchant who hopes to take them for the shirts off their backs or a politician who plans to use them for his own ends. Magic here is powerful but isn't seen on a daily basis because it is hoarded by the ruling elite. Magicians have a penchant for gadgets; encounters with their strange or unpleasant devices will be the most common experience.

THE REPUBLIC OF FLONDAR

Northwest of Gaulica is Flondar, a monotheistic republic which aggressively controls access to the sea and maritime trade. Flondar is a sometime ally and economic rival which helps maintain the balance of power with Andalus and Bavar (see below). However the Senate also has voted to support Gaulica's troublesome reformers. Flondarian society is relatively egalitarian. Foreign religions receive limited tolerance as dogmatism would interfere with the nation's profits. In spite of being such a small country, or perhaps because of it, the republic has a strong professional army and navy armed with the latest weapons. It engages heavily in foreign trade even with its enemies; many Andalusian slaves are transported in Flondarian ships. Merchant princes and theologians have a major influence on politics. Much of its technology is geared toward commercial interests: mechanical looms, precision clocks, faster ships, etc. Because of this combination of military and economic pressures, the republic is the most technologically advanced nation in the campaign.

Flondar is crammed onto a desolate coastline that is alternatively marshy or rocky. The lack of farmland and natural resources forces it to depend on international trade and finance. A disproportionate number of its citizens are city dwellers: traders, bankers, industrialists, craftsmen. Residents have a high per capita income but the poor are wretched. The majority of these poor engage in fishing or subsistence farming. The Senate is controlled by oligarchical trade organizations and appoints chief executives titled Commodore-General to handle national emergencies, such as the current war with Andalus. There is little or no magic here; there's a religious bias against it, and the nation is too crowded for nonhumans to coexist secretly.



If PCs want to engage in high-stakes trade or cutthroat diplomacy, load up on the latest hardware, or explore the world, Flondar is the place to come. Its ships are the best, its sailors the boldest, and it is actively seeking to establish colonies. The republic can be a handy hiding place if the characters fall out of favor back home. However, Flondar wants to woo Gaulica as badly as Andalus does, and the Senate has been known to return asylum-seekers when Lord Ragah's diplomats pull the right strings.

THE DUCHY OF BAVAR

Geography is the source of Bavar's woes: it's the most convenient land route between Andalus and Flondar now that the Gauls have gained their independence. Once a prosperous feudal kingdom with ties to the empire, Bavar is currently a desolate wasteland haunted by dissidents, refugees and outlaws and stalked by disease and fell beasts. A certain Duke Craigmont has established some semblance of order at one of the old manorial strongholds but the actual area the duchy can exert control over is small. Bavar's population is one-fifth of its pre-war numbers; everyone is either dead or has fled. Those who remain are desperate and sullen and may attempt to rob PC travelers who appear weak or heedless. Generally, however, the people are fearful of strangers and will hide when PCs approach. They're armed with anything from sticks to sporting rifles looted from the ruins of some Flondarian campsite.

Before the war, Bavar was an Imperial client state which had begun importing ideas and technology from Flondar. A religious war between adherents of the old and new faiths weakened the kingdom, enabling Republican and Imperial troops to use it as a

battleground largely unchallenged by the locals. Thorgard, the last high king, managed to reconcile Bavar's warring factions so that they could kick the foreigners out. Immediately following victory, however, he succumbed to plague. Craigmont gathered the shreds of the army and established his capitol. Because of this, the acceptance and effectiveness of magic varies from place to place; survivors are generally too exhausted to renew old feuds. Magicians are few, as they died or ran like everyone else, but PCs may unearth a few magic items that previous looters have missed. Nonhumans disgruntled by conditions elsewhere have begun to colonize the region as there aren't enough mortals to stop them.

Bavar can be a depressing place for adventurers to travel but it is also where altruistic PCs can do their fellow men some real good, where mercenaries can always find employment, and where monster-hunters can encounter gothic and mythological horrors. If the characters want to make the world a better place, chase outlaws for fun and profit, hunt real live dragons or dine in the halls of the goblin king, Duke Craigmont's camp is a good place to start.

MAHANADI HEGEMONY

This distant empire counterbalances the power of Andalus and could be a greater threat once the Imperials are beaten for good. Conflict between the rival empires is part of the reason Andalus was unable to stop King Paluz's rebellion and why it hasn't simply crushed Flondar with overwhelming numbers. However, to most characters in the campaign, Mahanadi is merely a name. A very few Flondarian merchants-adventurers have returned with rich cargoes supposedly from the Hegemony but none of them are talking.



8.0 OVERVIEW / HISTORY

Musketeer Jacques d'Blois strode purposefully toward the chevalier seated at the back table.

"Monsieur, I will have words with you!"

"Ah, d'Blois, mon ami," Valentin of the Cardinal's Guards said pleasantly. "I hope you are quite well."

"How can I be well when I hear that Lieutenant Caillos and Monsieur Martieu are with the surgeons this morning and that the latter is not expected to recover? You will regret this."

Valentin's eyes widened as if with surprise. "I fail to understand you, sir. I could hardly stand by while those blackguards accused you of being a liar."

"Indeed!" D'Blois strove to keep the tremor out of his voice. "They called me a liar?"

"Quite so. The gentlemen had the temerity to suggest that you had unfavorably compared His Eminence to the hind-quarters of a donkey. Since the Cardinal is the King's most faithful and trusted servant and since your devotion to His Majesty is unquestionable, I knew you could never have made such a treasonable statement. I saw fit to chastise them for their rashness."

"You play games with me!"

Valentin's cheery smile hardened into a smirk and his hand slid to the pommel of his sword. "I never play games, monsieur. I am in deadly earnest."

For the most part, knowledge of the history and setting of 17th Century Europe will be helpful to those participating in a campaign based in history. GMs will find the following information useful even if they are not running a historical campaign. The events and circumstances which shaped the time period shaped the swashbuckling genre as well. For those running a fantasy campaign, this section (and those following) can be used as a guideline for creating or adapting a swashbuckling game.

8.1 SETTING

This section provides an overview of the times and places where adventures will take place. Section 11.0 provides a more detailed look at setting.

Adventures in *At Rapier's Point* can take place anywhere in the world. This is a great age of European exploration and colonization. Although there are fortunes to be made in India, the Orient and the Americas, most adventures will take place in Europe, specifically France and England, where the paths to power and glory are familiar and well-trodden.

The Reformation has divided Europe in two. The British Isles—with the exception of Ireland—and most of northern Europe are Protestant while France, Spain and southern Europe are Catholic. Russia and the portions of southeastern Europe not engulfed by the Ottoman Empire embrace the Orthodox faith. Most kings, even Catholic ones, put national well-being ahead of obedience to the Pope, although the Catholic Church still wields considerable temporal power. Travelers need a pass to go from one country to another but borders are broad and ill-watched and sneaking in and out of a nation isn't too difficult. Smugglers, spies and other people on the run do it all the time. A voyage across the English Channel takes about six hours in good weather.

France has an incredibly varied climate and geography, ranging from cold, rugged mountains to flat, balmy Mediterranean plains. Unfortunately, in century of religious and political strife this has the effect of dividing the nation into a bunch of separate territories, each with its own feudal ruler and economy. The nobles would like to keep it that way, especially the Protestant lords that dominate the south. France, however, is surrounded on all sides by enemies controlled by the powerful Hapsburg family: Spain to the south, the Holy Roman Empire to the northeast and Italy to the southeast. Mercenary Switzerland, due east, cheerfully supplies soldiers to anyone who can afford them. To counter this threat, French kings insist on increasing their authority and enforcing Catholic unity, a process they're willing to carry out by force.

The cold, damp, rugged British Isles are divided into four countries that have a history of fighting each other. England and Wales have been united since 1536. They returned to the Anglican Church just 40 years ago after Mary Tudor's violent attempt to restore Catholicism as the state religion. The nation is at peace due to the skillful manipulations of Queen Elizabeth. To the north, Scotland is dominated by fiercely independent feudal lords who are continually fighting among themselves. Some stability is provided by the powerful Presbyterian Kirk, whose ministers act as a sort of primitive theocratic senate. Ireland, to the west, remains staunchly Catholic and independence minded in spite of 400 years of English occupation. The English and Scots are attempting to colonize its east coast in much the same way they are colonizing North America.

France and England's neighbors are a motley lot. Spain, the most powerful and aggressive nation in Europe, is busy spending its South American gold and silver on armies to recapture the Calvinist United Provinces (Holland), subdue Portugal, and interfere in French, Italian and German politics. If Spain is Europe's military giant, the United Provinces are rapidly becoming its economic giant. The Dutch rebels build better ships than anyone else and are quickly monopolizing trade both in Europe and in the Orient. Their policy of religious tolerance also attracts craftsmen from many other nations. The Holy Roman Empire (Germany) is a loose confederacy of states nominally under the authority of an emperor. Because its princes are competing for political and spiritual authority, the Empire is a powder keg waiting to be ignited. Italy has even less political unity than Germany and is under Spain's thumb. However, it is Europe's cultural center. A year's study in Italy is considered an essential part of a young gentleman's education. It is a mecca for painters, sculptors, architects, physicians, theologians and scientists.

In addition to Europe, however, there are the French and English colonies in the New World. These are unfashionable, dangerous settlements in the wilderness far from home and the patronage of the court. The West Indian colonies are tiny tropical islands infested with fevers, cannibals and Spaniards. The North American colonies are small palisades perched on the edge of cold, dark forests that stretch as far as the eye can see. Most characters won't willingly come here, at least not to stay. However, success as a colonial governor, privateer, trader or plantation owner can be a springboard to better opportunities back home or can salvage a plummeting career... if you survive. The colonies also a good place to hide if you fall out of favor, commit a crime, or get into trouble for your political or religious views.



8.2 HISTORY

The 17th Century was one of great change in both France and England. Both nations entered the century as fragmented feudal societies and emerged as unified nation-states ready for the Industrial Revolution. Violent religious factionalism subsided into an exhausted toleration, medieval superstition was gradually replaced by rationalism, and manorial economics gave way to aggressive capitalism.

FRANCE (8.2.1)

By the early 1600s, France had been torn by almost four decades of religious and civil strife. Henry of Navarre, a Protestant noble from the House of Bourbon, became king in 1589 when his cousin, Henry III, was assassinated by Catholic radicals who thought the late king was wavering in his opposition to the Protestant heretics. Henry IV successfully battled rival factions but was crowned in 1594 only after he adopted Catholicism. After four years of negotiations between Catholics and Protestants, Henry's Edict of Nantes ensured national unity by granting limited tolerance toward Protestants. This settlement essentially created a country within a country. Protestants were allowed freedom of worship, freedom of the press, and the ability to hold public office. They were allowed to maintain strongholds and private armies for their defense, and special courts were created to handle cases involving them. The edict prevented civil war for a time but led to renewed problems during Louis XIII's reign.

Henry was a scandalous womanizer, and his marriage to Margaret of Valois was a failure. It also failed to produce children. In 1599 he finally managed to get the marriage annulled and in 1600 married Maria de Medici for political reasons on the advice of his first minister, Maximilien de Bethune, Duke of Sully. The union produced a male heir, Louis, in 1601 but also enraged Henry's former fiancée, Henriette de Balzac d'Entragues. A sexy schemer, Henriette hung around Henry's court for the next decade constantly involved in plots to kill the King. She was eventually exiled.

During the next ten years, Henry, under Sully's guidance, rebuilt France's economy. Funds were raised by putting government offices up for sale and national debt was reduced by 30 percent. This practice eventually made the French bureaucracy one of the most corrupt in Europe. Sully also promoted agriculture and industrialization, policies which helped make Henry the most popular king in French history. Henry encouraged the exploration and settlement of Canada. He dreamed of creating a sort of 17th Century League of Nations that would help limit the power of Austria.

When the armies of the Holy Roman Empire seized territory on France's eastern border in 1610, Henry planned a three-pronged attack into Spain, Italy and the Netherlands to recover it. These plans alarmed the rest of Europe, Protestant and Catholic alike. Expecting to be gone for a while, Henry made the Queen his regent on May 13. The next day he was murdered by a Catholic fanatic when his carriage was stopped by a traffic jam.

Louis XIII became king at age 9 with his mother as regent. Sully resigned in 1611, and Maria de Medici handed power over to her brother-in-law, Italian adventurer Concino Concini. The nobility, encouraged by Concini's corrupt and inefficient rule, persuaded the Queen Mother to convene the Estates-General in hopes of regaining the power they had enjoyed before Henry's reign. Instead, the assembly, dominated by the Protestant middle-class, demanded major reforms in the corrupt French clergy and was dissolved the following year in 1615. (The Estates-General didn't meet again until 1789, when it again demanded reform and set off



the French Revolution.) During this period Armand du Plessis de Richelieu became a member of the Council of State, helping Concini consolidate his power and placate the Protestants. Richelieu became Secretary of State in 1616. In the meantime, the Queen Mother married Louis off to Anne of Austria when the boy was 14 to help make peace with Spain. Two years later, in 1617, Louis ordered Concini arrested; the Italian was killed when he resisted. Concini's wife was condemned as a witch, Maria de Medici was banished from Paris, and the Queen Mother's ministers, including Richelieu, were dismissed.

Louis spent the next 26 years continuing to unify France and consolidate his power, a process which resulted in some kind of conspiracy or minor civil war about every five years. These conspiracies were usually instigated by Maria de Medici, Anne of Austria, or the King's jealous younger brother, Gaston of Orleans. The royal relatives survived by betraying their co-conspirators but always managed to get a new set of dupes for the next uprising. The King was weak but smart enough to realize it. In 1624 he recalled Richelieu, recently named a cardinal. Ruthless and cunning, Richelieu set about to ensure Louis' ascendancy and his own. Between 1626 and 1632 Richelieu broke the power of the aristocracy and the Huguenots, crushing their armies and dismantling their fortresses. In doing so, he transformed France into an efficient police state. Once he had deprived the Protestants of their military strength in 1629, however, he was surprisingly tolerant. Richelieu granted them general amnesty, freedom of worship and restored their ability to hold public office (lost during a civil war in 1622).

...

Richelieu's real forte was foreign policy. France was surrounded on all sides by enemy states controlled by the Hapsburg dynasty: Spain, Austria, Italy, and the Spanish Netherlands (modern Belgium). Richelieu desired to end that threat and expand French territory to its "natural" boundaries, the mountains to the south and east and the Rhine to the north. He supported Holland's rebellion against Spanish rule and in 1633 led France into the Thirty Years' War (raging between German Protestants and Catholics since 1618) by declaring war on Spain. His diplomats sought to end the conflict while his armies grabbed coveted German territory. When Spanish armies invaded northern France, Richelieu returned to Paris in 1636, whipped the city militia into an army and routed the Imperial forces. His secret agents encouraged revolt in the Spanish state of Catalonia in 1639 and in Spanish-controlled Portugal in 1640. He returned to Paris in 1642 after yet another victory against the Germans, worn out and dying. Louis died five months later in 1643.

Louis XIV ascended to the throne at the tender age of 5, and France again was ruled by a queen, Anne, and an Italian, Richelieu's protege Cardinal Jules Mazarin. The two may have been secretly married. Mazarin continued France's military and diplomatic involvement in the Thirty Years' War which further depleted the royal treasury. The nobles once again sought to depose the regent queen's man in charge. The Frondes, a pair of civil wars lasting from 1648 to 1653, began ironically as French diplomats ended war in Germany.

In July 1648 the war-weary Parlement demanded that taxes be reduced 25 percent and that no new taxes be established without its consent. The assembly also demanded the dismissal of royal commissioners who went over the heads of local governors and that persons arrested not be held in prison more than 24 hours without being brought before the proper judge. When the Queen ordered leaders of Parlement arrested about a month and a half later, a mud and rock slinging mob gathered and forced her and



Louis to order the prisoners' release. Angry mobs forced them to flee Paris twice, frantic journeys in which she sold her jewels for food and slept on straw. When they returned, soldiers led by Gaston d'Orleans attacked the palace, claiming that the King had been kidnapped. Anne led the attackers past Louis' room while the boy pretended to be asleep. Louis later moved the administrative center from Paris to Versailles. At the same time, Parlement outlawed Mazarin. By August of 1647, the court reassembled as if nothing had happened.

The second Fronde erupted in January 1650 when Mazarin ordered the arrest of three nobles involved in the previous uprising. Nobles professed loyalty to the King while they engaged in a confused tangle of alliances and counter alliances against Mazarin. He released the prisoners a year later after Parlement again demanded his expulsion. The Prince of Conde, who had supported the Queen in the first revolt, now sought Spanish and English aid against his government. Louis, 13 years old, ended the regency in November, banished Mazarin, then recalled him. Conde's troops took Paris in July 1652. Mazarin realized his absence would cause the rebels to fight among themselves and left the country. Paris tired of the disruption caused by Conde's troops and allowed the royal family to return peacefully in October. Louis recalled Mazarin in February 1653. The cardinal returned to France with an army of his own and successfully bribed the German mercenaries comprising his opponents' forces to go home. Authority was restored to Louis, who confirmed Mazarin as his first minister.

To end the war with Spain, Mazarin sought an alliance with Puritan England. Cromwell's unbeatable army and navy ensured victory; Spain signed a treaty with France in 1649. (Upon



Cromwell's death, France supported the restoration of monarchy in England.) As part of the treaty, Louis XIV was forced to marry Spanish princess Maria Theresa even though he was in love with Mazarin's niece, Marie. Louis allowed Mazarin to continue as dictator but upon the Cardinal's death in 1661 decided to rule personally without a first minister.

ENGLAND (8.2.2)

Compared to France, Stuart England was a cultural and political backwater isolated from the rest of Europe by the English Channel. The United Kingdom was united with Scotland in name only and held Ireland by force. Scotland would have been willing to join with England but English Parliaments put it off until 1707. England lacked the money and will to establish a military capable of backing up its foreign policy and was out-traded by its economic rivals. Its American colonies were commercial failures whose inhabitants starved almost as fast as they arrived. They survived because Spain was too busy fighting Germany and France to wipe them out. James I negotiated peace with Spain in 1604 and steered an isolationist course, realizing that his country was too weak and divided to take on Europe's problems.

Middle-aged James Stuart came to England in 1603 after a long, frustrating reign in Scotland and viewed his time in the south almost as an extended vacation. He was an intelligent man who sought to maintain religious and political stability in a nation that during his childhood had been wracked by vicious religious strife. He was also a 17th Century good old boy who lacked Queen Elizabeth's public relations skills. He offended the public with his crude manners, offended Parliament with his insistence that a king's feudal prerogatives carried more weight than its statutes, and offended everyone with his promotion of court favorites regardless of their ability or lack of it.

Religion was the first issue James had to contend with. Puritans had asked him to make modifications in Anglican ceremony even before he reached London. In 1604 he convened the Hampton Court conference to allow Anglican and Puritan leaders to air their views, hoping to guide the two groups toward some kind of settlement. He began as a neutral referee but by the close of the meeting James supported Anglican church organization and ordered all clergymen to conform to Anglican worship. The Puritans got none of the changes they had requested, about 90 ministers lost their jobs, and gradually Puritanism became a rallying ground for the King's opponents. The conference did produce the Authorized Version of the Bible, which was published in 1611. The conference also had an effect on New World colonization. Although Jamestown was founded in 1607 as a commercial venture, religious dissidents began fleeing to America to escape Anglican persecution.

Catholics had been encouraged by James' sympathetic attitude and hoped for a relaxation of the restrictions placed upon them. When Robert Cecil, the King's chief advisor, forced him to adopt harsher

measures instead, eight Catholic gentlemen placed 30 casks of gunpowder beneath the chamber of the House of Lords. They planned to ignite the casks when James opened the Parliamentary session in November. However, a Catholic lord received an anonymous letter warning him away. He turned it over to Cecil, who had the palace searched on the eve of the session and discovered conspirator Guy Fawkes and the barrels of gunpowder. The other conspirators were rounded up, and all were executed in particularly grisly ways. The Gunpowder Plot was used to justify even sterner statutes against Catholic worship. Some Papists claimed that the whole thing was instigated by Cecil to sway Parliament toward his anti-Catholic policies.

Cecil, despite his bigotry, was competent and hard working. Unfortunately, James became infatuated with a young, handsome, insolent courtier named Robert Carr at a time when he was wrangling with Parliament over power and money. Already facing a deficit left by Elizabeth, the King spent large sums on lavish parties, luxurious houses, his Scottish followers and his boyfriend. In addition, even his most competent ministers were notoriously corrupt, milking the system for every penny they could get. He erased his influence in the House of Commons by giving all his buddies, including Cecil, titles of nobility. James then had Cecil come up with assorted schemes for raising funds and asked Parliament to approve them. The lower house told him to cut his expenses, questioned the legality of his money-making methods, and criticized his personal conduct. This evolved into an argument over who was really in charge.

Cecil died in 1612. So did James' athletic eldest son, Henry, leaving shy, stuttering Charles as the heir apparent. Seeking to placate Spain, the Court became increasingly pro-Spanish while



the Commons and general public continued to see Spain as a Catholic menace. To offset this, James married his daughter Elizabeth to a Protestant German prince, Frederick V, in 1613. The same year, he proposed to colonize northern Ireland with English and Scottish settlers and to incorporate Irish Catholics into the Anglican Church.

Carr and his wife were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1616 after she poisoned a man who had opposed their marriage, a scandal that did nothing to enhance James' reputation. Meanwhile, he'd already found another favorite, George Villiers. Villiers rose fast, knighted in 1615, made Duke of Buckingham by 1623. He was handsome, dashing and elegant, and in James' eyes could do no wrong. Villiers was also a greedy opportunist whose ambition was greater than his political skill. His 11-year stranglehold on English policy did as much as anything to ruin the Stuart dynasty.

Encroaching old age and Buckingham's bad advice ill prepared James for the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War. In 1619, Protestants in Bohemia revolted and offered the crown his son-in-law, Frederick. When Fred accepted, Catholic Austria invaded and drove him and Elizabeth not only out of Bohemia but out of their original territory, the Palatinate, as well. James was caught between his dreams for a peace-keeping Spanish alliance and public opinion that branded him as a Papist-loving betrayer of his own daughter. He reluctantly assembled Parliament to request funds for an overseas expedition but dismissed it a year later when it again attacked his administration's corruption. Without money to wage war, James stalled on aid to Frederick and began negotiating the marriage of Charles to Spanish princess Maria Anna. He hoped an alliance would help him persuade Spain to intervene on Fred and Liz's behalf. Against his better judgement, he allowed Villiers and Charles to go to Spain to woo Maria. They returned humiliated nine months later when the Spanish stalled and Maria hid herself in a convent. The King began negotiating Charles' marriage to a French princess, Henrietta Maria. In 1624, James was finally forced to abandon his cherished policy of neutrality, as he planned a rescue of the Palatinate. He hoped the threat of war would encourage Spanish cooperation; when it didn't, the expedition launched the following year failed. He fell ill and died in 1625, making his impetuous son, Charles, king.

Charles I was dignified and devout but lacked competent advisors and his father's patience and practicality. James had sympathized with Catholics but hadn't gone against public opinion to aid them. Charles alarmed the Puritan-dominated House of Commons and the public with his openly pro-Catholic attitude. James had talked about his supreme authority but hadn't forced the issue. Charles, who had few financial resources, tried to butt heads with a Parliament composed of wealthy middle-class businessmen and landowners who controlled the nation's economy. He also appointed conservative bishops such as William Laud who actively enforced Anglican worship and suppressed Puritan speakers and writers.

Charles irritated the French by arguing with his stubborn 15-year-old wife, who kept trying to use their marriage as a bargaining chip to ensure better treatment of Catholics. While still at war with Spain, Buckingham insisted on trying to relieve Protestant rebels in France in 1628. That venture fared no better than his Spanish expedition, Parliament demanded an investigation of Buckingham, and a disgruntled naval officer named John Felton stabbed the duke to death. Felton was executed as a traitor but hailed by the public as a national hero. Meanwhile, Charles kept asking Parliament to fund the war against Spain, but it kept wanting to discuss religion and dispute the duties he'd placed on shipping. In return for money, he was forced to sign an agreement that taxes could not be levied

without Parliament's consent. Charles dismissed Parliament in 1629; it ignored him, finished its business, and adjourned itself. The King had nine rebellious members arrested and found other ways to get money for the next 11 years.

By this time, England was enjoying peace and prosperity. Charles took measures to relieve the poor, to ensure better wages and fairer prices. The monopolies he granted on a wide range of products undid his charitable work to some extent. He placed a controversial tax on coastal towns for the maintenance and rebuilding of the navy which was challenged unsuccessfully in court. And he unwittingly set off a chain of events that would dethrone him when he named bishops for fanatically-Calvinist Scotland and required Anglican style services to be held there.

The English Civil War was four or five wars in one. It began with a Scottish civil war between die-hard Presbyterians and Engagers who accepted an Anglican-style church hierarchy (1638), which led to a Scottish occupation of northern England the following year. Charles I called on Parliament for money to buy off the Scots. To appease Parliament, he allowed one of his counselors to be executed. Unfortunately, that counselor was in charge of peace-keeping in Ireland, and the Irish rebelled in 1641. Charles then asked Parliament for money to raise an army to keep the Irish in line. Parliament feared that such an army would be used to against them, and instead used the opportunity to seize power (1642). Parliament controlled the nation's wealth and navy; Charles had to rely on gifts from rich Anglican and Catholic supporters. His underpaid armies were defeated, due in part to the exploits of a rising young politician and cavalry officer, Oliver Cromwell. Charles himself was captured.

With Charles imprisoned, Parliament began arguing with itself over religion and with the army over back pay. The King took advantage of this disunity to escape to Scotland in 1647 and returned with a Scottish army. Parliament began its own negotiations with the Scots, however, making monetary and religious concessions which resulted in Charles being turned over to Cromwell's army. Republican leaders decided they would never have peace as long as the King remained alive and had him executed. His dignified behavior at his trial conferred on him a sort of posthumous heroism which, combined with public discontent, made the Restoration possible 12 years later. In the meantime, however, things looked black for the Royalist cause. Irish rebels recognized 21-year-old Charles II as king and were ruthlessly massacred by Cromwell's troops. The Scots, dissatisfied with the arrangements they'd made, invited Charles to return from France. He did, and in 1650 led a third Scottish army onto English soil. Failing to get the English support he'd expected, Charles II was soundly defeated by Cromwell the next year. He and a couple followers played a 40-day game of hide-and-seek with Parliamentary troops before escaping to France. Scotland was conquered and made a political and religious vassal state.

Cromwell, who had risen from a junior member of Parliament to a leading general in the military government, returned to London as a minor hero. He tired of Parliament's endless debates and seeming inability to get anything done and became convinced that the members had become a self-perpetuating oligarchy. In 1653, he led soldiers into the chamber and dismissed the legislators who had been meeting there for 13 years. He was now military dictator but he sincerely wanted England to be governed by a constitution and representative assembly. He convened "Barebone's Parliament," a group of delegates selected from the nation's churches, to draw up a new constitution. The members, realizing that radical delegates were planning a sweeping democratic program, voluntarily disbanded after five months. Army leaders then made





Cromwell Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland and in 1655 divided England into 12 military districts.

His power was not absolute; he called another Parliament in 1646 and, like James and Charles before him, dismissed it when it tried to limit his power. He also had to cooperate with the generals and the army which had put him in power, another reason Puritan England wasn't able to form a civilian government. Cromwell was forced to use the same foul tactics as Charles had done to make money and keep order. Although he refused opportunities to be made king, his enemies labelled him a power-hungry hypocrite.

The Continent was horrified when the barbaric Brits beheaded Charles I and set up a theocratic republic. However, the champion of Protestantism was no longer a wimp. Europe was awed when Cromwell's Ironsides took on and whipped Holland in 1652. France's Cardinal Mazarin hastened to sign treaties with Cromwell and at the Lord Protector's request ended persecution of Protestant sects. England joined France against Spain in 1655, seizing Jamaica and the Spanish treasure fleet and ensuring the defeat of Spain's armies in 1658. Cromwell, disillusioned and tired, contracted a fever late that year. Quinine might have saved him but he rejected it as a Jesuit hoax, named his son Richard as his successor, and died.

The new Lord Protector lacked his father's iron will and, unable to get the cooperation of the army or Parliament, resigned. Republicans in the army seized power but General George Monck, stationed in Scotland, marched his forces south in 1660 and allowed Parliament to reconvene. Monck then invited Charles II to return as king on the condition that he grant general amnesty and freedom of conscience, and allow owners of property confiscated from Royalists to keep it. Charles agreed and returned to England in triumph.



9.0 PEOPLE AND CULTURE OF THE 17TH CENTURY

No sooner had the bishop de Albiac began reciting the liturgy than jaunty strains of Calvinist psalms began pouring through the church windows. He groaned inwardly and furtively glanced at his lordship, the Duc de Chartres, sitting on the front pew. The duke stiffened and gazed at the bishop reproachfully. De Albiac cleared his throat and continued intoning the familiar Latin phrases more loudly. The cappella choir outside likewise raised its volume, one off-key fellow bellowing until his voice cracked. The bishop scarcely dared to look toward the front pew. The duke's face, lately gone a shade of bright purple, contrasted nicely with his bristling white moustache. An uncomfortable murmur ran through the worshippers. De Albiac looked around desperately for his curate, Jules. Faithful Jules was already disappearing up the stairs to the bell tower. A moment later the clangor of church bells overwhelmed the Protestant singers. Of course, it also made it impossible for the bishop to continue saying Mass.

"Damn Huguenots!" he grumbled to himself.

Life was a dangerous business in the 1600s. Although the wealthy frequently lived much longer, the average life expectancy was 22 years. Statistically, it was safer to ship to America and brave the Atlantic, wild animals, hostile Indians and possible starvation than to remain in civilized Europe. Plagues swept the cities, famines ravaged the countryside, and war was everywhere. Often the major difference between armed brigands and His Majesty's soldiers was that the brigands weren't in uniform. Half of all the babies born died in childhood; parents commonly tried to beat the odds by having 10 or more kids. Strangers were unwelcome and were treated rudely; the locals didn't want to fall prey to thieves and didn't want to encourage impoverished wanderers to settle down and become a burden on the parish. No wonder the Musketeers were so tough!

9.1 OPPONENTS

The profound political, religious, intellectual and economic changes occurring in France and England generate the conflicts that provide adventures for *At Rapier's Point*. Many of the people the player-characters will run afoul of aren't necessarily bad guys. Many of them are sincere individuals whose advanced ideals and goals put them at odds with the status quo. Unfortunately, Musketeers are called upon to defend the establishment. Who are these people?

RICHELIEU & CROMWELL

It's tempting to imitate fiction and make Cardinal Richelieu and Oliver Cromwell the villains, ruthless men who usurped the King's power to build their own. However, all politicians in the 17th Century were ruthless autocrats. Bribery, graft and nepotism were accepted aspects of the bureaucracy. Machiavellian political theory demanded that an official act swiftly and decisively and worry about ethics later. Richelieu and Cromwell considered themselves

patriots, doing whatever it took to protect their nations from external invaders and internal schemers. Foreign policy took priority over domestic reform. These men thought in terms of national survival and expected the peasants to sacrifice even their lives so that their grandchildren could live in a unified, sovereign country. Despotism was seen as a means of protecting the common people from the capricious authority of the nobility. Thus, Richelieu could feel justified in turning France into a police state. Both men showed unusual tolerance toward religious minorities once those groups no longer represented a political threat.

SPAIN

Its power and influence were waning, in fact, Spain was bankrupt. The fabulous wealth shipped from the Americas went to finance nobles' finery and wars against the Netherlands, the German Protestants, France, England, and its own rebellious provinces. So many peasants were drafted from the farmers' field to the battlefield that Spain was forced to import food. However, it was still the most powerful nation in Europe culturally and militarily at the beginning of the century. Naturally, Spain would do anything it could to maintain or regain its position. The Hapsburg family which ruled Spain also controlled Austria, the Netherlands, Italy and Portugal. Ironically, France found itself battling Spain while Protestant England, fearing the growth of French power, allied itself with Spain, the Pope's champion.

THE UNITED PROVINCES (HOLLAND)

Both England and France supported the Dutch wars for independence from Spain, which lasted from 1568 to 1609. Once a truce was signed, however, the Hollanders soon posed a severe economic threat, especially to England, because of their aggressive pursuit of foreign trade, raw materials and fishing grounds. By the time Spain officially recognized Dutch sovereignty in 1648, England was ready to go to war with the United Provinces itself.

JESUITS

Militant proponents of Counter-Reformation Catholicism, the Jesuits were distrusted by both French and English kings as spies for Spain and the Pope. The Jesuits would have cheerfully staged a pro-Catholic coup in England. France, while devoutly Catholic, firmly maintained that national interests overruled those of the Pope; kings periodically felt it necessary to expel the Jesuits from France.

CALVINISTS

These Protestants, represented by the Huguenots in France and the Puritans in England, succeeded in causing more trouble than the Jesuits ever hoped for. Calvinists opposed their kings for moral and political reasons. They actively campaigned for church reform and social change, were influential politically and economically, and in France maintained paramilitary forces as good or better than the King's army. These factors, plus their claim to obey a Higher Authority, made them an intolerable threat to monarchs who wished to wield absolute power.



THE HOLY LEAGUE

The League was a radically pro-Catholic political party formed in France during the reign of Henry III. It sponsored the assassination of Henry III when members became convinced that he had gone soft on Protestantism. League involvement was suspected but never proved in the assassination of Henry IV. The King had to be cautious when he enjoyed the League's dubious support.

LEVELLERS

Levellers were an English Protestant political-religious faction during the 1640s. They promoted religious toleration, republican government, social equality, and universal suffrage and gained a considerable following within the Parliamentary army. Their ideals were too radical even for the reforming Puritans, and officers with Leveller sympathies were carefully weeded out.

CLUBMEN

Farmers during the English civil wars were required to provide taxes and supplies to the armies of both King and Parliament. They finally got fed up with it and organized into armed bands whose goal was to drive soldiers from either side out of their area. They couldn't stand up to a well-organized, well-supplied army but the Royalist and Roundhead forces were frequently neither. Clubmen were often successful in cutting army supply lines and in forcing commanders to march their troops in the opposite direction.

THE COMPANY OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT

Formed in 1627 to guard religious orthodoxy and moral integrity in France, this secret organization is one of the most insidious and powerful foes the characters will ever have a chance to cross. Its members were made up of leading figures in the judicial system, the Church and the nobility. It was granted legal status by Louis XIII and Anne of Austria was heavily influenced by it. There were cells in every provincial capital. Between 1630 and 1660, 51 local groups were established. The Company had a wide range of interests including charitable work, seizing people's property for profit, regulating immodest dress, fighting Protestantism and attempting to control the theater. The Company exerted its influence through covert lobbying rather than public action. Members were encouraged to adopt a strict moral lifestyle and to admit spiritual advisors into their homes. Both Cardinal Mazarin and Louis XIV's minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert tried to suppress the Company without success. Louis XIV finally shut it down in 1666.

THE COMMITTEE OF TEN

Another secret political organization, the Committee of Ten was dedicated to the overthrow of Louis XIV. Its headquarters were in Geneva. The plan was to form a defensive pact against France consisting of England, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Austria. This alliance would provide military support for a Protestant uprising to occur simultaneously in several provinces. Committee agents successfully infiltrated Louis XIV's intelligence network, and envoys shuttled around Europe always one step ahead of the French secret police. The organization was active from at least 1658 until 1669, when two of its chief agents were identified and neutralized.

FIFTH MONARCHISTS

"Monarchy men" were members of a democratic English political-religious movement during the 1650s. These Independents believed it was their duty to prepare the way for Jesus Christ's imminent return to earth. They believed Christ's 1,000-year reign would constitute a fifth major world empire (the first four being the

Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman empires), hence their name. They advocated the creation of a more just and equal society; more extreme members of the group hoped to launch a holy war to rid Europe of Roman Catholicism and present a united Protestant Christendom to Jesus when he returned. The movement gained adherents in London, Wales and the army.

Because rule by godly men and promotion of the Protestant cause in Europe were common Puritan goals, Monarchists for a time influenced Cromwellian policy. After a small but vocal group gained seats in "Barebone's Parliament" of 1653, moderates in the interim assembly became alarmed by the specifics of the Fifth Monarchist program: replacing Parliament with a general assembly of representatives selected by the nation's churches; replacing English common law with a simple written code; ending all state funding for churches and pastors. Realizing that this itinerary would radically alter British society, the moderates voluntarily disbanded the assembly eight months later. Some Monarchist leaders were briefly imprisoned in early 1654 when they refused to acknowledge Cromwell's authority as Lord Protector. Although discredited, the Monarchists were active until 1661. Some of their ideas were adopted 100 years later by the founders of the United States.

The sect was not pleased when Charles II returned, members crying out that only Jesus should be king. In January 1661, Thomas Venner, a London wine-cask maker, led a small group of rebels on a two-day killing spree. They were eventually rounded up and hanged by the city guard. The revolt effectively ended the Fifth Monarchy movement.

9.2 THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Let's face it: in the 17th Century, it's a man's world. You probably won't be able to pursue a military or professional career unless you disguise yourself as a man (and it has been done). However, women have a lot more clout in 17th Century society than is generally recognized. Queens have ruled France, Sweden and England, royal mistresses have more of an effect on national policy than their blue-blooded boyfriends would like to admit, and many of Europe's most successful diplomats, spies and assassins (the terms are interchangeable) are women. Women oversee the Parisian salons—those informal think tanks and literary clubs that have revolutionized French thought and learning.

Even in their traditional roles, women have considerable influence. Aristocrats can change the destiny of nations by their choice of who or who not to marry—and they do have a say in the matter. Being a housewife involves a lot more than it does in the 20th Century. A lady of quality in charge of a country estate is essentially running a small corporation: acquiring, manufacturing, storing and inventorying all the supplies and materials needed by her family and their small army of servants. It's not surprising, then, that many middle-class women who moved to the city established businesses with or without their husbands.

Female characters can acquire status, wealth and political power just like their male counterparts. They just have to be more subtle (read "sneaky" and "underhanded") about it. A female character will often need to marry or become associated with a front man, someone good with a sword or a ledger but willing to let her call the shots. It's a tricky business but ladies of the court have been doing it with aplomb for years. The disadvantage of this is that the front man gets all the credit for your ideas and may start trying to do his own thing once you've helped him rise to the top. If he becomes too troublesome it's time to get a new front man and slip some arsenic in the old one's wine.



Which brings up another point: female characters will probably fight their enemies differently than their male counterparts. Men use swords. Women use daggers and poisons. Men challenge opponents to a duel. Women get their front man to do it or start a smear campaign to destroy the opponent's reputation at court. Men get assassinated or thrown in prison. Women get tried for witchcraft or are exiled.

9.3 ENTERTAINMENT AND THE ARTS

What did people do for fun in the 17th Century? Quite a lot, actually. Social class, as always, determined what types of leisure activities a person was likely to participate in but whether he was marquis, merchant or mendicant, he was serious about having a good time. Europeans were a rough and rowdy lot, and even "refined" gentlemen enjoyed active, often crude entertainments.

Royalty and the aristocracy lived to hunt. All-day expeditions in search of deer, wild boars, game birds and wolves were a passion rivaled only by gambling at cards, and more than one French nobleman had had to pawn the family jewels to pay his debts. Because the stakes were so high in these intense gaming sessions (one of Louis XIV's mistresses lost 700,000 ecus) cheating, either alone or with an accomplice, became an art form. Other popular games and sports included: *jeu de paume* or indoor tennis (there were 140 courts in Paris alone); *croquet*; *pellmell* (also known as *mail* or *pall-mall*), a game similar to *croquet* where the object was to drive the ball through a suspended metal hoop; *bowling*; *billiards* (the table had no pockets and the cues looked kind of like miniature shuffleboard paddles); *chess*; *horse racing*; and *backgammon*, also known as *tric-trac*. In France, it was also fashionable for the sick or out of sorts to visit provincial resorts at Vichy, Cauterets and Bourbon-l'Archambault where the illicit love affairs were as hot as the mineral water baths.

Almost all men and women of quality learned to sing or play musical instruments, and there were a number of amusements for the musically inclined. Balls, concerts and masques were popular. Masques, allegorical skits featuring bizarre costumes and sophisticated music and scenery, had the same popularity in England that gambling had in France. Ben Johnson and Inigo Jones were the most notable masque writers and producers. Ballet was becoming a French institution. Cardinal Mazarin was intent on transplanting Italian opera in French concert halls; music critics and audiences of the late 1640s reacted to it about the way their 1960s American counterparts reacted to the Beatles. Although the entertainment world had its professionals and superstars, there was still plenty of room for amateur performers. Popular home instruments included the guitar, the spinet (harpsichord), the recorder (a wooden flute with a whistle mouthpiece) and the *clavecin* (piano).

The upper middle classes generally tried to imitate the athletic and musical pursuits of the nobles. They also devoted their free time to scientific, political and literary discussions at the Paris salons, took fashionable walks in one of Paris' or London's many parks, and later in the century sipped coffee, tea or hot chocolate in one of the many coffee houses scattered about town. Private libraries were increasing in number, and it seemed like every educated woman was writing a novel. Romance novels were joining tobacco and hot chocolate as the urban gentleman's addictions. The average novel had about 500 copies printed for the first edition and earned its author 300 livres. Bestsellers could earn between 1,000 and 3,000 livres. Newspapers sold too; they were published in London starting in 1622, and the *Gazette de France*,

a government mouthpiece, was in circulation from 1631 onward.

Most people, the farmers, tradesmen and laborers who made society function, worked six days a week, 16 or more hours a day. What leisure time they had was on Sundays and on (unpaid) religious holidays. Church competed with the theater and the alehouse as the community social center. Sermons, whether delivered by priest, vicar or dissident lay preacher, were popular entertainment. Skilled preachers had followings similar to those of 20th Century recording artists. Feasts, festivals and after-service dinners were common. In England, Morris dances, sort of a poor man's masque on the hoof, were traditional on holidays and fair days, as was dancing around the maypole. Vaulting contests, dancing, stool-ball, cricket, bowling, wrestling and stick fighting were popular Sunday afternoon sports. Football, played with an inflated pig's bladder, was as rough as its modern counterparts and the participants wore no protective clothing. Gambling with dice or cards was forbidden at licensed alehouses but there were plenty of unlicensed ones. Patronizing them was a calculated risk. The traditional bard was alive and well; traveling musicians, storytellers and conjurers frequented taverns, inns and fairs.

Spectator sports for those with particularly savage tastes included cock fighting, and bear-, bull- or boar-baiting. Cockfighting involved putting two aggressive roosters in an enclosed space and letting them fight to the death while the owners placed bets on the outcome. Losing birds were often roasted alive by their enraged (and poorer) owners. Baiting involved pitting a wild animal against a pack of vicious dogs; again, spectators placed bets on the animal they thought would win. Other poultry games were a sort of jousting where a rider tried to grab a greased duck hung by its feet and a sort of blind-man's bluff where a blindfolded man with a knife tried to decapitate a goose, also suspended by its feet.

THE THEATER

Besides church, the theater was the one entertainment that people of all classes can participate in. General admission in England was cheap, one penny; a seat cost 2 to 3 pennies and a private box cost 12. French theater was aimed at a middle and upper class crowd, and admission was much higher; 5 sous, rising by mid-century to 30 sous for a new play and 15 for a repeat performance. A private box cost twice that much. Audiences were rowdy: eating, talking, drinking, gambling, smoking, milling about and offering running commentaries on the play during a performance. To matters more confusing, sometimes French nobles purchased seats on the stage itself. Church officials generally condemned the theater for glorifying sex, violence and baseness and for creating a public health hazard (all true), but kings, cardinals, and nobles faithfully underwrote their favorite playwrights and actors. The Puritans closed England's theaters in 1642 after the outbreak of the civil war. They remained closed until Charles II returned in 1661.

Actors were regarded with a mixture of worship and abhorrence. Skilled actors were idolized by their fans. French superstars wore costumes to suit their egos rather than the needs of the play (a bigger hat than other players, white gloves regardless of the setting) and dictated lines to the playwright. Their English counterparts could become fantastically wealthy and sported wardrobes like those of a noble. One actor, Edward Alleyn, bought a 10,000 pound estate and established a college nearby! At the same time, actors were ostracized by society, treated as riff-raff by the authorities and were refused burial on consecrated ground. For obvious reasons, the names of French performers weren't listed on playbills, and taking a stage name was a matter of self protection rather than a promotional ploy.



Playwrights weren't much better off. The going rate for a script in the 1630s was 3 ecus, about the amount a theater troupe could earn in one night. Publishing one's plays was a risky venture. Literary pirates could often get an unauthorized version out before the author could, and sometimes the publisher pirated its own work to avoid having to pay the playwright!

Performances were usually held in the late afternoon, 3 to 7 p.m., to take advantage of natural lighting. French theaters were equipped with chandeliers; plays were written with half-hour acts and long intermissions so that the candles could be changed. If an English play ran late, the theater was lit with burning pitch or tar; several wooden theaters burned down as a result. Both French and English theaters featured a central general admission area, where common spectators stood, with two tiers of galleries along the sides. The balconies contained chairs and private boxes for better-paying customers. Sitting or standing beneath them was not a good idea as the rich were rowdy as the poor. Seats couldn't be booked in advance; you had to send a lackey ahead of you to hold your seat. Plays didn't necessarily start on time, and admission was collected by attendants after everyone had been seated. The earnings were locked in boxes, the origin of the modern term "box office."

FOOD AND ETIQUETTE

Both menus and manners were complicated but they can be summarized briefly:

The rich ate meat, lots of it. Vegetables were considered common, although an occasional salad was served. A usual meal consisted of a joint of beef, mutton or venison accompanied by several poultry and/or fish dishes, white yeast bread, wine, followed by cheese, peeled fruit, pastries or some other type of dessert. Puddings were popular in England. Coffee, tea and hot chocolate were expensive New World luxuries. Nobody, rich or poor, drank water; it wasn't safe. Meals were huge and lengthy, with the midday meal being the main one; leftovers were served cold in the evening. This protein-laden diet encouraged gout, a crippling disease characterized by the painful accumulation of uric acid in the joints. Developing gout was a status symbol, proof that one could afford to eat like a gentleman. The rich ate off dishes of china, glass or precious metals, using utensils of silver.

Poorer folk supped on unleavened black bread, boiled grain, soups, cheese and vegetables such as cabbage, beans and onions, rarely being able to afford meat. Cattle and poultry were spared for their milk and eggs. They drank ale, beer or cheaper grades of wine. Vegetables such as maize, potatoes and tomatoes were unknown, not yet imported from the New World. The poorest people lived solely on bread and ale. Food was served on a large piece of bread or on trenchers of wood or pewter. Utensils were carved from wood or bone.

Etiquette was bizarre and truly disgusting by modern standards, and mealtimes can provide entertaining opportunities for role



playing. At upper class tables, seating was a complicated affair, with each guest arranged according to rank. Gentlemen wore their hats to the table and took them off to salute each dish as it was brought in. Waiters provided group finger bowls for hand washing at the start and finish of the meal. Guests cleaned their teeth afterward with toothpicks.

Stews, soups and sauces were served in communal bowls; each guest just dipped in and helped himself. There were no serving spoons. A polite hostess would wipe hers off on a piece of bread before serving her neighbor. The tablecloth acted as a giant napkin. People ate with their fingers and cut off portions with their personal knives (the same ones they used to skin game and clean their fingernails). Two-tined forks, an Italian invention, were thought unnecessary. Using them was at best over-refined and at worst unpatriotic.

9.4 MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Although many couples genuinely loved and appreciated each other, marriage in the 1600s was a matter of the wallet rather than of the heart. Parents arranged unions for their children far in advance with an eye toward increasing the family's bank account and real estate holdings. A girl's father was supposed to provide an appropriate dowry, a sum of money intended to help the couple get started. The amount was agreed upon when the betrothal was set up. A bride from a wealthy family could bring an English groom up to 8,000 pounds. This was part of the reason marrying beneath one's station was considered such a problem. Fraud was not



unknown; some men seized their wives' dowries for themselves. Because marriage was an economic and political agreement, extra-marital affairs were common. In France especially it was common to entertain more than one mistress at a time; these women were often married themselves.

Marriage was for life; couples had to get a special order from the Church or the government to get divorced, and even then they were disgraced. Separations were rare, not only for reasons of faith, but because a wife's labor and out-of-home wages were essential for the average man's survival. Aristocrats could get married as early as 14 for boys and 12 for girls, although they generally stayed with their parents until they were considered mature enough to live on their own. Ordinary people married much later, in their early to mid-twenties, because the men first had to earn enough to pay for the wedding and to establish an economically viable home. Families were large, with ten or more children, but the high infant mortality rate often prevented all but one or two from reaching adulthood. Discipline could be harsh; in England a man was entitled to corporally punish his wife provided he used a switch no thicker than his thumb.

Beds were few and houses were cold, so it wasn't uncommon for an engaged couple to sleep in the same bed—fully clothed and/or separated by a board. Loveless marriages for the rich and late marriages for the poor meant that a lot of babies were born out of wedlock. The wealthy could often get away with this. In fact, kings and noblemen staffed their estates with bastard children. For ordinary people, however, such a pregnancy was a major disaster. The authorities actively sought the identities of parents to ensure that the parish would not be responsible for feeding, clothing and raising an illegitimate child until it was 12 years old. A wayward man was fined and assigned custody of the child. The woman, and anyone who sheltered her, might be fined; she might also be flogged and run out of the parish.

Boys and girls dressed alike until age 6, when a male child officially got his breeches. Children of poor families were put to work as soon as they were able. Working class boys might be apprenticed to a tradesman, provided their fathers could pay a steep fee to their master. Wealthy families gave their kids all manner of toys and some sort of education. Boys could be sent to grammar school or provided with a tutor. Girls were usually taught by their mothers. Especially in royal families, children were often ignored and allowed to run wild, unless their governesses didn't have something better to do. The personality quirks of James I, Louis XIII and Louis XIV can at least partially be attributed to a lack of loving attention and discipline when they were young.

9.5 RELIGION

Europe was still Christendom, but it was a tragically divided Christendom. The Reformation of the 1500s had shattered the church into hundreds of sects. Roman Catholicism held its own in France, Spain, Ireland, Portugal and the rest of southern Europe. Various national Protestant churches had arisen in England, Scotland, the Netherlands, Germany and most of northern Europe.

Religion influenced one's social status, politics, career opportunities and chances of self improvement. There were then, as now, plenty of skeptics, but they found it convenient to share their opinions quietly with those who held similar views or, like Rene Descartes and Cyrano de Bergerac, became adept at verbal and literary gymnastics. Rulers, politicians and businessmen might not be devout, but they at least paid lip service to the religious beliefs of their day. Monarches claiming to rule by divine right couldn't afford to be agnostics.

The Catholic Church had reformed many of the abuses that had caused the protests of men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin. The Jesuits founded such good schools that even Protestants sent their children to be educated there. Intrepid Jesuit missionaries spread the faith to Japan, China and the Americas. South American missionaries discovered around 1630 that cinchona bark (quinine) was effective against many fevers though religious prejudice caused Protestants to deny this until the late 1670s. Catholics such as Vincent de Paul, prison reformer and founder of several charitable organizations, won back the hearts of many by their good works; both Charles I and II, rulers of Protestant England, were closet Catholics.

However, Protestants and Catholics continued to disagree on several issues. Catholics maintained that Church pronouncements had authority equal to the text of the Bible, while Protestants insisted that the scriptures were the sole guide for faith and daily living. As a result, Catholics relied on the clergy to interpret the scriptures and to mediate between them and God. Protestants encouraged their adherents to pray to God on their own and to read the Bible for themselves. Protestants also emphasized the need for a simpler, more personal style of worship. Calvinists emphasized squeaky clean living and the idea that those who would be saved ("The Elect") had been predetermined before the creation of the world.

Catholics and Protestants regarded each other as dangerous heretics to be forcibly converted or eliminated, although a few church officials and politicians did call for reconciliation and tolerance. Religious unity was seen as a requirement for national unity, and dissent was as much a political crime as a religious one. Leaders who favored toleration often were forced by political pressure and public opinion to disallow freedom of conscience. Protestants persecuted each other when they had the opportunity. Lutherans and Calvinists grudgingly accepted each other, but persecuted other Protestant sects such as the Anabaptists and Quakers with the same fury they reserved for Catholics.

Dissenters frequently brought persecution upon themselves. Not content to quietly follow their own beliefs, they sought and provoked confrontation with the religious status quo, demanding the established church to shape up. Huguenots were known to set up their services within earshot of the local Catholic church and attempt to drown out the Mass with their hymns. The Catholics would retaliate by ringing the church bells. Eventually one side or the other would lose its temper and a massacre would occur.

To give the dissenters their due, the Catholic clergy in France and the Anglican hierarchy in England were often corrupt and out of touch with the people. Parishes were overseen by absentee bishops more interested in collecting multiple salaries than in promoting their people's spiritual welfare. Some upper-echelon church officials led extravagant and immoral lifestyles, leaving the practical, daily work of the church to underpaid, uneducated priests and ministers.

France's religious situation was relatively straightforward. France remained staunchly Catholic while insisting that the Pope's authority was limited to religious matters. The Church was a major landowner and had more financial and political clout than the nobility. It (theoretically) received 10 percent of national budget in tithes and was accused by opponents of having an annual income of 312 million livres. The one flaw in Catholic unity was the ongoing battle of pulpit and pen between the Jesuits and the followers of Dutch theologian Bishop Cornelis Jansen. Jansen's *Augustinus*, published in 1640 two years after his death, urged Catholics to circumvent Calvinism by accepting the doctrines of grace and predestination, which were found in the writings of St.



Paul and St. Augustine, and by adopting a strict moral code. Jansenists blasted the Jesuits for allegedly winking at sin, accommodating the pagan beliefs of their Oriental converts, and promoting situational ethics. Jesuits accused the Jansenists of being Protestants in disguise. Unfortunately for the Jansenists, the Society of Jesus was better at making friends in Rome and at the French court. After Pope Innocent X condemned some of their beliefs as heretical in 1653, they increasingly found themselves persecuted. The Huguenot minority, estimated at 10 percent of the population, received varying levels of toleration but retained a political and economic influence out of proportion to their numbers. They lost their ability to hold public office between 1622 and 1629, while Louis XIII sought to break their military strength, but were then (officially) unmolested until 1660, when the Church's General Assembly demanded that they again be excluded from public office and that all their schools and hospitals be closed.

England's situation was much more complex. This was perhaps due to the origin of the Church of England. Henry VIII had angrily founded a national church, not because of any desire for reform but because the Pope wouldn't grant him a divorce. Although the Anglican Church gradually became more Protestant during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I, it retained an emphasis on clerical authority and ritualized worship that other Protestant sects found objectionable. It inherited a complex system of church government by bishops and archbishops that encouraged corruption and absentee clergymen. Thus the Anglican Church was too Protestant for England's Catholics and too Catholic for Protestants who adhered to the teachings of John Calvin.

When James became king, England's faithful were divided into three basic groups: Anglicans, various dissenting Protestant groups lumped together as "nonconformists," and Roman Catholics. James hoped to help Anglicans and nonconformists reconcile their differences, but during the next 40 years the Protestants gradually polarized into warring camps, each side trying to gain and exercise political power in order to protect its members and promote its views. This struggle was a major contributor to the outbreak of the civil wars. Throughout the century Catholics remained a large (25 percent?), devout and persecuted minority with a highly developed underground. James toyed with the idea of tolerance toward them (his wife was a Catholic), but conspiracies such as the Gunpowder Plot, Parliamentary opposition and the revenue generated by fining Catholics changed his mind.

"Puritan" began as a general term; Puritans were both reform-minded Anglicans and nonconformists who wanted to "purify" the state church's worship and administration of perceived abuses. Church government was a major issue of the reform movement. Episcopalians favored the existing system of bishops. Presbyterians wanted a representative system of elected ministers and elders; this system was popular with the Scots and many English Calvinists and had a direct affect on the development of republicanism in both England and America. Independents, who took Protestant freedom even further, wanted each congregation to be responsible for itself without an overall national church administration. Puritanism, which began within the state church, evolved into a distinct and separate movement as the Presbyterians and especially the Independents gained dominance.

During the civil wars, factions more moderate and more radical than the Puritans were systematically excluded from Parliament and the army. Anglicans and Catholics tended to support the King and found themselves in an uncomfortable position when the Puritans prevailed. Under the Commonwealth and later the Protectorate, Puritan worship and morality were enforced with varying degrees of success depending on the sympathies of local officials.

Theaters were closed, many leisure activities were prohibited on the Sabbath, and the celebration of popular holidays such as Christmas was forbidden. Anglican worship continued openly in many areas; in others, worshippers humored the authorities most of the time but insisted on proper Anglican or Catholic ceremonies for important events such as weddings or funerals. Like Richelieu, Cromwell favored limited toleration for religious minorities as long as they didn't present a political threat. He even allowed Jews to build a synagogue in London.

Two groups who got the worst of it in both nations were the Anabaptists and the Quakers. Anabaptists, from whom modern Baptist groups, the Mennonites and the Amish are descended, believed that baptism was only valid if the participant was old enough to understand what he was doing. They rejected infant baptism and insisted that adult members of their congregations be rebaptized. Quakers, members of the Society of Friends, maintained that because each believer could hear from God for himself there was no need of any type of clergy. Because their beliefs ran counter to what everyone else in Europe practiced both groups were universally hated and persecuted.

9.6 CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Poverty, unemployment, war, religious uncertainty and social unrest combined to create an atmosphere conducive to lawlessness. Morals were loose: adultery and extra-marital affairs were common. Governments in both France and England tried without success to check the demand for prostitutes. Bribes and graft were an expected and accepted part of doing business with justices and other government officials. Soldiers, used to taking what they wanted or needed from the peasants, continued to do so after they mustered out. As highwaymen, they were alerted to wealthy travelers by spies at country inns. Dueling was a socially acceptable way of murdering someone who had offended you. Crime prevention was unheard of; officials sought to deter crime with harsh penalties even for relatively minor offenses. Law enforcement agencies were rare, understaffed, and ineffective. Paris and London were packed with the urban poor who survived in maze-like slums by begging, stealing and whoring. The poorly lighted streets were dangerous at night; in 1642 there were 342 nighttime assassinations in Paris. Sensible people stayed indoors and those having evening business traveled in groups surrounded by paid lantern-bearers.

One didn't have to steal or kill to run afoul of the law. Persons could get in trouble for being poor, unemployed, or in debt, for holding unpopular religious or political views or for publishing pamphlets that offended the King. Those accused of a crime had no civil rights in France. French citizens could be arrested via "lettres de cachet" (orders in secret) and imprisoned indefinitely without charges, trial, or chance of parole. This became the common way for a nobleman to punish an unruly son or to rid himself of his mistress's husband. English defendants had a right to trial by jury except when they were charged with treason ("treason" was anything that threatened the life or majesty of the monarch). Also, the authorities were supposed to have a reason to arrest someone and throw them in prison, although this restriction was often suspended in the case of political prisoners. Whether an English prisoner got his civil rights often depended on how wealthy and influential his family was. Juries could be intimidated by the judge, who in turn could be intimidated by the monarch who appointed him. Torture was a frequent interrogation method in both countries even though it was supposedly illegal in England.



Major crimes were punishable by death. In England, there were 200 capital offenses including blackmail, cutting down young trees and stealing more than a shilling. Upper class criminals were beheaded while lower class malefactors were burned or hanged. Felons convicted of non-capital offenses were imprisoned, sent to the American colonies or, in France, branded and assigned to the galleys for ten years. Minor offenses were punished by whipping, being chained to the pillory as a public spectacle, branding, having one's ears, nose or hand cut off, or having holes burned in one's ears or tongue.

Prisoners were segregated according to their social status, although they were open to exploitation by their jailers no matter where they were sent. A well-to-do felon might have relatively comfortable quarters in the Bastille or the Tower of London. Rich inmates could have their own furniture, personal servants, special meals, and the company of their wives. Other prisoners were sent to overcrowded hospitals where they slept four to six to a bed and were forced to manufacture goods for the local industrialists. Really unlucky prisoners found themselves with four other people in 6 foot square dungeon cells that leaked water from the Seine or the Thames.

Paris was one of the few cities that had a police department. Its 800 policemen, however, were too few to effectively patrol a city of 400,000 people, and officers tended to be apathetic. To make matters worse, Paris had 40,000 beggars who resided in 11 traditional areas for the poor along the city walls. These areas were known as courts of miracles because the residents, who specialized in faking various types of infirmities to generate sympathy and cash, shed their handicaps when they came home at night. The truants had their own slang and leaders, and police were afraid to

enter their domain. Paris forbade begging in 1656 and set up a five-branch hospital system the following year. Fifty officers swept through the courts of miracles arresting the occupants so that they could be enrolled in the hospital's mandatory work program. Only a few members of the criminal subculture escaped.

London had a city watch but no police force until 1829. Like Paris, it had its criminal subculture. Jonathan Wild, an acting magistrate, organized a band of thieves and outlaws and lived a double existence: respectable city judge by day, receiver of stolen goods by night.

In rural England, law enforcement duties for an entire parish fell upon the petty constable, a local tradesman or farmer appointed to the unpaid position for a year by the county justice of the peace. This untrained, unarmed amateur was expected to prevent trespassing and poaching, catch petty thieves, keep the peace and stop vice at taverns and inns, ensure payment of taxes, and keep an eye on wayward apprentices.

Because of these conditions, law enforcement usually consisted of the "hue and cry" system, the methodology used by the villagers in all those old Boris Karloff/Lon Chaney movies. A person encountering a suspected criminal or a crime in progress raised a hue and cry, yelling at the top of his lungs in hopes of drawing all his neighbors to the scene. He and the neighbors then pursued the suspect with torches in one hand and pitchforks in the other. This impromptu posse cornered and beat the snot of the suspect before dragging him to the magistrates.

9.7 SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

The 17th Century was an age of superstition and religious intolerance but it was also a time of great advancement in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, physics and a number of other disciplines. Protestants urged by their pastors to study the Bible began studying other things as well, and their Catholic opponents kept alive the medieval tradition of scholarship in a frantic effort to keep up. The knowledge generated by this contest made possible the Industrial Revolution of the 1700s.

Science mingled with magic. Astronomers earned research money by drawing up horoscopes for their wealthy patrons. Many medical prescriptions were of the "eye of newt, tongue of dog" variety. Chemists continued to try to turn lead into gold. Learned men clung to the notions that too much fluid in the body caused disease, that plagues were caused by bad air or the alignment of the planets, and that parasites were spontaneously generated by diseased tissue. At the same time, however, they invented the microscope, telescope, pendulum clock, vacuum pump and barometer, mapped the moon, discovered the satellites of Jupiter, charted the anatomy of the brain, described the circulation of the blood, invented calculus and logarithms, experimented with steam power and built the first internal combustion engine—using gunpowder as fuel.

Science was a rich man's hobby (government grants were even harder to get than they are now), and most inventors and scholars were either well-off or sponsored by those who were. Because of this, and because scientists often lacked the technology to put their findings to practical use, many of their discoveries didn't have an effect on the common man until well into the next century. Both scientists and physicians traveled to Italy to get their training and work with established researchers. The scientist of the 1600s was usually a generalist, putting down his telescope to perform a dissection, then working out a complex equation before testing out that new gadget he'd invented.



The conflict between science and religion, exemplified by the trial of Galileo Galilei in 1633, has been blown out of proportion. The Catholic Church was less concerned with the spread of knowledge than the spread of Protestantism, and Rome's Jesuit soldiers in the battle against heresy were often scholars and inventors themselves. Many researchers, such as Robert Boyle, Blaise Pascal and Isaac Newton, saw themselves as devout men using their powers of observation to explore the Creator's universe. Newton and Pascal wrote theological treatises as well as scientific ones.

Several organizations devoted to the advancement of science were active. Italian scholars founded the Accademia Secretorum Naturae in Naples in 1560. Rome's Accademia del Lincei was active from 1603 to 1630; Galileo and his assistant Evangelista Torricelli were members and later helped found the Accademia del Cimento in 1657. English thinkers and scholars formed an "Invisible College" at Oxford in 1645 and in London in 1659. They founded the Royal Society in 1660. In France, the Paris Academy of Sciences was established in 1666.

Although many practitioners knew what they were doing, seeking medical help was a risky business. Care was divided up among a motley variety of professionals, tradesmen and wandering quacks. Some had state licenses, some were overseen by medieval guilds (pharmacists were under the control of the grocers' guild), and others were unsupervised. Physicians gave medical advice and prescribed bleeding, purgatives and enemas for every malady. Surgeons amputated damaged limbs, removed bladder stones and performed cesarean sections without anesthesia or antiseptics. Operations were usually last-ditch efforts to save a patient's life and had to be done ruthlessly fast with several helpers holding down the patient. Traveling barber-surgeons cut hair, pulled teeth, lanced boils, gave enemas and bled patients for physicians (surgery was considered beneath a doctor's dignity). Midwives shooed doctors out of the delivery room and assisted women with knowledge gained from their own pregnancies and the advice of their mothers and grandmothers. Broken bones and sprains were treated by a bonesetter who was usually also the local blacksmith or carpenter. Wandering oculists removed cataracts and performed other delicate eye surgeries that regular licensed surgeons were afraid to attempt. Hospitals functioned as social service agencies, housing not only the sick but also the poor, the aged, the insane, homeless children, prostitutes and anyone else the authorities wanted to get off the streets. Once admitted, inmates were completely at the mercy of the hospital's director. In Protestant countries, there were no nurses because the medieval religious orders who filled that role had been outlawed.

Only the rich could afford to consult a doctor. A physician could charge 50 to 100 pounds for a "guaranteed cure." The man on the street relied on folk remedies. Successful medical tools and techniques developed by practitioners were jealously guarded trade secrets. Dr. Peter Chamberlen, a Huguenot relocated in England, developed the obstetrical forceps in 1628. The tool was a big pair of tweezers used to pull babies out of the womb during difficult deliveries. Chamberlen, his younger brother and his nephew (who were also physicians/midwives and were also named Peter) became famous and wealthy for delivering healthy babies, but went to great lengths to conceal the reason for their success. They had helpers haul a huge, ornamented box into the delivery room, blindfolded the patient, locked the delivery room door, provided mysterious sound effects for eavesdroppers. When the French government refused to buy the secret from Chamberlen's son in 1670, the forceps remained unknown to the medical world until 1733.

9.8 MAGIC AND SUPERSTITION

France and England's greatest minds believed in the existence of angels, demons, witches and ghosts. After all, the Bible said they existed, and it was heresy to say otherwise. Furthermore, Europe experienced an increased interest in the occult from 1560 on, possibly because religious strife had caused many people to lose confidence in the Church. Occult trinkets and books on the occult (tracts against, manuals on how to, and pamphlets lampooning the whole idea) were bestselling items. Scotland's King James, later to rule England, wrote a scholarly book on demonology in 1597.

Witches—men and women who had sold their souls to Satan in return for supernatural power—were believed to be able to cause storms, to control others' emotions, to kill someone by burning a wax likeness of them, to haunt houses and cause diseases. The existence and abilities of witches may have been a matter of debate, but the consequences of believing in them were quite real. In France, 1,539 people were burned for witchcraft between 1560 and 1610 in both Catholic and Huguenot cities. During roughly the same period, Scotland burned 8,000 witches, while England burned 81. Witch burnings declined in England under King James who, after his experiences in Scotland, demanded fair trials. Executions for witchcraft increased under the Long Parliament; between 1645 and 1647, 200 witches were burned.

Confessions were obtained by torture though more pragmatic judges required those accused of witchcraft to demonstrate their powers before they would convict them. Midwives were vulnerable to accusations that they conducted business with witches because afterbirths were a coveted item for magic rituals. Suspected witches would often accuse others of devilish dealings in hope of getting leniency from the court. Witchcraft charges were a convenient political tool because they were difficult to disprove. The penalty for a witchcraft conviction was usually death by burning, though in Germany skeptical princes tried to limit punishment to exile.

Ironically, the authorities engaged in punishing witchcraft became a moderating force in the witch-burning frenzy. In Catholic nations, the dreaded Inquisition, in charge of rooting out heresy, told priests to discourage belief in witchcraft and removed priests that were too willing to believe in it. Pope Urban VIII in 1637 condemned the Inquisitors for arbitrary prosecutions, insufficient evidence and forced confessions. In 1672 Louis XIV forbade accusations of witchcraft. Prosecutions tapered off in France, England and even Scotland, ceasing by the 1720s.

The fear of witches had some basis in fact. James I was almost assassinated three times by Francis Bothwell, a Scottish nobleman who in 1590 allegedly tried to use magic to sink the King's ship as he returned from his honeymoon. In 1680 Louis XIV suppressed the findings of a special tribunal investigating a spate of suspected poisonings in Paris. The tribunal discovered that a ring of satanists had been selling poisons, abortions, aphrodisiacs, charms and other services to prominent women since before 1665. The King ordered a coverup when his own mistresses were implicated in involvement with Black Mass rituals. One member of the criminal organization was burned alive.

In rural areas, the people believed in an infinite variety of supernatural beings: fairies, goblins, ogres, sprites, etc. These beliefs had a major impact on a peasant's life as he sought to outwit or placate this unseen host of malicious or at least capricious spirits. They determined where a man could live, how and when he planted and harvested his crops, what kinds of wood he could cut



to make tools or burn for fuel. Protective measures ranged from carrying bread crusts in one's pockets and turning one's jacket inside out to building one's cottage so that the door faced a certain direction. Individuals, especially small children, who sickened and died were believed to be changelings faking the person's demise while the real family member was held captive by the fairies. Alternatively, the dying person was thought to be a wooden likeness made to seem alive by magic. People, especially pretty maidens and talented musicians, failed to come home and later turned up claiming to have been kidnapped by fairies. Folk healers accused of witchcraft sometimes defended themselves by saying that they had gotten their salves and powders from the fairies rather than from the devil.

Belief in monsters and fabulous animals declined in the 17th Century, though respected bestiaries continued to list classical creatures such as dragons, sphinxes, centaurs and the like. People thought that giants, griffins and unicorns might still exist in Africa, Asia or the New World. Travelers brought back stories of all sorts of strange races: men whose faces were on their chests, men who walked on all fours and barked like dogs, men whose ears were long enough to reach their feet, one-legged men whose huge single feet could double as a sun shade, mouthless men who fed by sniffing flowers and fruits. "Unicorn" horns and "griffin's" claws brought top price from politicians afraid of being poisoned and pharmacists desiring to concoct potent medicines. Mermaid sightings were rare, but Henry Hudson's crew saw one in the New World in 1608. Historians could document cases in the 12th and 15th centuries where mute sea-beings had been captured and had lived with the locals for months or years before they escaped or died. Fishermen on the western coast of Scotland and Wales hesitated to kill seals that ate from their nets for fear the poachers might be selchies, seal-people who could shed their skins and walk on land as men. Tales said that offended selchies could cause storms or, more commonly, overturn boats. Inhabitants of the British Isles also feared Black Dogs, calf-sized ghost hounds that were portents of death, and various packs of devil hounds that hunted men's souls.

Vampires were an Eastern European phenomenon and didn't cause much loss of sleep in France and England. Werewolves, however, were widely believed in, especially in France, where a 40-year loup garou scare coincided with the witchcraft trials. In 1574, hermit Gilles Garnier was arrested just across the German border in Dole, Franche-Compte, in connection with the deaths and mutilations of four children. He was convicted of rape, murder and cannibalism after a spectacular trial in which he claimed he had met a forest spirit which enabled him to change into various animals, including a wolf. In a 1589 trial, German Peter Stubbe, who had committed a series of animal and human mutilations during a 25-year period, was convicted of incest and of the rape/murder of a woman after he allegedly killed her two male companions while in wolf form. Thirteen-year-old Jean Grenier was convicted of infanticide and cannibalism in Gascony, France, 1603. Grenier claimed he and a friend had been initiated into a cult of werewolves by a sinister, black-garbed chevalier calling himself the Lord of the Forest. The judge, taking Grenier's age and possible mental retardation into account, ruled him insane and sentenced him to life imprisonment in a Bordeaux monastery. In captivity, the feral-eyed Grenier maintained the Lord of the Forest had visited him to encourage him to continue his activities. Grenier said he had driven his demonic visitor away with a cross.

Defendants convicted of lycanthropy were burned at the stake like witches and heretics; this prevented them from coming back from the dead. The French believed that werewolves could assume

their lupine forms at noon of the date of the full moon as well as at night. Metal-tipped pointed sticks which had been blessed at a chapel of St. Hubert were believed to be as effective for killing werewolves as the usual silver clubs, silver bullets and decapitation. When transformed, a loup garou was believed to assume the shape of a giant wolf, although occasional bipedal wolves retaining some human features also appeared in folklore.

A word to PCs about fairies: you don't want to meet them! Forget J.R.R. Tolkien's noble elves and Walt Disney's helpful wand-wielding midgets. The "real" fairies of folklore are the original inhabitants of Europe and heartily resent the humans who have taken over their territory. Terrified farmers euphemistically refer to them as the "fair folk" or "good people" in hopes that the fairies won't blast their crops or cause their livestock to waste away. In fact, human/fairy interaction resembles an elaborate protection racket. Fairies have such a complicated code of etiquette that it seems as if they're making up the rules as they go. You don't know whether to bid a fairy good evening; will he curse you for disturbing him or curse you for ignoring him?

Folklore does divide the fairy tribe into good and bad camps, but often the only difference between the "good" fairies and the "bad" fairies is that the good ones aren't actively out to get you. Even a "good" fairy would just as soon watch you drown in a bog as pull you out. If he does rescue you, you'd better wonder about his motives. It is common knowledge that fairies are required to offer a tithe of their members, or suitable captives, to the devil every seven years.

As with most supernatural creatures, fairies are most commonly encountered at night or at twilight. The people most likely to meet fairies (besides children, talented musicians and beautiful maidens) are members of old, noble families who interbred with them centuries ago and individuals who have led extremely wicked and dissolute lives. The fairies regard the former as cousins and will occasionally show up to beg a boon or to grant assistance in time of dire need.

9.9 MONEY AND TRADE

Both France and England were economic disasters. Depressions and recessions were common because Europe's constant warfare made travel even more hazardous and cut off potential customers. The influx of gold and silver from the New World caused English prices to skyrocket while wages remained the same; French prices dropped by one-third so that farmers could sell their produce for only a fraction of what it was worth. In general, French incomes and prices were lower than their English counterparts. Medieval guilds jealously opposed the innovations of the new capitalist class of merchants. Pirates infested the Irish Sea, a threat the developing navies of both nations were unable to effectively counter. Competition for foreign trade was stiff; the Dutch were especially aggressive adversaries. In spite of these problems, France developed industry and England founded its merchant empire.

Travel was slow and dangerous. Land journeys could take weeks or months to complete, while sea ventures could take years. On land, roads were often merely lines drawn on a map. Where they existed, they were narrow, unmarked dirt tracks that meandered through wildernesses and farmers' fields. Merchants entrusted their goods to carriers who hauled freight and some bargain-rate passengers with wagons or pack horses. They always had to be on the alert for bad weather and highwaymen, and some paid protection money to well-known brigands. Carriers traveling to remote locations served as postman, newsman and government agent. Fantastic wealth could be made by overseas trade, but it was



even more risky. Storms, pirates and capricious customs officials could eat up profits. Trips to the Orient or the Americas were lengthy; it could take years before a merchant got a return on his investment. At first, merchants sought new backers for each new venture. Later, corporations such as the English East India Company raised funds for four-year periods. Primitive stock exchanges developed as trading companies sold shares to generate permanent capital.

France should have been a major economic power. It had Europe's greatest proportion of arable land and its most varied climate. It had a well-developed military to enforce its will. But feudal organization and internal strife kept the French looking inward instead of outward, and the nation's potential was not realized. Merchants transporting goods within France had to pay tariffs each time they entered a new noble's territory. When they reached their destination their customers lacked currency with which to buy their goods. Because of this, famines occurred in one province while another areas' surplus crops rotted in the field. French kings were too busy fighting wars to encourage overseas trade; merchants relied on the Dutch or English to transport their goods abroad. On the bright side, Henry IV did encourage the manufacture of pottery, glass, silk, and tapestries, and imported foreign artisans to encourage domestic industry.

England's comparatively stable political climate enabled merchants to be much more enterprising. They faced obstacles of their own, however. To raise money, the Stuart kings sold monopolies on the manufacture of major goods such as chemicals, metals, tobacco, coal and wine. High customs duties also lined the royal pocket. Merchants clashed with Dutch entrepreneurs for trade with India and for fishing rights; the Dutch controlled the bulk of trade with France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and the East and West Indies. In spite of these problems, a thrifty (and lucky) merchant adventurer could amass a fortune of up to 200,000 pounds during his lifetime by carefully investing his profits in new ventures. Successful merchants often diversified, taking public office or dabbling in real estate on the side. Of course, marrying a wealthy wife didn't hurt either.

Textiles were England's biggest industry, mostly woolen cloth. The Thirty Years War in Germany, fashion trends away from wool blends and increasing foreign competition shrank the market by one-third during the '30s and '40s; the resulting depression encouraged 80,000 people to emigrate to America. Other major industries included coal mining, iron smelting, shipbuilding, and the manufacture of salt and glass.

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOMES IN LOUIS/POUNDS

Profession	France	England
Noble	100-4,000	5,000 - 20,000
Abbot	5,000	—
Country Gentry	200-3,000	1,000-5,000
Anglican Archbishop	—	2,000
Officeholding Lawyer	1000	2,000
Army Colonel	300	350
Superstar Actor	250	300
Navy Captain	200	252
Yeoman Farmer	5-70	40-200
Physician	100	120
Justice of the Peace	54	63
Army Sublieutenant	50	70
Court Poet	50	—
Lower Clergy	10-15	10-50
Cavalryman	40	45.5
Dragoon	29	32.5
Navy Midshipman	23	27
Locksmith	23.5	30
Sculptor	20	20-100
Skilled Laborer	9-14	16-18

MONETARY VALUES

French	English	Spanish	1990 U.S. dollars
—	Farthing, brass	—	\$0.10
—	Half Penny, copper	—	\$0.20
—	Pence	—	\$0.40
Sou	—	—	\$0.30
Livre = Franc, silver late century (20 sous)	Shilling (12 pence)	—	\$5
Ecu (5 livres)	—	—	\$23
Pistole (10 livres, 2 escudo)	—	—	\$60
Louis, gold (20 livres)	Pound, sterling = Gold Unite (240 pence or 20 shillings)	—	\$100
Livre, early century	—	—	\$25
—	—	Real	\$2
—	—	Piece of Eight, PoE (8 reals)	\$15
—	—	Escudo (2 PoEs)	\$30
—	—	Doubloon (16 PoEs or 128 reals)	\$250



ANNUAL INCOMES CONTINUED

Profession	France	England
Apothecary	8-12	10-15
Infantryman	4	10-16
Unskilled Laborer	5-10	12
Navy Seaman	10	11
Agricultural Worker	6	10-13
Teacher (male)	8	12
Subsistence Farmer	4-6	6
Teacher (female)	5	8
Woman Laborer	3-5	5
Militiaman	2	4
Wet Nurse/Servant	1 plus keep	1 plus keep

AVERAGE EXPENSES

Item	France	England
Food		
Restaurant meal	20 sous	1 shilling
Meat per pound	3 sous	2 pence
Whole pig	24 livres	1 pound
Whole chicken	2.5 sous	1-2 pence
Dozen eggs	5-10 sous	6 pence
Butter per pound	5-8 sous	4 pence
Loaf of bread	1-2 sous	1-2 pence
Wine per pint	2-3 sous	1-2 pence
Asses milk per pint	3-4 sous	2-3 shillings
Ale per quart	1-2 sous	1 pence
Tea per pound	50 livres	50 shillings
Clothing		
Shoes	3 livres	3 shillings
Sabots	25 sous	—
Country shirt	30 sous	2 shillings
Common man's wardrobe	9 livres	10 shillings
Satin doublet and hose	5 louis	103 shillings
Silk stockings (male)	1 louis	25 shillings
Gentleman's cloak	30 livres	33 shillings
Fees and Fines		
Catholic fines per month	—	20 pounds
Puritan blue law fines	—	1-11 pounds
Bastille, nice cell, per day	20 sous	—
Baronet title	—	1,000 pounds
Physician's "guaranteed cure"	50-100 louis	50-100 pounds
Gentry woman's dowry	200-9000 louis	100-8,000 pounds
Year's travel in Italy	1,000 louis	1,000 pounds
Fare across English Channel	5 livres	5 shillings
Channel fare w/ stern cabin	10 livres	10 shillings
Theater, general admission	5 sous	1 pence
Theater, gallery seat	7 sous	2-3 pence
Theater, box seat	10 sous	12 pence

General Equipment

Powder Charges (20)	13 sous	10 pence
Lead Shot (20)	7 sous	5 pence
<i>Different for weapon types</i>		
Match (10 shots)	7 sous	5 pence
<i>Necessary for Matchlocks</i>		
Cleaning Kit	13 sous	10 pence
Powder Horn	13 sous	10 pence
<i>Waterproof; Holds 60 shots</i>		
Cartridge Pouch	7 sous	5 pence
<i>Holds 50 balls and 1 Cleaning Kit</i>		
Firearm Pouch	1.5 livres	1 shilling, 2 pence
<i>Water-resistant</i>		
Bandolier	2 livres	2 shillings
<i>Carries 12 loads</i>		
Compass	25 ecus	9 shillings
Telescope	1.5 louis	1.5 pounds
<i>x8 magnification</i>		
Navigation Instruments	1-6 louis	1-6 pounds
Surgical Kit	1.5 louis	1.5 pounds

Weapons

Baton	1 ecu	3 shillings
Bayonette	1 ecu	4 shillings
Blunderbus	1 pistole, 1 livre	15 shillings
Broadsword	1 pistole	12 shillings
Buckler	1 pistole	12 shillings
Carbine	1 pistole, 2 ecus	18 shillings
Cavalry Lance	1 pistole, 1 ecu	16 shillings
Cutlass	5 livres	5 shillings
Dagger	1 ecu	3 shillings
Duelling Pistol	1 pistole, 2 ecus	18 shillings
Grenade	9 livres	9 shillings
Halberd	9 livres	9 shillings
Harquebus	1 louis, 13 livres	1 pound, 13 shill.
Knife	1 livre, 10 sous	1 shilling, 7 pence
Large Axe	9 livres	9 shillings
Longsword	1 pistole, 3 livres	15 shillings
Main Gauche	9 livres	9 shillings
Musket	1 louis, 1 livre	1 pound, 1 shilling
Pike	1 pistole, 2 livres	15 shillings
Pistol	1 pistole, 3 livres	15 shillings
Poleaxe	1 pistole	11 shillings
Rapier	1 pistole	12 shillings
Sporting Rifle	24 livres	25 shillings
Smallsword	9 livres	9 shillings
2-H Sword	1 pistole	12 shillings
Whip	5 livres	5 shillings

Sundries

Hunting gun	24 livres	24 shillings
Watch	24 livres	24 shillings
Candles per pound	6-10 sous	3-6 pence
Coal per cauldron	20 livres	17-19 shillings



9.10 WARFARE IN THE 1600S

As in everything else, the 17th Century was a time of transition for warfare from medieval to modern. France, surrounded by enemies and primed by decades of civil war, developed the best army in Europe. In addition, France's openness to scientific advancement provided her with fine military engineers such as the Marquis de Sebastien Vauban. Richelieu tried to keep France out of direct involvement in foreign wars, at least during the first half of his rule. He also assembled a French navy of Dutch-built ships. As a result, Louis XIV inherited a formidable war machine capable of terrorizing the Continent.

England, meanwhile, was having trouble backing up its status as the savior of Protestantism in Europe. The Stuart kings allowed the navy Elizabeth had assembled to atrophy, and their attempts at military adventurism were miserable failures partly because James and Charles were unable to get the necessary funds from Parliament. England had no standing army, protected as it was by the English Channel, and even had difficulty subduing its neighbors, Scotland and Ireland. However, English mercenaries had fought in Spain, France and the Netherlands. These soldiers flocked home when the Civil War broke out, bringing with them foreign training. Seven years of infighting produced the so-called New Model Army, a professional redcoated fighting force that Cromwell used to subdue the Scots and Irish and defeat the Spanish and Dutch.

TECHNIQUES AND ORGANIZATION (9.10.1)

Armies consisted mounted cavalry and dragoons supported by infantry and artillery. Infantry was made up of pikemen and musketeers. In theory, opposing armies would line up at each end of an open field facing each other. Light artillery and musketeers would be positioned up front with the pikemen behind them and heavy artillery behind the pikemen, firing over the infantry's heads. Cavalry would be divided into two wings to the right and left of the infantry. Dragoons, similarly divided, would be stationed on the outer flanks of the cavalry. After each side tired of bombarding the other with cannon the armies would advance. Cavalry would ride forward firing their small arms, then turn about, draw their swords and attack the infantry and each other. Musketeers would fire when the enemy got close enough, either in a massed volley or in a series of ranks, then hide between or behind the pikemen to reload. Pikemen would brace the shafts of their 16-foot long polearms against their right feet at a 50 degree angle to meet the onrush of cavalry. They held their pikes in their left hands, and wielded swords in their right. Dragoons would lurk along the sidelines, sniping at enemy cavalry.

In practice, of course, things were not so neat. Cavalry often threw away their firearms after using them, hoping to recover comparable weapons from the battlefield after the fight. Unless directed by an iron hand, cavalry tended to continue their initial charge and leave the main battle behind. By the time they returned, they were often too late and too tired to do anything. In England, fields were increasingly enclosed with hedges, which made effective cavalry charges difficult, if not impossible. Before the advent of the plug bayonet in 1647, musketeers were virtually helpless against mounted warriors, once they had fired their guns. This left the pikemen to do most of the heavy fighting. Often battles were a contest between cavalry. Horsemen would attack each other first while the foot soldiers hung back. The army who had mounted soldiers left would then attack the opponent's foot soldiers.

Battles were made all the more confusing by the lack of regular uniforms. Though some units had distinctive clothing, most soldiers were identified by their battle flags and by special badges worn on their street clothes. At least one resourceful commander got the upper hand by having his infantry throw down their badges and mix with the enemy before attacking.

Artillery were smooth-bore, muzzle-loading cannons identical with those used aboard warships of the period. In fact, naval commanders had to put up with the land forces borrowing their big guns! Field guns were mounted on iron carriages instead of the wooden ones used on ships. An army's long-range firepower was limited by the difficulty in transporting field pieces. Roads, where they existed, became seas of mud during the rainy summer campaign season. Even on good roads cannons required teams of six to 18 draft animals to haul them. Smart commanders traveled with a number of light guns then sent for more and heavier cannons after the enemy had holed up in a fort or town. Cannons were made of bronze, iron or brass. Breech-loading cannons were in limited use but didn't become common until the 19th century because of technical problems.

The introduction of gunpowder and heavy artillery supposedly made medieval castles and keeps obsolete. France pioneered the use of star-shaped fortifications and earthworks with sloped walls. These were designed to deflect or absorb enemy fire while allowing maximum return fire. However, the old castles proved to be tough nuts to crack. Their thick walls of soft stone tended to dent rather than crack when hit, and their usually elevated positions made them difficult to fire upon.

Artillerymen in such positions had troubles of their own, however. Smooth-bore cannons had trouble firing downward. They had to be carefully placed or the cannon balls would roll out of the muzzle before they could be fired.

MEN AND EQUIPMENT (9.10.2)

Mounted Soldiers

Cavaliers were the flashy superstars of the military, the guys featured on enlistment posters. They were recruited from the upper classes, received higher pay, and were better able to forage for food when supplies ran short. Depending on their nationality, they had to provide and feed their own mounts, which mitigated their pay rate somewhat. A cavalryman was armed with a carbine or a pair of saddle-holstered pistols as well as a sword. Firearms had either wheel-lock or flintlock firing mechanisms because matches were too hard to mess with in the saddle. The 8-foot cavalry lance, though considered obsolete, was still the horseman's best defense against pikes. Cavaliers wore helmets, backplates and breastplates, and some type of hip and leg protection such as high, heavy boots. Horses were considered expendable, and when an officer had one impaled by pikes he usually had six to 10 more available.

Dragoons started out as a type of second-rate cavalry, riding inferior horses and equipped with flintlock carbines or muskets. Their usefulness as marksmen gradually earned them greater respect. They were armored the same as cavalry.

Infantry

Infantry were recruited from the lower ranks of society and included common (and uncommon) criminals. Pikemen were usually paid slightly less than musketeers though officers tended to value them more in a fight. These were the rank-and-file grunts who actually won the battles or took the forts after the cavalry had done its thing. Musketeers were armed with matchlock muskets



and short swords. Muskets were heavy weapons which required a forked rest to steady them while being fired. They had an effective range of 80 yards, and a trained musketeer could reload and fire every 20 seconds. Bows were considered obsolete but Charles I may have had some longbowmen available as late as 1640.

Pikemen were armed with an iron-shod polearm 16-feet or longer, though officers had to discourage them from sawing off a foot or two of the shaft to make carrying the weapon easier. Like musketeers, pikemen were armed with a short sword, although use of the swords to chop firewood caused some units to be re-equipped with battle axes. Pikemen were helmeted and wore a boiled-leather buff coat for torso protection. Musketeers were supposedly armored likewise, but contemporary illustrations often show them without helmet or buff coat.

The use of the plug bayonet, pioneered in France in 1647, revolutionized infantry tactics. A musketeer could stuff the tapered handle of the blade into the muzzle of his gun to create a 6-foot pike that allowed him to defend himself. The disadvantage was that the bayonet could either become jammed in the barrel, making the gun useless, or fall out at any given moment. Pikemen were gradually phased out.

MILITARY LIFE (9.10.3)

The 17th Century soldier faced all the rigors of his modern counterpart: death, wounding, sickness, starvation and loss of freedom. In spite of that, a number of factors made the military an attractive career choice. Runaway inflation, an economic depression and changing patterns of land ownership made jobs harder to find at a time when the previous century's prosperity had boosted the population. In France, famine was endemic because of internal tariffs and poor transportation. The army offered the common man a steady job, the promise of regular pay, food and clothes, war booty, and an elusive shot at improving his social status. For the nobility, a military career was one of the few occupations a gentleman could indulge in without having to resort to (horror!) actual work and the resulting loss of status. The noble stood to gain lands, titles and war booty from a successful term in the army.

Officers came almost entirely from the upper class, and in France positions were purchased. Promotion had more to do with one's status and favor at court than with actual combat ability. Pay was higher than for the common soldier but still low enough to encourage widespread corruption. In France, officers received a fixed sum per soldier in their unit and bargained with recruits to determine how much the men were actually paid. An officer got the equivalent of 2 pounds per infantryman and 10 pounds per cavalier. A French colonel got 6,000 livres per year, a sub-lieutenant 1,000 livres. Part of this money, however, went toward feeding the officer's horse and toward clothing the men in a captain's regiment. Sometimes the officer had to provide his own horse. During the English Civil War a cavalry horse sold for 9 pounds, a saddle for 16 s, 6d. A dragoon horse sold for 4 pounds, a saddle for 7 s, 6d. Officers often flaunted their wealth by traveling with luxurious appointments and eating fancy food while in the field. This, and the practice of going home for the winter and leaving the troops on their own, tended to encourage desertion and a lack of discipline.

The common soldier encompassed a wide variety of social types from respectable shopkeepers and farmers to desperate criminals. Most soldiers entered the king's service through recruitment, though conscription became common during the wars of the 1640s. Clothes were provided by officers, and French soldiers got free food as long as they were on the march. A portion of the soldier's salary was deducted at other times to pay for army-

provided bread. Armies often enraged their own citizens by demanding food, equipment and shelter.

French soldiers were promised 5 sous per day. English soldiers supposedly received 8 or 9 d per day (infantry 6 s per week, cavalry 17 s, 6 d per week, dragoons 12 s, 6d per week). How much of this money they actually got and how often they got it was another matter entirely. Officers were in a good position to cheat their men, and both Parliament and Charles I had trouble paying their troops. The English army's continual unrest after Charles' defeat was partially caused by soldiers agitating for back pay. Both the French and English armies had high desertion rates because of this. In fact, war-weary troops during the English Civil War freely switched sides depending upon which army could pay them better. Charles I, with no regular source of income, was doomed from the start.

Both countries desperately needed men, and recruiters would spare no dirty trick to fill out their regiments. Recruiters passed out decks of cards bearing their name and address, posted posters, and marched through town with a drummer. When this didn't work they would get young men drunk to sign them up, even slipping money in the victim's pocket to "prove" he'd joined up. When demand got more urgent, recruiters were not above kidnapping boys off the London streets in broad daylight and sending them by boat to boot camp so they couldn't escape. French recruiters would snatch "volunteers" from their beds for military service.

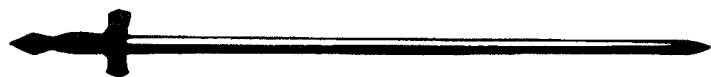
In France, officers often lined their pockets by signing up more men than they could use, pocketing the money, and sending "recruits" on their way with a small bribe. They borrowed soldiers for the day from nearby regiments when an inspector arrived to count their men. A similar practice was used for equipment.

SPECIAL FORCES (9.10.4)

In addition to the regular army, there were several special forces at the monarch's command. French kings, after 1616, were protected by the Swiss Guards, popularly known as "Switzers." Louis XIII, unable to trust the shifting loyalties of the court, assembled these mercenary bodyguards soon after he seized power. The Switzers weren't identical to the Pope's Swiss Guards but were hired from similar sources. English kings were protected by the Band of Gentleman Pensioners, consisting of about 40 fanatically loyal courtiers. The Pensioners were done away with under Parliamentary rule, although Cromwell formed his own elite corps of bodyguards.

The Mousquetaires protected the French royal family, quelled riots and uprisings, and were under the king's direct command in war. Organized by Louis XIII in 1622, they originally consisted of about 100 men who acted as a mounted escort in peacetime and as adjunct cavalry or infantry during war. Mousquetaires were equal in rank except for a captain, a lieutenant and an ensign. Most were young aristocrats but a few were professional soldiers. By Louis XIV's reign their numbers had greatly multiplied. They were divided into Black Musketeers and Gray Musketeers, depending on the color of their horses; the two divisions had separate quarters and stables on opposite sides of the Seine. According to Dumas, d'Artagnan served with the Black Musketeers. To become a Musketeer, a candidate had to have at least gentleman status, had to have a recommendation from a current or former senior officer, and had to distinguish himself in the military.

Yeomen of the Guard, known as "Beefeaters," performed similar duties in England: protecting royalty, controlling riots, and guarding national buildings in the Tower of London. Before 1640, England had no standing army, and the Beefeaters and Pensioners were a king's only defense against civil disturbances.



10.0 PEOPLE OF THE 17TH CENTURY

10.1 HISTORICAL FIGURES

This section lists notable people active in France and England during the 1600s. Some of the notes on their personalities are conjectural but most of their deeds and foibles are historically documented. They are listed alphabetically (by surname).

DIEGO SARMIENTO DE ACUNA, COUNT OF GONDOMAR (1587-1626)

History: Count Gondomar, Spanish ambassador to England during King James' reign, was a clever and highly influential diplomat. He successfully encouraged James toward policies favorable to Spain despite his personal disdain for the monarch and the unfailing hatred of the English public. He promoted greater tolerance toward Catholics, urged the King to execute Walter Raleigh (1618) after the latter's treasure hunting expedition attacked a Spanish settlement in Guiana, and in 1623 persuaded young Charles I to pursue marriage negotiations with the Infanta Maria Anna of Spain (Anne of Austria's little sister).

Roleplaying: Contemporary political cartoonists depict Gondomar as a Spanish Machiavelli, and they may be right. He privately believes James to be weak coward but manages to maintain the illusion that he's the English King's good buddy. When James, a Scotsman, wants to complain about about what idiots the English are, Gondomar is there ready to listen. In fact, he's always listening, always watching, ready to seize any opportunity or tidbit of information that might help Spain and get him in tighter with the English monarch. "Sneaky" is his middle name, and the PCs had best exercise caution to the point of paranoia when dealing with him.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA (1601-1666)

History: Surrounded by enemies, hated by the people, bound to a husband she despised, Anne of Austria managed to keep her head and her throne through four tumultuous administrations and watched France progress from anarchy to absolutism.

The Spanish princess was forced to marry Louis XIII to further his mother's political ambitions in 1615; both of them were 14. Anne and Louis were opposites. She was outgoing, opinionated and outspoken. He was shy, vacillating and secretive. She favored her home country, while Louis saw Spain as a threat. After Anne miscarried, Louis ignored her for almost two decades. Anne found herself alone in a hostile kingdom.

Things got worse for the Queen when Cardinal Richelieu, committed to breaking Spanish supremacy, took charge. Anne quickly learned to hate the minister, who snubbed and harassed her. In 1626, she may have been involved with Gaston d'Orleans in a conspiracy to discredit Richelieu by starting a revolt in Brittany. The plot was discovered but she was not implicated. In 1630, Anne plotted with Marie de Medici to imprison Richelieu if the King, who was very sick at the time, died. Instead, Louis recovered and confirmed the cardinal's authority. The Queen Mother and Gaston were exiled, and several nobles were imprisoned, but again Anne escaped punishment.

In 1637, the King was trapped at the palace by a storm and spent the night with Anne. The birth of little Louis one year later was considered a miracle by the public and temporarily alleviated



Anne's unpopularity. A second son, Philippe, was born two years later. The births were surrounded by rumors that the frigid King couldn't possibly be the boys' father and that they were sired by the Queen's secret lover.

In 1641, Anne passed up another chance to do in Richelieu. Gaston d'Orleans and the marquis of Cinq-Mars schemed to surrender the city of Sedan to a Spanish army, march to Paris to capture the King, and assassinate Richelieu. A conspirator approached the Queen, expecting her cooperation. Anne, however, knew that both Louis and the cardinal were deathly ill and that she would be regent once they were gone. She leaked the plot to Richelieu, who got Gaston to confess by claiming to have a copy of the agreement with Spain. Anne's instincts were correct; the two men she loathed so intimately were dead within two years and she was master of France.

Widowed at 40, Anne was still fit and handsome. Being queen regent was not the enviable position she'd imagined, however. She and her advisor Mazarin were considered foreigners by the public and easy pickings by the nobility. Ironically, she was forced to continue Richelieu's policies to maintain order. The Queen helped ignite the first Fronde by having members of Parlement arrested, though she was forced to later release them.

The Queen didn't oppose Louis' ending of the regency during the second Fronde, possibly learning from the mistakes of Marie



de Medici. She continued to have an influence on policy. When he hesitated to marry Maria-Theresa because of his passion for Marie Mancini, Anne castigated her son thoroughly for putting love ahead of political and financial expediency. After Mazarin's death there is no record of her meddling.

Roleplaying: Anne of Austria's reserved, dignified bearing is a mask for her loneliness and vulnerability. She came to the palace as a fun-loving girl who enjoyed music and dancing but the betrayals and friendless isolation of her reign have molded her into a somber, wary matron. Early on, she sometimes allied with Marie de Medici and Gaston d'Orleans but soon learned that she couldn't trust them. Anne had to learn craftiness and duplicity to survive at court. She clings to Mazarin in spite of his flaws because he's the only man she's met in Paris (besides D'Artagnan) who hasn't betrayed or abandoned her.

At the beginning of her reign, Anne resembles a wide-eyed, if haughty, Snow White; by its end, she's hardened into a still-lovely but somewhat sinister Lady Macbeth. Anne has difficulty trusting people, such as ambitious PCs, for fear they'll use her to accomplish their ends then abandon her. If the characters demonstrate their loyalty with deeds, she'll reward them monetarily but may still remain suspicious. Adventurers would do well not to depend on her gratitude; when the pressure is on, she'll turn on them.

CHARLES DE BAATZ-CASTELMORE, SIEUR D'ARTAGNAN (1623-1673)

"I wish more than anything to be a Mousquetaire."

History: Information on the real d'Artagnan is hard to find. Born to wealthy, middle-class parents, de Baatz left Gascony for Paris in 1640 and served in the Black Company of Louis IV's Mousquetaires during Mazarin's ministry. In 1661, he arrested Nicolas Fouquet, superintendent of finances, on embezzlement charges. He was named captain lieutenant of the First Company of the King's Musketeers in 1667. About two years later, de Baatz arrested the husband of Anne Marie d'Orleans, the King's cousin, when she married against Louis' will. The husband, Captain Antonin Nompars de Caumont of the First Company, was a fellow Gascon and possibly a rival. Ten years younger than de Baatz, de Caumont was a witty braggart and accomplished duelist who had become the favorite of the King. In 1670, d'Artagnan led an army of 4,000 crack troops to crush a peasant revolt. The rebel forces, number about 6,000, were slaughtered and d'Artagnan's army brutalized the countryside. He was later named governor of Lille, and eventually died in battle.

Alexander Dumas gives us a much more gratifying, if fictional, account of d'Artagnan's exploits. D'Artagnan arrived in Paris from Gascony in 1625, a brash 18-year-old eager to pursue a military career. He was admitted to the King's Guards but quickly ran afoul of Cardinal Richelieu's agents and three of Louis XIII's toughest Mousquetaires: Athos, Porthos and Aramis. He gained the trio's respect and friendship after assisting them in a duel with Richelieu's guards and became a Musketeer himself after foiling a plot by Richelieu to embarrass Queen Anne. When he attempted to prevent Milady de Winter, Richelieu's top assassin, from slaying England's Duke of Buckingham, she killed his mistress in revenge. D'Artagnan, his friends, and two other victims of de Winter's crimes hunted down the assassin and put her to death. In 1628 Richelieu grudgingly commissioned d'Artagnan as a lieutenant in the Musketeers for his bravery during the siege of La Rochelle.

He and his friends became known as "The Invincibles" for their exploits but separated soon after de Winter's demise. D'Artagnan

remained in the Musketeers but despite exemplary service received no promotions for the next 20 years. On the eve of the first Fronde, he was sent by Mazarin to collect his old companions to defend the Queen but discovered that Athos and Aramis had joined the rebels. The four swore to remain friends in spite of their political differences. D'Artagnan spirited Mazarin and the royal family out of Paris, then was sent with Porthos to England to negotiate with Cromwell. He rescued Athos and Aramis, who had been captured while trying to aid Charles I, but an attempt to help the King escape failed. Upon their return to France, he and Porthos were arrested but they escaped, kidnapped Mazarin, and forced him to compromise with the rebellious nobles. D'Artagnan also blackmailed the cardinal into promoting him to captain of the Musketeers and making Porthos a baron.

D'Artagnan ran into trouble, however, when loyalty to his king and devotion to his friends conflicted. He was ordered to arrest Fouquet but knew from his previous missions that the finance minister was innocent. He allowed Fouquet to escape out of conscience but then pursued him out of duty. Noting this, Louis XIV ordered d'Artagnan to lead an expedition against Aramis and Porthos, holed up in an island fortress after a failed attempt to replace Louis with his twin brother Philippe. When d'Artagnan tried to delay the assault to allow his friends to escape he was relieved of command, arrested, and sent back to Paris. The King informed d'Artagnan that he expected absolute obedience from from his servants but was willing to drop an indictment for treason because of the Musketeer's service record. Outmaneuvered, humiliated, and convinced that his friends were dead, d'Artagnan bitterly submitted and was reinstated as captain of an emasculated corps of Mousquetaires. He was later killed in battle just as he was about to be made a Marshal of France.

Roleplaying: The historical Charles de Baatz is a professional soldier whose successful career won't significantly affect French destiny. Like most men of his time, he's pretty ruthless about getting ahead. A career army man, de Baatz obeys orders, doesn't make waves, and won't do anything to jeopardize his chances of promotion. He'd naturally feel threatened by a flamboyant upstart like Antonin de Caumont. PCs who encounter this version should keep well in mind that de Baatz is Louis IV's hatchet man. He'd arrest his own mother if ordered to.

D'Artagnan, as portrayed by Dumas, is a composite of de Baatz and de Caumont, the quintessential Mousquetaire. He is the quick-thinking, smooth-talking, fierce-fighting, hard-loving, free-spending, chip-on-the-shoulder swordsman the PCs will be trying to imitate. His code is one of personal honor, loyalty to friends and service to the king, and he follows it even to his own harm. His allegiances don't prevent him from deceiving and manipulating his associates in order to further his career, however. He's not foolhardy but his bristling pride causes him to attempt feats a 20th Century soldier would consider unnecessary. The d'Artagnan the players will be familiar with depends on when they encounter him in his career. As a young man, he is naive and overconfident, willing to duel anyone in order to win the reputation he needs to become a Musketeer. As a mature officer, d'Artagnan has learned graceful manners and has become adept at obeying orders while protecting his own interests. During Louis XIV's reign, he is an embittered old man quite capable of mowing down rebellious peasants. Years of faithful service have robbed him of the woman he loved, his closest friends, and a sense of control over his own destiny. He clings to the only thing he has left: blindly loyal obedience to the king.



SAVIENIEN DE CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1619-1655)

"The Ballade, sir, is formed of three stanzas of eight lines each and a refrain of four. I'll compose one while I fight with you and at the end of the last line—thrust home!"

History: The historical Cyrano de Bergerac was as colorful as Edmond Rostand's fictional character, if not as noble. Born in Perigord, de Bergerac served in the army but mustered out in 1642 after being wounded twice in battle. He went to Paris to pursue a career as a comic author, playwright and amateur philosopher. He was notorious as a duelist, loose-living hellion and vocal atheist and ran with a crowd as wild as he was. His tragic play, "The Death of Agrippine," was banned after one performance in 1640 as sacrilegious (it was). Cyrano became the toast of the freethinking Paris salons when it was published in 1654. Soon afterward he was killed when a falling beam struck him in the head.

Cyrano de Bergerac's chief claim to fame, besides his large nose, was a pair of humorous science fiction novels published after his death: *Comic Histories of the States and Empires of the Moon* (1657) and *Comic Histories of the States and Empires of the Sun* (1662). He described how he made several outrageous attempts at space travel (strapping rockets to a chair, tying dew-filled bottles to himself so that he would rise when the sun evaporated the moisture, sitting on an iron plate while hurling a magnet ahead of him) before he actually reached the moon. De Bergerac used his encounters with the moon's inhabitants to satirize contemporary theology and traditional scholarship, and his books may have influenced Jonathan Swift.



Rostand's Cyrano was a paragon of bravery, wit, swordsmanship and unselfish devotion. He could outfight 100 men but couldn't bring himself to tell his lovely cousin Roxane that he loved her because of his insecurity about his nose. When he learned she was in love with another soldier, tongue-tied Christian de Neuville, Cyrano offered to write Christian's love letters for him. De Bergerac's poetry gained Roxane for Christian; only as Cyrano lay dying did she realize it was he that won her heart.

Roleplaying: Either version of Cyrano can enliven a campaign. The historical de Bergerac is an ornery troublemaker willing to have fun at anyone's expense. The fictional Cyrano is a jealous lover eager to punish any male interest shown toward Roxane. In either case, he is an accomplished fencer highly sensitive about his nose. The PCs can get in a fight merely by noticing it, and de Bergerac always has brawl-loving friends nearby.

MAXIMILIEN DE BETHUNE, DUC DE SULLY (1560-1641)

History: Longtime friend and chief advisor to Henry IV, Maximilien de Bethune helped the King put France back together after the religious wars. A staid, unwavering Huguenot, de Berthune acted as Cricket to the King's Pinocchio, often restraining the passionate Henry from doing something stupid.

They became friends when he was 12 years old. Sully fought on Henry's side for 14 years and was one of the few Protestant advisors who supported Henry's decision to turn Catholic to achieve the crown. He was thus in a unique position to influence Henry's policies and foibles. Berthune scolded the King for spending France's meager treasury on mistress Gabrielle d'Estrees in 1589, and when Gabrielle tried to get him ousted, Henry chewed her out. Sully prevented his marriage to Henriette d'Entragues in 1600. He unsuccessfully opposed Henry's plan to allow the Jesuits to return to France in 1603, arguing that they were agents of Spain. He proposed a "Grand Design" to Henry: a nine-nation alliance to offset the power of the Hapsburgs, but Henry died before it became a reality. As Henry's main administrative assistant, Sully oversaw areas as diverse as military fortification, the Bastille, highway construction and public building.

Ironically, Berthune's close friendship with the King was a contributing factor in Henry's assassination. The King sneaked out of the palace without his guards specifically to visit Sully, who was ill and bedridden at the time, and was murdered on his way home. Berthune was retained by Marie de Medici but resigned in 1611 when the Queen married off Louis to Anne of Austria despite his protests. He apparently stayed out of politics and concentrated on writing his memoirs, a lengthy tribute to Henry's reign.

Roleplaying: Maximilien de Berthune is smart, sensible and devout, a thinker and planner. He lives simply even though the King gave him four monasteries to support himself with. He's been getting Henry Bourbon out of trouble as long as he can remember and feels an irrational responsibility for the brash king's welfare. He won't compromise his faith or his friendship, and both loyalties are what drives him to work so hard. PCs can encounter him either as a patron or an antagonist, but either way he'll be obsessed with thrift. The characters had better be prepared to justify every expense of the projects they propose and shouldn't count on receiving royal pensions for their work, although Henry frequently overrules Sully on this point. Berthune will grow increasingly grim after Henry's death as he watches Concini undo much of his and Henry's work.



HENRY BOURBON AKA HENRY IV AKA HENRY OF NAVARRE (1553-1610)

"Those who unswervingly follow their conscience are of my religion, and I am of the religion of all who are brave and good."

History: Henry IV flip-flopped on his religious views almost as often as he changed mistresses but this flexibility, combined with valiant soldiering and a genuine concern for his people, enabled him to end the anarchy of France's religious wars, rebuild the country and protect his people from foreign intervention. A century later, he was the only monarch not vilified by the French Revolution.

Henry was the son of a nobleman in the southern province of Bearn. His rural upbringing made him familiar with the lives and problems of common people. Henry's mother became a Protestant and caused the rest of the family to convert with her, which may have been why Queen Catherine de Medici had him brought to Paris at age 9. He became a Catholic, toured France with the Queen in 1564, and learned the manners of the court. Nostradamus prophesied that Henry would be king and that the Queen's sons wouldn't carry on her line. When he returned home at age 13, he quickly switched back to Protestantism. He became king of Navarre at age 19 upon the death of his father.

To help counter brewing strife between France's Catholic north and Huguenot south, the Queen married off her daughter, Margaret of Valois, to Henry. The next day, however, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre occurred. Henry escaped the slaughter, was forced to become Catholic yet again, and remained at court for three years a virtual hostage. He strayed one night while "hunting" in 1575 and fled in disguise back to Bearn, where he renounced Catholicism. He served as governor of Guyenne, most of southern France.

Henry and Margaret didn't get along. He was a rustic provincial who loved the outdoors and athletics and wasn't too fussy about cleaning up when he returned from them. She was a refined lady of the court who enjoyed the civilized life and was frankly offended by his stench. Margot was in love with someone else when forced to marry Henry, and both of them were so promiscuous that they eventually avoided each other out of mutual suspicion. She helped arrange his escape but didn't join him for three years. She left him for Paris two years later, offended by his many mistresses, but lived it up so much there that King Henry III sent her home. When, in 1584, she left Henry again, both her brother and her husband had had enough and confined her to her chateau. She stayed there, sponsoring the arts, entertaining lovers and writing her memoirs. In 1600 she let Henry to annul their marriage and in 1605 was allowed to return to court.

Meanwhile, a series of three religious wars raged across France. In 1580, Henry's military victories forced Catholics in southern France to end hostilities, and there was peace for six years. In 1584, Henry III named him heir to the throne. Henry of Guise, Margaret's old flame, contested this with an army supplied by the Holy League, was beaten by Henry of Navarre's forces in 1587 and was assassinated by the King's men the following year. Henry III waffled about succession but confirmed Henry of Navarre as the heir before he himself was assassinated by a League agent. Henry of Navarre, now Henry IV, in 1589 found himself the Protestant king of a nation controlled by the fanatically Catholic League. Not only did the League have a rival candidate for his throne—the duke of Mayenne, Henry of Guise's brother—but Spain and Savoy offered their choices for king as well.

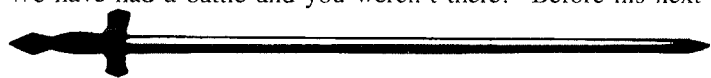
His Protestant army was outnumbered 3 to 1 by Mayenne's troops but victory at Arques won him English support and international recognition. He wrote exultantly to a friend, "Hang yourself! We have had a battle and you weren't there!" Before his next

confrontation, at Ivry in 1590, Henry put a white plume in his helmet, and told his men, "If you lose your standards do not lose sight of my white plume. You will always find it in the path of honor and, I hope, of victory." His victory was decisive. Henry fought until his sword arm was swollen and his blade beaten out of shape. Thousands of Mayenne's Swiss mercenaries, unpaid and aware of Henry's reputation for mercy, surrendered. The King further reduced the League's influence by repealing all measures of intolerance in 1591. He besieged Paris, was driven away by Spanish invaders from the Netherlands, beat them, and returned to surround the city, where both Mayenne and the Spanish general were holed up. Realizing that the capitol would never submit to a Huguenot, Henry switched back to the Catholic faith in 1593, commenting, "Paris is surely worth a mass." The League broke into factions, one of which let him into Paris the following year, and Henry was officially king. He fought the Spanish until a peace treaty was signed in 1598. To prevent further religious strife, Henry expelled the Jesuits in 1595 and issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which granted limited freedom of worship to Huguenots. He allowed the Jesuits to return in 1603 when he became convinced their presence would reduce civil unrest.

Henry, needing an heir, wanted to wed Gabrielle d'Estrees, his live-in girlfriend since 1589, but was still married to Margaret. When the pope refused to annul their marriage, Henry planned to tie the knot with Gabrielle anyway. When she died in 1599 after giving birth to a still-born son, the grieving King fell into the arms of ambitious Henriette d'Entragues. He would have married her, but the duke of Sully, his close friend and advisor, persuaded him to marry Italian princess Marie de Medici for financial reasons. He got the annulment this time and did so but retained Henriette as his mistress. His stormy relationships with both women are detailed in their individual entries.

The King's popularity was always iffy. In spite of his political and economic reforms there were plenty of extremists of both faiths who saw him as a traitor. He was forgiving toward his enemies and was inclined to be lenient toward would-be assassins. Enough attempts were made on his life that Henry apparently got used to them. His incessant sexual liaisons affected his policy decisions and undermined the public's confidence in him. When, in 1610, he planned to invade the Netherlands, everyone was sure he was going after 15-year-old beauty Charlotte of Montmorency, whose husband had taken her to Belgium to keep her out of the King's clutches. This rumor stirred up widespread resentment against Henry. In spite of death threats, he insisted on leaving the palace to visit Sully, who was ill. He sneaked off without his guards, was stalled in traffic on the way home, and was fatally stabbed by Catholic fanatic Francois Ravallac, who had been stalking him for a year.

Roleplaying: Henry IV is a paragon of French manhood: Handsome, heroic and horny. He's coarse, macho, boisterous and loves a fight, whether it's a battle or a wrestling match or a dirty game of cards (he cheats well). He's approachable; he doesn't stand on ceremony, doesn't mind being poked fun at and has a genuine compassion for his subjects. Henry is smart, although his emotions often cloud his judgement, and has a quick wit. When a new officeholder protested that he was unworthy, Henry quipped, "I know it quite well but my nephew asked me to appoint you." His courage and honorableness are proverbial; thirty years after his death he was still the standard that French soldiers, especially the elite Musketeers, tried to live up to. This living legend's fatal flaw is his women. He either cannot or will not control himself and has mistresses behind his mistresses' backs. It takes much of Sully's energy to keep the King from wrecking his own policies with his



affairs; he'll abandon planning a crucial military campaign or deplete the treasury to chase a gal he likes.

This is a king PCs can believe in rather than serving out of a sense of duty. He'll generously reward characters who display bravery and chastise those whom he considers cowardly or dishonorable. Henry will also be a challenge to protect. In spite of the constant assassination attempts, he mixes freely with the public and is always slipping off to some romantic rendezvous. He also never seems to get tired, organizing hunting excursions after he's spent the day fighting or marching. The characters will need a lot of stamina to keep up with him.

LOUIS BOURBON AKA LOUIS XIII (1601-1643)

"I should not be king if I had the feelings of private persons."

History: Ignored by his philandering father, despised by his mother, Louis XIII was a sulky, withdrawn child who nursed feelings of bitterness and inadequacy. He watched the Queen Regent hand France over to a greedy foreigner and opportunistic nobles. In his early teens he was forced to marry Anne of Austria to further Marie de Medici's foreign policy, and the Queen had him physically carried to his bride's bed. Louis' resentment exploded in a bloody coup in 1617 which sent the Queen Mother into exile and killed her cronies. His political career was overshadowed by that of Cardinal Richelieu; his frequently poor health and difficulty in making decisions led him to more and more leave matters in his chief minister's hands.

His married life was tepid. Louis and Anne had conflicting personalities and political views and generally avoided each other. This lack of intimacy with the Queen or a mistress has caused some observers to accuse him of being a homosexual. After Anne miscarried in 1625, he left her alone for 13 years. In 1637, he was trapped by a rainstorm at her palace and spent the night. The future Louis XIV was born a year later, followed by Philippe in 1640. The public was so surprised by these births that rumors flew as to who the real father was.

It is hard to determine what kind of relationship Louis had with Richelieu. He disliked the cardinal dictating policy to him yet rubber stamped most of Richelieu's decisions. He could have dismissed the cardinal at any time but retained him in spite of strong opposition from family members and influential nobles. Louis personally went to Richelieu's bedside to care for him while the cardinal lay dying but acted happy and relieved when Richelieu was dead. Moreover, he made no significant changes during the seven months before his own death.

Roleplaying: The opposite of his macho, charismatic, womanizing dad, Louis XIII is a vacillating introvert. He can act decisively enough when he feels threatened but generally leans on strong advisors; now that he has seized power he doesn't quite seem to know what to do with it. Tall and thin, Louis enjoys sports when he isn't fighting off one of his frequent bouts of sickness. During his sick periods, he composes music, cooks and gardens.

He's somewhat paranoid but to be fair, Louis has no one he can trust. His philandering father ignored him and died when he was young. His mom nags and still wants to run his life. His intimidatingly bright and beautiful wife despises him and would gladly turn France over to her Spanish relatives. His kid brother Gaston is always trying to seize the throne. His chief advisor, Richelieu, bosses him around; sometimes it's hard to tell who is really king around here! And his brother-in-law, Charles Stuart, alternately invades his country and begs for money to fight the Puritans.

Louis is a trifle weird: aloof, withdrawn, he tends to sulk and has bursts of violent temper. The only time he truly relaxes is when he is hunting or engaging in one of the sports popular at the palace. A fearful person, he yearns for someone he can trust yet resents having to depend on others. Generous to those who serve him faithfully, he is unmerciful toward those who oppose him. Louis would make a different sort of enemy than Richelieu: the cardinal is ruthless but rational and calculating, Louis explodes into violent action when he feels threatened.

LOUIS BOURBON AKA LOUIS XIV (1638-1715)

"The ardor that we feel for glory is not one of those feeble passions that cool with possession. Her favors, which can never be obtained except with effort, never cause disgust, and he that can refrain from longing for fresh ones is unworthy of all those he has received."

History: Given his parents' cold relationship, Louis XIV's birth was regarded as something of a miracle by the public. Neglected, undisciplined, king at age 5, Louis grew up being taught he was God's gift to France. When, at age 23, he was given control of Europe's most efficient political and military machine, is it any wonder that he went on a rampage after girls and glory?

His little world was shattered for him by the Frondes. As Mazarin diverted funds for diplomacy and defense, 10-year-old Louis wore old clothes and slept on tattered sheets. A mob entered the palace seeking confirmation that he had not been kidnapped, and Louis had to lay in bed pretending to be asleep as they filed by. When he and his mother fled Paris, they were forced to sleep on straw, and Anne pawned her jewelry to keep them from going hungry. He learned to despise his subjects in general and Parisians in particular. Three years later, in a bid for stability, he ended his mother's regency and banished Mazarin. He recalled the minister as soon as things had quieted down.

He fell madly in love with Mazarin's niece, pretty Marie Mancini. However, one of the terms of peace with Spain was his marriage to plump, dull Spanish princess Maria-Theresa. Marie was sent away. Louis married Maria-Theresa in August 1660 and received a dowry worth \$6 million. The poor Queen was unable to keep his interest for long. He flirted with his sister-in-law, Henriette d'Angierterre, then met Louise de la Valliere, a provincial duchess who provided a type of intelligent companionship Maria-Theresa was incapable of giving. A jealous countess sent an anonymous letter to the Queen informing her of the affair, which enraged Louis.

Meanwhile, Mazarin died, instructing Louis to act as his own first minister. He did, seizing Mazarin's hidden hoard. Louis was jealous of Nicolas Fouquet; the finance minister was richer than he was, kept trying to give him advice, and had a painting of the royal mistress done. Louis had both the man and his fortune seized, adding Fouquet's loot to what he'd already acquired from his wife and Mazarin.

Roleplaying: Louis XIV is an incredibly powerful spoiled brat. He has the will of Richelieu, the vanity of Mazarin and the hormones of Henry IV—a dangerous mixture of traits he conceals beneath a solemn, formal exterior. He insists on being supreme not only in politics but in wealth, fashion and manners as well. Adventurers dare not rouse his anger. Louis doesn't care who gets hurt as long as he gets what he wants. He seems to be immune to the needs and feelings of others. Might makes right, and he's the most powerful French king since Charlemagne.

As long as the PCs don't cross him, however, Louis XIV will seem a pleasant if imperious monarch. In addition to being king,



he's the official national hero. He's gorgeous, athletic and charming, adored by the public and lusted after by most of the ladies of the court. He loves dancing, ballet and theater and occasionally puts on amateur performances himself, which no one dares to criticize. Louis is a champion eater; a midnight snack might consist of three loaves, a bottle of wine and a whole chicken. (If he's feeling indisposed.) He works it off chasing deer and dears.

OLIVER CROMWELL (1599-1658)

History: His efforts to establish the Kingdom of God in England by military means failed, but Oliver Cromwell succeeded in transforming the nation's character. When he came to power, England was a bawdy, lazy, impotent backwater. By the time of his death, England had become a disciplined, purposeful world power capable of enforcing its will. He established British naval power and laid the foundations of the British Empire.

Before the civil wars, Cromwell was a rather ordinary country squire. He was the only one of 10 children to survive infancy in his wealthy, middle-class family. In 1616, he entered Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge but didn't finish school. After a wild youth, he repented, became a Puritan, married and had nine kids, and owned property near Huntingdon worth 1,800 pounds. Nominated for Parliament in 1628, Cromwell supported the House of Commons' demands for greater royal accountability but had little personal influence.

That began to change when the war broke out. He began recruiting as a captain in the Parliamentary army in 1642 and the following year organized a regiment of his own into which he admitted men of any faith except Catholics and Episcopalians. Military victories the same year earned him the nickname "Ironsides," and it became the name of his troops. His devout, disciplined soldiers refused to swear, steal or rape, shouted with joy or rage as they met the enemy, chose to die rather than retreat, and never lost a battle. When Royalist forces were winning at Marston Moor in 1644 and at Naseby in 1645, Cromwell's cavalry swept in and routed them. Disgusted with the armchair generals he kept having to rescue, Cromwell pushed for an ordinance requiring members of Parliament to resign their army commissions. He resigned from Parliament, was made a lieutenant general, and reorganized Parliament's amateur soldiers into a professional fighting force, in which his veteran Ironsides were dominant.

By 1646, Charles I was defeated but the army refused to disband until it received back pay. Fearful of the monster it had created, Parliament began negotiating with the King. To prevent this, an army faction captured Charles in 1647. Cromwell arrived and took charge, marched the King to London, and the army seized power. Charles escaped to Scotland and led an army south, but Cromwell stopped them. Charles was to be tried for treason.

Parliament temporarily got the general out of its hair by sending him to put down the Irish revolt. He did, ruthlessly massacring all who opposed him. Cromwell believed the faster the rebels could be crushed, the sooner peace could be restored. He was called away from Ireland in 1650 when Gen. Thomas Fairfax resigned rather than launch a preemptive strike at Scotland, which had invited Charles II to return as king. Made supreme commander of the army, Cromwell invaded the north, beating a superior force and taking 10,000 prisoners. He fell ill, however, giving Charles enough time to reorganize and invade England. Cromwell followed, gathering local militia as he went. He won at Worcester even though he was again outnumbered 2 to 1 by the Scots. The foreign victories won him modest fame but the fever he caught in Scotland stayed with him for the rest of his life.

After dissolving the Rump Parliament and watching "Barebone's Parliament" self-destruct in 1653, Cromwell hoped that a dictator could do what a committee couldn't: set up a stable government that was relatively representative and preserved the ideals of the Puritan revolution. The Lord Protector called another Parliament in 1654 but was pressured into dismissing it the next year when members tried to reduce the army's pay and numbers. He declared martial law in 1655 to maintain order but convened a new Parliament in 1656 to raise money for the war against Spain. When that was not enough, he had to raise taxes to higher levels than Charles had ever levied. He also accepted large subsidies from the reorganized East India Company in return for granting the corporation almost complete autonomy. Cromwell refused Parliament's offer to make him king in 1657, and survived an army conspiracy to assassinate him the same year. Parliament was dismissed in 1658 when it tried to limit the power of the House of Commons.

The Lord Protector was growing so unpopular that even his oldest daughter turned against him. Stress, fever, and disappointment at not being able to set up a constitutional government began to wear England's Iron Man down. "I can say in the presence of God, I would have lived under my woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than undertook such a government as this," he complained. He took ill with fever and died.

Roleplaying: Oliver Cromwell is one of those influential men who is either loved or hated by those around him. His enemies depict him as a power-hungry opportunist who cloaks his dirty deeds with religious hypocrisy. His friends see him as a saintly statesman valiantly striving to keep the army under control so he can establish a more egalitarian, moral society. Either way, the Lord Protector is a dignified but energetic man whose inner fires are held under tight control. When those controls slip, Cromwell's wrath is terrifying. It takes him a long time to make up his mind, but when he does he acts decisively. He's worked alongside too many drooling fanatics to become one of them, but he is devout. When he makes a speech or writes a letter he tends to preach.

As a member of Parliament, he dresses plainly and somewhat shabbily, a gentleman farmer who doesn't mind getting his hands dirty. As Lord Protector, Cromwell dresses in a plain black suit, although he dons a gold embroidered one for state occasions. He enjoys his power but grows increasingly nervous, wary and tired as the years go by. When he's not working, Cromwell enjoys teasing and pulling practical jokes on his family and friends. He loves music and plays the organ well. He lives simply, caring for his wife, mother and children, but can't resist a bit of luxury: by the end of his tenure, he owns 22 Turkish rugs.

Cromwell won't put up with any nonsense from the PCs, whether they're on his side or the King's. He's not sneaky like many of his contemporary strongmen but he can be merciless if the adventurers interfere with his goals. Cromwell won't persecute them just because they disagree with him but he will jail or execute PCs who actively and unrepentantly oppose him. He keeps his word, and once he's made a decision it's very hard to change his mind.

GASPAR DE GUZMAN, COUNT OF OLIVARES (1587-1645)

History: Chief minister for Philip IV, Count Olivares was Cardinal Richelieu's Spanish counterpart and rival, zealously trying to reform a nation rotten with corruption and inefficiency. Saddled with a playboy monarch too busy having fun to rule. Guzman essentially ran Spain from 1621 to 1642. Like Richelieu, whom he admired, Olivares taxed the peasantry to destitution to fund armies in a desperate bid to preserve his country's political



power. He failed. Spain's decline was unstoppable, especially in the face of a unified, aggressive France.

His foreign policy forced Guzman to maintain armies in eight locations in five countries. To support this effort he raised the sales tax to 14 percent, which helped ruin Spain's economy. He hoped to merge Spain and Portugal, but both Portugal and the Spanish province of Catalonia revolted in 1640 with French aid and encouragement. For his part, Olivares sent Huguenot rebels the equivalent of almost \$4 million per year. On the domestic scene, he generously patronized literature and the arts. After a series of defeats, he was dismissed by Philip in 1643. Humiliated, Olivares left the capitol, went mad, and died in obscurity two years later.

Roleplaying: Count Olivares is proud, quick tempered, stern and stubborn. He's also a hard-working patriot who bypasses opportunities for personal wealth and self-indulgence because of his zeal for the nation's welfare. He's as ruthless as Richelieu, and almost as fanatical as the cardinal about national ascendancy. Guzman is a classy, honorable villain. Should the player characters meet him, they'll find him courteous and candid. He will never tell them an outright lie, although they'd be wise to consider what he's not telling them. The Count will gladly harbor Richelieu's enemies; he may be the PCs' salvation if one of their intrigues fails.

JULES MAZARIN AKA GIULIO MAZARINI (1602-1661)

"Louis has in him the stuff to make four kings and an honorable man."

History: Cardinal Mazarin, an Italian, completed the work began by Richelieu: taming the nobility, unifying France, negotiating a settlement to the Thirty Years' War favorable to France, and ending the threat of Spanish domination. In addition to being a master diplomat, however, the Cardinal was also a master embezzler who used his position as chief minister to Anne of Austria and Louis XIV to amass a fortune estimated at 200 million francs.

Born to poor Sicilian parents, Mazarin was educated by the Jesuits in Rome, became a diplomatic agent for the Pope, and gained notoriety by negotiating a settlement to the Mantuan War in 1630. He was sent to Paris as a papal nuncio and soon caught Richelieu's eye. Mazarin rose in favor and was recommended by Richelieu as his successor. The country may have been relieved at the Cardinal's demise but came to hate the new one just as much.

Mazarin had several strikes against him when he came to power in 1643. He was a foreigner and the public always saw him as one no matter how many years he served the French throne. The nobles and middle class magistrates hated him because he had more influence over the Queen than they did and continued Richelieu's policy of centralizing authority. The poor hated him because he taxed them to destitution to pay for his military victories against the Germans and Spaniards. Church officials distrusted him because he put national interests ahead of loyalty to Rome, expressed skepticism about religion, and continued official tolerance toward Protestants. He offended everyone by dipping into the public till to lavish expensive gifts on his family, especially his pretty nieces, Marie and Olympe. On the other hand, Mazarin enjoyed the unflinching support of the Queen Regent and young king, who saw him as a protection against hostile aristocrats and parlements.

Resentment against Mazarin came to a head during the Frondes, when Parlement ordered him to be hunted down and all royal funds seized. Figuring that discretion was the better part of valor, Mazarin twice left the country but performed one of his slickest diplomatic feats by bribing a mercenary army to go home. Young Louis XIV shared his mother's confidence in the cardinal and retained him as chief minister once order was restored.

Back in power, he appointed Nicolas Fouquet superintendent of finance, whose privatized tax collection service so efficiently lined Mazarin's pockets and his own that it eventually brought down the wrath of Louis XIV. Mazarin next shocked the nation by forming alliance against Spain with Oliver Cromwell, the Protestant English dictator who had had Louis XIII's brother-in-law, Charles I, beheaded. Mazarin died within a year and a half, advising Louis to be his own chief minister and determine his own policies.

Roleplaying: Player characters who encounter Jules Mazarin will find him the opposite of the grim, driven Richelieu. He's charming and gentle to the ladies, forgiving toward his enemies, a witty conversationalist, loves creature comforts, and delights in fine art and music. He's also a smooth-talking con man consumed by greed who thinks every man has his price. Mazarin gives and takes bribes freely and has absolutely no appreciation for integrity. The GM can imagine him as the ultimate scoundrel made good. Mazarin's company may be more pleasant than Richelieu's but it would be dangerous for the PCs to trust him.

Whether he actually has anything going on with the Queen is up to the GM but it wouldn't be surprising for Anne of Austria to find the handsome, clever Italian attractive after her strained marriage to Louis XIII. Mazarin treats the boy king with respect and an almost fatherly affection.

MARIE DE MEDICI (1573-1642)

History: Henry IV was madly in lust with mistress Henriette de Balzac d'Entragues but in 1600 Sully persuaded him to marry Marie de Medici, daughter of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, so that Florentine bankers would cancel France's huge debt. They were married by proxy; when they met, Henry discovered that she was fat, tall and arrogant. With her attitude and his hormones, they couldn't have had much of a relationship, but she bore Henry seven children and endured while he continued to pursue mistresses. It's a safe bet that Marie and Henriette hated each other dearly, especially as the latter kept insisting that she was the rightful queen. Marie became regent upon Henry's death in 1610 but was content to let her brother-in-law Concino Concini run things while she enjoyed a life of luxury. She considered her eldest son, Louis, feeble-minded and favored his younger brother Gaston. Louis hated her and her pro-aristocracy, pro-Spanish policies and banished her when he seized power in 1617. Marie raised a revolt (1618?) after escaping from window of her palace but was talked out of it by her former minister Richelieu.

Marie never forgave Richelieu for joining the other side and was constantly conspiring against the prime minister. Her big chance came in 1630. After nursing a grievously ill Louis XIII back to health, de Medici told him that a properly grateful son would replace Richelieu with a nobleman she had selected. She even had a prison cell conveniently reserved for the Cardinal. When Richelieu interrupted this tender scene by entering the chamber through a secret passage, the Queen Mother told Louis he must choose between her and the Prime Minister. He stuck with Richelieu. Marie was banished and held court in exile in Flanders. In 1636, when the war with Spain turned against France, she worked for a Spanish victory. All her plots were unsuccessful, and she died several months before Richelieu.

Roleplaying: Marie de Medici is the archetypal snobby, overbearing society matron. She's so sure mother knows best that she's willing to incite war against her own son to get her way. Marie thinks Gaston would make a better king but Louis should be easier to control (she never ceases to underestimate him). She forced him to marry Anne and had him carried kicking and screaming to her



bed. Medici is sometimes sympathetic to Anne, they have similar foreign policy views, but is jealous of anyone who might gain more influence over Louis than she has. She's possibly a worse enemy than Richelieu; at least he has work to do, she sits around scheming. Marie will eagerly involve PCs in her plots and abandon them to royal wrath just as quickly if things go sour. Still, she's a steady source of employment for courtiers with the nerve and ambition to spy upon and work against Richelieu.

GASTON JEAN BAPTISTE D'ORLEANS, DUC DE MONTPENSIER (1608-1660)

History: Louis XIII's younger brother was behind most of the aristocratic rebellions that occurred during his reign. Gaston d'Orleans engaged in no fewer than six conspiracies against the French crown but somehow managed to land on his feet each time they failed, usually obtaining a pardon by betraying his accomplices.

As a boy, Gaston was the leader of Paris' most prominent juvenile gang. His cutpurses, operating on the Pont-Neuf, specialized in snatching cloaks off people's backs and vanishing into the daytime crowds or the nighttime shadows. The cloaks were later sold to used clothing dealers.

The duke was Cardinal Richelieu's most persistent foe, opposing what he saw as the minister's illegal encroachment upon the rights of the nobility. In 1626, he conspired with Cesar de Vendome to make Brittany independent, an attempt to discredit Richelieu. When the plot was detected, one of his companions was imprisoned, another executed. Gaston was in on the Day of the Dupes scheme to replace and imprison the cardinal (1630) and was exiled to his family chateau at Blois. The Queen Mother and a duke were also exiled; again, one of Gaston's companions was imprisoned, another beheaded. When sneakiness failed, d'Orleans opted for brute force. He incited Henry de Montmorency, governor of Languedoc, to revolt in 1632. They raised an army of thousands, but it was crushed by Richelieu's more disciplined forces. Montmorency was beheaded, while Gaston saved himself by naming his accomplices.

Gaston led a hastily assembled army against Spanish and German invaders at Corbie in 1636 but didn't press the assault on the city. Richelieu relieved him and took personal command, driving the enemy from France. This blow to his pride did nothing to increase the duke's love for the cardinal. In 1642, with the marquis of Cinq Mars, d'Orleans plotted to overthrow Richelieu with help of a Spanish army. He negotiated with Olivares and promised the marquis he'd arrange cardinal's assassination. However, Richelieu tricked Gaston into spilling the beans by claiming to have a copy of the agreement with Spain. Cinq Mars and a friend were beheaded.

Once Richelieu and Louis were dead, Monsieur de Montpensier quickly joined the movement to oust Mazarin and restore the nobility's feudal privileges. During the first Fronde (1649), he attacked the Royal Palace, claiming that young Louis XIV had been kidnapped. He probably hoped to abduct the King to force Anne of Austria to come to terms but she outmaneuvered him by showing Louis to the mob. Gaston tried to remain neutral during the second Fronde but when royal troops besieged Orleans in 1652, he sent his daughter to relieve the city.

Roleplaying: Above all, Gaston d'Orleans is proud, of himself and of his heritage. He sees himself not as a traitor but as a champion of nobles' traditional rights and privileges. The duke will explain to the PCs that he's not waging war on his brother and nephew, he's attempting to rescue them and France from the

schemes of their villainous advisors. He is privately contemptuous of Louis, viewing him as a weak-willed puppet of the hated Richelieu. If the opportunity presented itself, he would willingly seize the throne. Gaston regards Anne of Austria and Mazarin as foreign interlopers and, ironically, is willing to arrange foreign intervention to get rid of them. Not surprisingly, family gatherings are a little chilly. Montpensier rationalizes his betrayal of comrades. It's his duty to survive to continue the fight against absolutism; he's in the best position to lead the nobles to victory, and in every war you have a few casualties. Gaston is persuasive and inspiring. It is up to the GM to decide whether he's sincere or feeding the adventurers a bunch of pseudo-patriotic hooey. Either way, their chances of survival if they team up with him are not good.

ANNE MARIE LOUISE D'ORLEANS, MADEMOISELLE DE MONTPENSIER (1627-1693)

"I am of birth that does nothing that is not great and noble."

History: Niece of Louis XIII, cousin and would-be wife of Louis XIV, Anne d'Orleans was a rebel in more ways than one during the second Fronde (1650-1652). She resented the young king's lack of interest in her (Louis was 13, she was 25) so when her father, that persistent conspirator Gaston d'Orleans, remained neutral, Anne decided to try her hand at power politics. In March 1652, Louis sent his keeper of the seals to Orleans to demand the city's allegiance. Athletic, proud, and tired of the constraints placed upon her as a woman, Anne donned armor, gathered a small force of like-minded noblewomen and regular soldiers, and marched to her home town. Refused entry, she had her men breach the walls, avoided the guards, appeared in the streets with a pair of her women warriors and persuaded the citizens to join the rebellion.

Four months later, when the King's forces were defeating the rebel army outside the gates of Paris, Anne persuaded the governor of the Bastille to fire the fortress's cannon upon the royal troops. She then commanded the people to open the gates to admit the rebels; they did, shutting the King's army outside. Anne's exploits earned her the nickname "The Grand Mademoiselle" but destroyed her chances of winning her cousin's heart. By the end of the year, Parisians had tired of war and welcomed handsome 14-year-old Louis back into the city. The King recalled Cardinal Mazarin and banished the sorrowful Anne d'Orleans to one of her estates, denied both marriage and military glory.

Roleplaying: The Grand Mademoiselle is a good model for players wanting to run "macho women with swords" type characters. She's headstrong, impetuous, brave and tough as any man. However, her most powerful weapon is her oratory; Anne d'Orleans, given time and opportunity, can bend an entire city to her will. In many ways, Anne is a real-life female Don Quixote. Her passion for romance novels and assurance of her aristocratic superiority have given her a skewed view of reality. Driven by her emotions rather than political ambition, she's out for excitement and glory. Playing a latter day Joan of Arc allows her to vent her frustrations and is simply a lot more fun than staying home at the castle.

Anne can cause a lot of trouble for the PCs whether they're on her side or not. She'll profess loyalty to the king while urging them to overthrow Mazarin, will lead them into hazardous (and often unnecessary) situations if they let her, and will steadfastly refuse to take their advice. Her arrogance is complete but sincere: she really believes she's better than they are. If they oppose her, the PCs will find that she's competent enough with a sword and can easily rouse bystanders to attack them.



ARMAND JEAN DU PLESSIS DE RICHELIEU (1585-1642)

"A Christian cannot too soon forgive an injury but a ruler cannot too soon punish it when it is a crime against the state."

History: In many ways, the history of Richelieu's career is the history of France. Son of one of Henry IV's household officials, Armand du Plessis became bishop of Lucon at 21, lying about his age to get the position (seeking forgiveness later). He complained about the low pay but worked hard to fulfill his duties. Accepted into Maria de Medici's Council of State at age 29, he was dismissed three years later when young Louis XIII seized power. The following year in 1618 Bishop Richelieu was exiled to Avignon for allegedly conspiring with the Queen Mother. Yet in 1620, he was the one called back to put down a nobles' revolt led by the royal mom.

He became Louis' prime minister at age 39 and was required to simultaneously tackle a revolt by the Huguenot strongholds and conspiracies by the nobility. War against the Huguenots lasted from 1625 to 1629 but afterward Richelieu declared a general amnesty and reaffirmed the Edict of Nantes. In the meantime, in 1626 he ordered feudal fortresses destroyed and banned dueling to help take the fight out of the nobles; instead it led to another (unsuccessful) rebellion by the nobility. The following year he had a count who had violated the dueling ordinance executed and established a public postal system. These actions (except starting the postal system) earned him the undying enmity of the nobles and most of the royal family except the King himself. In 1630, Maria de Medici nursed the ailing King back to health then demanded that Richelieu be dismissed. Richelieu, learning of her intent, entered the room through a secret panel and confronted the Queen Mother. Louis left and later confirmed Richelieu as prime minister, ordered the arrest of his mom's proposed replacement, and told his Maria to retire from politics. Disgruntled nobles, led by the King's brother Gaston, revolted unsuccessfully two years later.

In the meantime, Richelieu turned his attention to foreign policy. He feared that a decisive Catholic victory in Germany's Thirty Years' War would preserve the Hapsburg threat to France. In 1631 he signed a treaty with Protestant Sweden and subsidized a Swedish invasion. He built up a navy of 85 ships and appointed intendants to ensure better collection of taxes. When the Swedish assault failed, Richelieu sent armies to capture strategic Italian mountain passes in 1632 and in 1634 declared war on Spain. Spanish troops entered France two years later and were about to seize Paris when Richelieu appeared in the streets. He armed the city militia and organized it into a makeshift army that, under his command, repulsed the invaders. In between campaigns he founded the French Academy in 1635. While Richelieu continued to win military and diplomatic victories, the nobles made one last attempt to oust him, led as usual by Gaston of Orleans. In 1640 they offered Spain territory in exchange for an army that would help them capture the King and assassinate the cardinal. One of the conspirators tried to get Anne of Austria to join the plot; instead, she leaked the plan to Richelieu. He approached Gaston, pretending to have a copy of the agreement with Spain. As usual, Gaston confessed and named his accomplices.

Richelieu's ceaseless activity took its toll. Never in very good health, he became sick enough to have to return from the battlefield in 1642. Realizing that he was dying, Richelieu wrote extensive instructions for the King, donated half his personal wealth to the royal treasury as an emergency fund and recommended his aide, Cardinal Jules Mazarin, as his successor. When an attendant priest asked him if he had forgiven his enemies, he replied, "I have none but the enemies of the state." All of France breathed a sigh of relief when he died.



Roleplaying: Richelieu's main trait is his relentless intensity. He truly believes that only he can save France from foreign domination and he is completely committed to that goal; anyone who opposes him is a traitor. He can be remorseless and cruel, not caring who gets hurt as long as he accomplishes his goals. He sometimes regrets his ruthlessness but believes it is justified by the need for national survival. One of his minor pleasures is snubbing the Queen by remaining seated in her presence, a privilege reserved for the King. While jealous of his power, Richelieu feels the burden of its accompanying responsibility: "Great men who are appointed to govern states are like those condemned to torture with only this difference, that the latter receive the punishment of their crimes, the former of their merits."

The cardinal has admirable qualities. He is the embodiment of patriotism: loyal to his king, literally working himself to death on behalf of France, refusing to take bribes. He is devoted to his niece and constant companion, Marie-Madeleine de Combalet. (The queens Marie de Medici and Anne of Austria have started rumors about their relationship.) He courageously defies the status quo to promote national unity and religious toleration. A patron of the arts and would-be poet, he is jealous of Pierre Corneille and strives to have his own plays produced.

Physically, Richelieu is a tall scarecrow of a man who hides his gawky body beneath flowing red cardinal's robes. His most striking feature is his huge, intelligent eyes. They can skewer a foe with their formidable gaze or, in his unguarded moments, betray his exhaustion and a basset hound sort of sadness. Richelieu suffers from what today would be called migraine headaches and urinary tract problems. A lesser man would retire for health reasons but the cardinal grits his teeth and forces his body to keep going.



If used as a campaign villain, Cardinal Richelieu is the archetypal elegant mastermind. Cultured, calculating, always in control, Richelieu is a gentleman even when at his most sinister. He enjoys complex schemes and usually has Plans B, C and D thought out if his current project fails. He admires skill and daring and will attempt to recruit or buy off opponents he respects. In spite of his physical infirmities, he has enough combat experience to give the PCs a good fight.

Richelieu's chief limitation as a villain is that he is simply too busy running France and conquering Europe to give the PCs much of his personal attention or to take revenge. (His agents are another matter.) The PCs will have to thwart the cardinal several times before he begins to take notice of them. Another limitation is that his awesome power is only as great as the King's confidence in him. Influential nobles and Louis XIII's family are constantly working to undermine that confidence, so Richelieu has to watch his step. A caution to PCs finding allies against Richelieu among the aristocracy: noble support is no guarantee of safety. The cardinal succeeded in running the King's own mother out of France, and conspirators are notorious for betraying their assistants when intrigues go awry. Some of the cardinal's enemies, such as Gaston of Orleans, are as ruthless as he is and are less principled.

JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN IV ALIAS MOLIERE (1622-1673)

"Let us go frankly for things which grip us by the entrails, and never bother to find reasons to stop us enjoying ourselves."

History: Had Jean Poquelin's father been less indulgent, the greatest French comedian of the 17th Century might have wound up making furniture. Jean Poquelin III was royal upholsterer for Louis XII. His son, after five years of law school and a false start in a legal career, joined him in business in 1642. The following year, however, young Jean was swept off his feet by Madeleine Bejart, a middle class beauty who had abandoned respectability to start a theatrical troupe with her brothers and sisters. Dad gave him permission to quit the business; Poquelin left home to live with Bejart and the theater, taking the stage name Moliere.

They leased a Paris tennis court for three years as the *Illustre Theatre* but didn't earn enough to make the 1,900-livre annual rent. The theater went bankrupt in 1645, and Moliere was thrown in prison three times for debt. Surprisingly, Moliere's father bailed him out and helped finance a new start. The troupe left Paris in 1646 for a tour of the southern provinces. Somehow, Moliere and the Bejarts managed to make a living for the next 12 years.

Traveling to Guyenne, the players teamed up with another troupe under the protection of the governor, the duke d'Epemon. By the time the duke left in 1650 Moliere had become manager. He moved the troupe to Languedoc, where his old college buddy the Prince de Conti was governor, set up headquarters in Lyon, and received a pension and official sponsorship. The company thrived, traveling from city to city, and Moliere began writing plays as well as acting around 1655.

Moliere returned to Paris an experienced stage manager with a veteran crew and a modest reputation. Gaston d'Orleans had heard of them, and in October got the troupe an engagement at the Louvre. Their attempt to stage a tragedy by Corneille bombed but Moliere saved the evening by following it with *Le Docteur Amoureux*, a comedy he'd written himself. Louis XIV granted them permission to perform in Paris under Gaston's sponsorship and to share the Petit-Bourbon theater with an Italian troupe. They were paid 1,500 livres to perform Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

The farce *Les Precieuses Ridicules* (1659) made Moliere's reputation. Friends had induced him to poke fun at the Marquise de Rambouillet's over-refined crowd of eggheads. The resulting play was a hit but drew complaints from some of its victims. Nicolas Fouquet, one of the Rambouillet group's sponsors, asked Moliere to tone it down for a special performance for the very people it satirized. Within a year the play had earned troupe at least 3,000 livres, of which Moliere got almost 1,000. He attempted to publish it, but the play was quickly pirated by rival Jean Ribou. Louis XIV enjoyed it so much he had the troupe move into the palace theater, where it remained for the rest of Moliere's career.

Roleplaying: Moliere's greatest triumphs and tragedies occurred after 1661, but during the period covered in this game he's already a rising star. Pocquelin's acting ability comes naturally, and he's carefully honed his expressions, timing and delivery. He's hilarious on stage; off-stage he's harried and tired, eagerly seeking reasons to laugh. Long years of almost starving have taken their toll. Relations with his father are cool. The daily grind of setting up and shouting directions have taken the shine off his love for Madeleine. A good team professionally, they're drifting apart emotionally. Moliere has begun to be attracted by her daughter Armande, 12 years his junior and a member of the company.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

History: Forget, for the duration of your campaign, that William Shakespeare is the most famous writer in the history of English literature. His 37 plays (or 46 depending on which literary critic you believe) and poems were popular but Shakespeare was by no means the wealthiest or best-known author in town. In fact, although he enjoyed theatrical success, he made his real financial killing as a real estate tycoon. Although his early poetry was a success, Shakespeare made no known effort to publish his sonnets and plays; they were published without his permission by literary pirates, the bane of 17th Century authors, particularly scriptwriters.

In 1594 Shakespeare formed a theatrical company, Lord Chamberlain's Players, with Richard Burbage and Will Kemp. Burbage was the current superstar of tragedy while Kemp was the king of low comedy. Their sponsor was an official of the royal household, and the company performed before Queen Elizabeth for the first time in December. The show, incidentally, was Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. The company operated from the Theater in Shoreditch, dismantled it when the ground lease ran out, and built the Globe in Bankside, Southwark, in 1599. In 1603 the company was patronized by King James and changed its name to the King's Men.

When James took the throne, Shakespeare still had half his career to go. For unknown reasons the mood of his plays changed drastically. Until 1608 he wrote tragedies, each one more bitter and pessimistic than the last. Perhaps he grieved over the deaths of his son and father. Perhaps he became disillusioned after the Earl of Essex, a former patron, was arrested and executed for treason. Whatever the reason, this period produced some of his greatest plays. The tone lightened after he became a grandfather, and for the next four years he wrote romances, gentle fantasies where innocence overcame evil. He spent more and more time at home and retired about 1612. In April he contracted a fever after drinking too hard with some of his old show business buddies, died, and was buried in Stratford church.

Roleplaying: Far from the stereotypical starving artist, Shakespeare is a practical businessman who's made it rich through hard work and smart investments, sacrificing his family along the way. He's trying to earn a shilling, not write great literature, and



he's slapped more than one script together on short notice. He enjoys the pleasures of the city but isn't a wild man; the PCs will find him polite and patient (he has to be to manage his various business interests). His loves his kids but his marriage is rotten.

Secretly, Shakespeare is driven by a need for respectability. He's become a workaholic to try to make up for his father's disgrace and his own youthful indiscretions. He signs his name "William Shakespeare, Gentleman." In social and business dealings he makes the most of his company's royal sponsorship.

William Shakespeare's wealth and contacts could prove useful to characters adventuring in London. He's too busy to actively participate in adventures himself but will eagerly listen to the PC's tales (he's always looking for script ideas). Business problems might cause him to turn to them for help; if the characters seek his patronage, they'll find he drives a hard bargain.

CHARLES STUART I (1600-1649)

"I have observed that the devil of rebellion doth commonly turn himself into an angel of reformation... when some men's consciences accuse them for sedition and faction, they stop its mouth with the name and noise of religion."

History: One of the most tragic figures of the 17th Century, Charles I was transformed by suffering from a pompous, inept political novice into a courageous political and religious martyr. He was also one of the most human kings of the period; unlike his often bizarre relatives, Charles was a regular guy who was faithful to his wife, loved his seven kids, and tried to run the family business the way his daddy had taught him to. Maybe his ordinariness was the thing that caused him to fail so spectacularly.

Charles was overshadowed in his youth by his handsome, athletic older brother Henry. He was a sickly child who stuttered badly and had one leg turned outward so that he walked with difficulty. He compensated for his speech problems by practice and for his walking by becoming an excellent horseman. Henry died when Charles was 12. Charles was offended by Parliament's disrespect for his father and decided early on that he wouldn't put up with that sort of nonsense should he become king. He initially distrusted and despised his father's toady George Villiers, but came to regard "Steenie" as a big brother and friend, especially after Villiers tried to help him win the hand of Maria Anna of Spain. Charles grew very fond of the Spanish beauty during his 1623 trip to Madrid and developed an attitude toward Catholicism even more lenient than that of his father. He felt betrayed when the negotiations fell through and returned to England determined to punish Spain, a desire he had the opportunity to put into effect when James died two years later.

Soon after he became king, Charles married lovely Henrietta Maria of France, whom he had met in Paris. Their relationship got off to a rocky start. The 14-year-old French princess was used to getting her own way and came to England determined to single-handedly rescue the Catholics of Britain. She arrived with her own entourage, complete with Catholic priest, and refused to participate in the Anglican wedding ceremony. Charles had to appear in the chapel alone, saving face by announcing that he was symbolically marrying his people. They had a Catholic ceremony in private later. Not only did her new husband refuse to enact policies that would enrage England's rabidly anti-Catholic population, but he spent most of his time with Villiers planning wars against Spain and Germany. This led to spectacular fights between king and queen and teary letters to Henrietta's brother, Louis XIII, which did nothing to ease international tensions. Charles eventually sent her French followers home. She gradually learned to defer to the

King's wishes, and when Charles turned to her for comfort after Villiers' murder, their love and devotion toward one another became proverbial.

In public, Charles was a formal, aloof, rigid person who allied himself with religious hard-liners such as Archbishop William Laud and political hard-liners such as Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Stafford. This at a time when Parliament was clamoring for more authority and Puritans were clamoring for revisions in Anglican worship. Charles, who had learned to dislike Parliaments and Puritans early, refused to compromise but wasn't mean enough to be a true despot. He employed imprisonment without charges or trial and heavy censorship to silence his opponents but wouldn't allow Wentworth to impose ruthless military control as he had in Ireland. He alternated between half-hearted bullying and attempts at appeasement, which infuriated both the Scots and Parliament and led to the civil war. In the meantime, he allowed both Laud and Wentworth to be arrested and executed by Parliament. Once war broke out, Henrietta and the kids were sent to France, both for their safety and to lobby on his behalf.

After his defeat and capture by the New Model Army in 1644, Charles eroded all sides' confidence in him by simultaneously negotiating with the Scots, the Irish, Parliamentary moderates and keeping his promises to none of them. He hoped to get one faction to back him so that he could get firmly on the throne again but his clumsy attempts to employ Machiavellian tactics persuaded Parliament that he was not to be trusted. He tried to invade England with a Scottish army in 1648 but the Scots made a separate agreement with Parliament and handed him over. His enemies in the Long Parliament became convinced that they would never be free from uprisings as long as he lived and put him on trial on nebulous charges of "treason" and "high crimes." With great dignity, Charles refused to acknowledge the authority of the court to try him and argued that in doing so he was defending the people of England from tyranny by a legislative oligarchy.

Realizing he was about to die, he wrote tender letters to his wife and daughters. He also sent lengthy instructions on how to be a king to his eldest son, Charles: forgive his opponents, don't take revenge; be true to the Anglican Church but grant religious toleration and don't favor any one faction; cooperate with Parliament. "It is all I have now left me," he wrote, "a power to forgive those who have deprived me of all." On January 30, 1649, Charles I was beheaded before a crowd of thousands kept at bay by the bristling pikes of Roundhead soldiers. The public, which more than halfway believed in the divine right of kings even if it disliked Charles' taxes, was shocked by the execution. Europe was horrified. Ten days later, a book purporting to be thoughts and feelings Charles had written down shortly before his death was in circulation; this favorable portrait of the King became a best-seller translated into five languages. As life under Parliamentary rule became harsher and harsher, people began to look back on Charles' reign with nostalgia.

Roleplaying: When he's not griping at Parliament, Charles I is a nice guy even if he is something of a stuffed shirt. He's not dependable, though; PCs will find that he breaks his promises easily if he thinks it will give him some sort of political advantage. He's basically insecure, which is why he depends so much on Buckingham and Henrietta. If the characters fail to accomplish what he wants them to do—if they lose a battle or can't get a measure passed in Parliament—Charles will take it personally and can be quite harsh with those he feels have betrayed him. Above all, Charles refuses to compromise: he is king, period, and the Anglican Church is the church, period. PCs who try to get him to make some accommodation with his opponents will quickly fall out of favor.





CHARLES STUART II (1630-1685)

"It must surely have been my fault that I did not come before, for I have met with no one today who did not protest that he always wished for my restoration."

History: Charles was 12 when the civil war started and stayed with his father until the Royalists began to lose. At 14, he was commander of the loyal forces at Bristol but was unable to keep them from fighting among themselves. In 1646, Charles I ordered him to leave the country for his own safety. In exile in Holland, the prince learned of his father's death when another refugee called him "Your Majesty." Charles fled sobbing from the room and later swore vengeance. The newly proclaimed Charles II decided to invade England from Ireland but had to alter his plans when Cromwell defeated rebels there. He was accepted by the Scots as their king after sacrificing one of his supporters to his political enemies as Charles I had done, and invaded England in 1650.

Eight months later his forces were decisively crushed at Worcester by Cromwell's army, and descriptions of the young king were circulated along with orders for his arrest. Parliament offered 1,000 pounds for his capture. With his routes to sympathetic Scotland and Wales blocked, Charles and a small group of followers headed south in hope of reaching the coast and getting a passage to Spain or France. During his six-week escape, he was aided by poor Catholics and rich Anglicans, avoiding Parliamentary troops by hiding in priest holes and trees, disguising himself as a personal servant, riding calmly past soldiers he met on the road. He reached the village of Charmouth on the southwestern coast of England and quietly chartered a ship, but the captain's pro-Puritan wife was

suspicious of passengers who wanted to leave the country so quickly and locked her husband in his room so he couldn't sail! Charles headed east, helped by rumors that he was either traveling with highwaymen in the middle of the country or skulking about the alleys of London, and paid a Shoreham fishing boat captain 60 pounds to take him to France. Soldiers searching for him arrived in the village two hours after he had departed.

In France, Charles lived in poverty with a dwindling number of friends. He ate on credit at taverns because there was no food at home. His mother and sister tried to win him to Catholicism while Presbyterian emissaries sought to make him a Calvinist. He remained firmly Anglican as his father had requested. Once the Fronde settled down, Louis XIV granted him a pension of 6,000 francs. Charles left for the Netherlands when Mazarin began negotiating with Cromwell but his pension was continued. With time, the pension, and a lost cause on his hands, he picked up the French vices of wenching, wine and cynicism, much to Henrietta Maria's displeasure. Between 1646 and 1667 he had 17 mistresses, not including short-term flings.

Parliament's offer to allow him to return in spring 1660 came as a genuine surprise, and Charles quickly agreed to abide by any terms the legislature set. All Europe rejoiced: the monarchs had respected Cromwell but he'd made them very nervous. When Charles set foot on English soil on May 25, it touched off a national party. Hundreds of thousands of people, including the Puritan army, turned out to cheer him. He fully obeyed his late father's advice on government, granting amnesty to everyone except the men who had signed the death warrant for Charles I, giving Parliament a free hand, and tolerating all sects as long as they didn't try to overthrow the government. He had Parliament pay off the



back wages owed to the army, which then disbanded, and prodigally voted compensation for Royalists who had suffered during Cromwell's tenure and for the people who had helped him escape in 1651. (At the time, England was 2 million pounds in debt and had less than 12 pounds in its treasury, but Parliament was too excited to care.) Charles looked around for a wife and selected Catherine of Braganza, a Portuguese princess he married in May 1662.

Roleplaying: Charles II changed radically during his lifetime, and the person PCs meet will depend on when they encounter him. He's a cheerful, happy child who loves his parents and wants to be with his daddy even when the fighting breaks out. Teen-age Charles is a brave, resourceful and impetuous youth. However, he's naive and lacks the military and people-handling skills needed to keep his followers working together. The 30-year-old Charles who becomes king is a cynical, sensuous and smooth French playboy. He's lazy, charming, and will agree to almost anything because he believes in nothing. You darn well better not leave your daughter alone with him or he'll be standing in as your grandson's "godfather" in just a few months.

JAMES STUART AKA JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND AKA JAMES I OF ENGLAND (1566-1625)

"Look not to find the softness of a down pillow in a crown, but remember that it is a thorny piece of stuff and full of continual cares."

History: James I has to be one the strangest figures ever to wear a crown, a bizarre study in contrasts. On the one hand, he was a brilliant scholar and author, a biblical student who dazzled theologians with his knowledge and commissioned the Authorized Version of the Bible. On the other, he was an occult expert, a public homosexual, and a shameless party animal who shocked his English subjects by throwing drunken bashes at the palace. Henry IV of France contemptuously called James "the wisest fool in Christendom," but he began the unification of England and Scotland and managed to keep both nations out of the turmoil brewing on the Continent.

James was born at Edinburgh Castle in the midst of a marital and political maelstrom. His mother and father, Mary Queen of Scots and Henry Stuart, were wrangling over who would wear the pants (and the crown) in the family. Meanwhile, the Scottish nobles were plotting to be rid of their Catholic queen. Stuart was assassinated by nobles who felt he had double-crossed them by backing out on the murder of Mary's secretary David Riccio; there were rumors that Riccio was James' real father, a claim the infuriated James even as an adult. At 13 months of age, James was separated from his mother by nobles who forced her to abdicate in favor of her infant son. Raised by a succession of four regents (all but one were assassinated by rival factions), James grew up always knowing what it was to be king but never knowing what it was to be loved.

James' tutor trained him to revere Calvin and regard his mother as a criminal. The boy took comfort in books and showed his brilliance early. At age 8 he engaged in philosophical discussions and was able to translate a Latin passage of the scriptures into French and then into English. He was also vulnerable to anyone who would show him affection. The first to take advantage of this was Esme Stuart d'Aubigny, a French cousin who arrived on a diplomatic mission when James was 13. The handsome envoy quickly abandoned diplomacy for a personal bid for power when he realized James was crazy about him. D'Aubigny had James' regent ousted and executed and acquired the title of Duke of Lennox. When he started appointing bishops, however, the Presbyterian nobles had had enough. A group of extremists kidnapped the King and forced him to send Esme back to France.

In 1583, at age 17, James actually began ruling on his own after he was rescued by moderate aristocrats. For two years Mary Stuart wrote him, hoping to arrange a joint reign and her return to Scotland. James, who had no sentimentality for a mother he'd never met, stalled and finally decided to throw in his lot with Elizabeth in hopes of inheriting the English throne. He displayed no emotion when he received news of Mary's execution in 1587. Around 1590 he married pretty Anne of Denmark; the pair enjoyed an affectionate and, at first, romantic relationship and produced lots of children.

Most of his Scottish reign was taken up with a battle between Church and State, a forerunner of the problems he would experience in England. James, as king, insisted that he was head of the church and that the bishops he appointed were necessary to oversee ecclesiastical matters as well as to collect money for the crown. Presbyterian ministers and the powerful nobles allied with them believed that the near republican Kirk could manage quite nicely without James peering over its shoulder. They maintained that a Christian king was under the authority of Jesus and was therefore just another member of the congregation, subject to the will of the church. James executed ministers who opposed him, ordered the arrest of preachers who condemned him from the pulpit, sought the support of Catholic lords, and threatened to move his court from Edinburgh. The public responded by writing pamphlets and ballads of protest, refusing to pay tithes to the bishops, and by rioting. Economic blackmail on both sides finally resulted in a truce in 1597; the Kirk was restored but it refrained from political sermons and put up with the bishops.

Englishmen joked about James' paranoia, but it wasn't baseless. Between 1590 and 1595 he had to deal with conspiracies and revolts instigated by Francis Bothwell, a Protestant extremist accused of attempting to use witchcraft to overthrow the King. Escaping from prison, "the wizard earl" almost assassinated James three times before he fled Scotland. Understandably, James grew to fear witches and encouraged their persecution. The King also survived an attempt on his life in 1600 by the Earl of Gowrie. The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 did nothing to make James more secure.

When not butting heads with the Kirk or dodging Bothwell's blade, scholarly James found time to pursue a literary career. In the late 1590s he published poetry, a book on demonology, a translation of the Psalms, a study of the book of Revelation, and two thick volumes expounding his political views. Later he published a pamphlet condemning smoking. These apparently sold well enough. James was able to come out with a "complete works" edition in 1616.

He also found time to engage in a little intrigue with the English. Realizing that his aging cousin couldn't last much longer, James corresponded secretly with nobles, Catholic leaders, the Pope, even Elizabeth's trusted advisor Robert Cecil. He waited, in spite of offers to help him invade, and by the time Elizabeth died in 1603 he was considered the best candidate to replace her. He was 37 when he undertook to rule two kingdoms at once.

Most of James' political accomplishments as king of England are detailed in the History section. In spite of promises to return to Scotland regularly, he did so only once, in 1617. He took the opportunity to hunt and also kept the Presbyterian ministers in line, this time by threatening to withhold raises if they didn't behave.

From 1614 on, James was in increasingly poor health, which helps explain his dependence on Robert Carr, George Villiers and Prince Charles. He went through periods of befuddlement, then would recover for a while and display his old cleverness and political savvy. James may have been senile but some medical experts have suggested that he suffered from the nervous disorder



porphyria, which causes a variety of physical and mental symptoms and allows the victim temporary recovery. The King may not have been the slobbering fool or spineless wimp that his enemies claimed; more likely, Villiers and Charles got away with things because James was too sick to stop them. During his recovery phases he was quite capable of chewing them out.

His infatuation with Carr and Villiers had personal consequences as well as political ones. Esme Stuart was long gone when Anne married the King, and James' sudden attraction to Carr may have been an unpleasant surprise to the Queen. The two grew apart, and when Anne fell sick in 1619 they hadn't lived together for 10 years. James didn't visit her and didn't attend her funeral, although there are some indications that he was saddened by her death.

In March 1625, James fell ill with a moderate fever after coming in from hunting. He was expected to bounce back in a couple days but instead collapsed, unable to speak. Further weakened by dysentery, James died about two weeks later and was buried in the tomb of Henry VII.

Roleplaying: James I is brilliant, boorish, funny, dangerous and pathetic. Adventurers will discover that he can talk knowledgeably on a variety of meaty subjects. James is smart enough to wait out touchy situations and act only when he has a reasonably good chance of achieving his goals. He's fun-loving and has a wry, often bawdy, sense of humor. The King enjoys hunting, riding, golf; he participates in sports even though his legs were twisted by rickets as a child. He and Anne love parties, balls and masques. PCs who please him will find James a generous patron; that's part of the reason he has so much trouble with Parliament!

On the down side, James clings, physically and emotionally, to anyone who shows him any affection. His insecurity grows into paranoia in his old age. His attachment to "Steenie" is truly disgusting; he kisses Villiers in public and refers to him as "my sweet child and wife." He'll argue ferociously with Villiers or Charles then suddenly give in, whining. His temper is hot, and he holds grudges for a long time. Secretive, James won't tell you what he's thinking until he's finished musing it all out; this often makes his decisions a surprise. And he's often hard to understand because of his thick Scots accent, though you'd be wise not to ask him to repeat himself. PCs who get on his bad side had best head for the colonies and take their time coming back.

GEORGE "STEENIE" VILLIERS, DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM (1592-1628)

History: George Villiers was James I's lover, Charles I's best friend. He aspired to be a British Sully but didn't have the brains or skill to carry out his grandiose schemes. Instead, Villiers' bungling drove England to the brink of civil war, and his assassination gave Charles a decade's reprieve.

Villiers was introduced to King James around 1614 by enemies of Robert Carr who hoped a rival would reduce Carr's influence. The plan worked too well. Villiers, who had a wife and kids, yielded to James' homosexual advances in return for titles and money, and became a powerful toady in his own right. Unlike Carr, who was merely greedy, Villiers sought military glory and political clout as well as wealth. He was knighted in 1615, made an earl two years later, and a marquess in 1619. He comforted the King over the deaths of Queen Anne and Prince Henry and was granted control of a number of royal monopolies. He kept an eye out for the future, too. Young Charles initially recognized Villiers for the grasping jerk he was, but Villiers eventually won him over by becoming the sympathetic big brother that Henry had never been.

How did he do it? In public, Villiers was stylish and dashing, with all the good looks, charm and false sincerity of a Douglas

Fairbanks/Errol Flynn hero come to life. People who met him went away praising his modesty and courtesy, and he dressed the part as well. His outrageous, macho antics drew the admiration of the aging king and impressionable prince. In private, Villiers preyed on the loneliness and insecurity of James and Charles. He was a rude, arrogant manipulator who nagged James, then chuckled smugly with Charles about how senile the old boy was. Jealous of anyone who could come between himself and the throne, Villiers even monopolized Charles' time so much that after the King's marriage, wife Henrietta Maria was left out in the cold. James nicknamed Villiers "Steenie" because he allegedly resembled portraits of St. Stephen. The marquess soon became the most unpopular man in England, hated by rich and poor alike, but his enemies could do little because he was in so tight with the King.

Villiers married in 1620. In spite of his shady relationship with the King, he and his wife genuinely loved each other and fretted constantly when they were separated by his business trips. James accepted this competition for his affections and tolerated the armloads of Villiers children, who turned the palace into a noisy playground.

By 1623, Villiers' decided to make his international debut. James already had a career diplomat negotiating a marriage agreement with Spain but George wheedled him into letting Charles and himself go to woo the Infanta Maria Anna in person. The trip was a chance to solidify his influence with the prince and establish a reputation and contacts overseas. The pair, traveling in disguise, swung through Paris and were introduced to Louis XIII and his family without being recognized. Legend has it that he flirted and tried to start an affair with Anne of Austria. This could be dismissed as highly unlikely, except that it sounds like the sort of thing Villiers would do. Once in Madrid, they kept writing James for more jewels and more time. The King promoted Villiers to a duke in anticipation of success. Their efforts eventually failed, and Villiers and Charles returned home in humiliation and immediately pestered James to declare war on Spain.

In addition to promoting war on Spain, Buckingham helped arrange Charles' marriage to French princess Henrietta Maria. He supported Parliament's impeachment of finance minister Lionel Cranfield on bribery and extortion charges because Cranfield had refused to let him milk the treasury. When physicians failed to cure James' fever, Buckingham tried some of his mother's home remedies. Rumors spread that he had worsened the King's condition or even poisoned him. At any rate, James' death didn't hurt Buckingham's career. He spent coronation night in Charles' chambers, apparently outlining plans for the new administration, and arranged matters so that he was enriched while the King was on a tight budget. Charles placed him in charge of the navy. Having learned nothing from the fleet's defeat at Cadiz, Villiers had Charles pass a forced loan of 200,000 pounds for military aid to Huguenot rebels in France. Richelieu declared war on England in 1627. Money ran out, the expedition failed, and Parliament demanded that Villiers be impeached. Charles refused to allow it but was saved from revolt by John Felton.

Felton was a former naval officer who had been wounded. Angry because his pension had been cut off, persuaded by propaganda that Buckingham was behind Charles' Catholic bent, Felton walked 60 miles to fatally stab Villiers with a 10-penny butcher knife on August 23, 1628. Overcome by remorse, he surrendered himself to authorities, apologized to Buckingham's widow, and was executed without the usual torture. Parliament was appeased, and Felton became a folk hero.

Roleplaying: The Duke of Buckingham appears to be the perfect courtier, and PCs may not immediately recognize him as a



bad guy. He certainly managed to fool D'Artagnan. Only as they spend time around him will they see the bullying arrogance and greed that lurks behind his smooth facade. Villiers is the sort of minor villain who is influential enough to be dangerous but incompetent enough that the adventurers can often thwart him and get away with it. He's sneaky and ruthless but when he tries to be clever he usually outsmarts himself. PCs who are soldiers, courtiers, or palace servants may have the misfortune to have Steenie as their primary royal contact or boss. One thing they must not do is joke about Villiers' manhood or his relationship with the King where he can hear about it. Doing so is an indirect insult to the crown, and the duke won't hesitate to remind James or Charles that such an insult is treason. Buckingham is also a permanent fixture of the Stuart administration; if the characters come into open conflict with him, the King will always decide in his favor.

10.2 FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

The following are people who never were but could, and should, have been. They are listed in alphabetical order. Dates given are conjectural.

ARAMIS AKA HENRI D'ARAMTIZ (1603-?)

"I will be an abbe when I wish; but just now I am a Musketeer."

History: Youngest of the Three Musketeers, the man known as Aramis outlived all his companions and was the cause of their undoing. The Chevalier d'Herblay had entered seminary and was at the point of ordination when a scandal forced him to postpone his career plans. Taking the pseudonym Aramis, he enlisted in the Musketeers. Later, he refused to tell even his friend D'Artagnan what had happened, but the periodic love letters he received from Marie Michon, Duchess de Chevreuse, may provide a clue. When D'Artagnan encountered him, he was wavering between a career in the Church or in the Musketeers. He was also juggling two or three mistresses at one time while denying any involvement with the opposite sex. Fellow soldiers (other than The Inseparables) suspected his hypocrisy and teased him unmercifully.

Aramis, clever and ambitious, taught D'Artagnan how to negotiate the treacherous undercurrents of political life. It was he who wrote the discreet letter in 1627 warning England's Lord de Winter that his sister-in-law Milady de Winter was plotting to assassinate the Duke of Buckingham. Aramis entered a Jesuit monastery at Noisy-le-Sec in 1629 but continued his many romantic liaisons in spite of his vows. When the duchess bore him a son in 1633, he abandoned her. Athos, with whom he had stayed in touch, adopted the boy.

Unable to complete a sermon without flirting with pretty girls in the congregation, Aramis was a failure as a priest but a roaring success as a spy. In 1648 he joined Athos in freeing the Duke of Beaufort, a leading Frondeur. The pair was then sent to aid Charles I by England's queen in exile Henrietta Maria. They arrived in time to be captured with the King by Cromwell's army, led by Milady de Winter's son, Mordaunt. With the help of D'Artagnan and Porthos, who had arrived as ambassadors for Mazarin, he and Athos escaped but failed to rescue Charles I from the scaffold. Back in France, Aramis was the only Musketeer to avoid arrest by Mazarin. He gathered a rebel army to break them out and presented the Frondeurs' demands to Mazarin, who had been kidnapped by D'Artagnan.

Roleplaying: Aramis is typical of the carnal clergy of his day. He is careful to fulfill his spiritual duties but takes little thought to the state of his own soul. The Church promises him a lucrative career and, much like any modern junior executive, he's anxious to climb the corporate ladder. Because he's so secretive, even friends such as D'Artagnan have difficulty trusting him fully. They never know what he's really thinking behind his pious smile. He's always excusing himself, saying he has to study or work on his doctrinal thesis yet returns with a feminine handkerchief in his pocket or the hint of perfume on his collar.

At first glance, Aramis appears to be exactly what he claims to be: a quiet, serious-minded bookworm. He refuses to gamble and spices his conversation with Latin phrases. However, his wit is as quick as his sword. He blushes whenever the subject of women comes up, and occasionally a betraying letter or gift slips out of his doublet. His delicate, almost effeminate, good looks make him irresistible to the ladies; his shiny dark hair turns silver with age. PCs encountering Bishop D'Herblay had best be on their guard even though he is one of the "good guys." He'll embroil them in his latest intrigue, will duel anyone who interferes with his romantic exploits, and lie to them with the most angelic look on his face.

ATHOS AKA ARMAND D'ATHOS (1594?-1661)

"I say that love is a lottery in which the person who wins, wins death. You are happy to have lost."

History: Leader of the Three Musketeers, the man who called himself Athos would have been content to lead a quiet life as a provincial lord had it not been for his tragic marriage. At age 25, the Count de la Fere became entranced by the beautiful 16-year-old Anne de Bueil who had recently moved to the nearby village of Berry with her brother, a priest. After a whirlwind courtship, they were married in a ceremony performed by Anne's brother over the objections of the Count's family. For a time they enjoyed a fairy-tale existence at the Count's country estate. One day, however, Anne was thrown from her horse while they were riding. As the Count bent over his dazed bride, her dress pulled away from her shoulder revealing a fleur-de-lis (stylized lily) brand indicating that she had been convicted of theft. His wife was not who she claimed to be! He'd been tricked into marrying a common criminal. Enraged at this betrayal of his love and honor, the Count quickly bound the girl and hung her from a tree. Then, horrified at what he had done, the Count fled, abandoning his name, his title and his lands.

Athos had served in the Musketeers at least three years when he met D'Artagnan in 1625. He, Porthos and Aramis had been friends long enough to earn the nickname "The Inseparables." He grew to regard the young guardsman as a son. One day, while in a drunken stupor, he told D'Artagnan about his marriage but later tried to persuade him that it was a drunkard's delusion. Athos was shocked to learn the following year that Milady de Winter, D'Artagnan's ex-girlfriend, was his wife, alive and serving Richelieu under another name. She got Richelieu's written permission to assassinate D'Artagnan in 1627, but Athos confronted her in her bedroom and forced her to hand the document over at pistol-point. When de Winter arranged the deaths of both the Duke of Buckingham and D'Artagnan's mistress Constance Bonacieux in 1628, Athos hunted her down and bribed a professional executioner to put her to death. D'Artagnan cleared The Inseparables of murder charges by presenting Richelieu with his own warrant of amnesty.

With his wife dead, Athos dropped his secret identity and settled down at the castle of Bragelonne near Blois, a small estate he had inherited. In 1633 he adopted Aramis' bastard son Raoul, a



responsibility which gave him a new sense of purpose in life. Enraged by Mazarin's heavy taxes and domestic policies, Athos helped the Duke de Beaufort escape the Bastille in 1648 to launch the Frondes. Confronted by D'Artagnan and Porthos, the Count swore never to raise his sword against his friends despite their differences. He went with Aramis to England at the request of Henrietta Maria to give all possible aid to Charles I. Captured by Mordaunt, Milady de Winter's son and an agent of Cromwell, Athos managed to escape with the help of D'Artagnan and Porthos, who were in England as Mazarin's agents. Athos planned to tunnel under the floor of the King's room and release him but Mordaunt moved up the execution date by volunteering to act as headsman. The four companions chartered a ship home but Athos' servant Grimaud discovered the hold had been packed with gunpowder by Mordaunt, who planned to light the fuse and flee in the ship's boat. The Musketeers escaped in it instead.

Back in France, Athos asked Queen Anne to release D'Artagnan and Porthos, who had been arrested for disobeying Mazarin's instructions. He was himself arrested for participating in the Fronde. After his rescue and the capture of Mazarin, Athos alone refused to make demands of the cardinal as a condition of his release. With the Fronde over, he entrusted Raoul's military training to D'Artagnan.

Raoul was deeply in love with childhood sweetheart Louise de la Valliere. When she was taken by the King as a mistress in 1661, the young man was inconsolable. He joined the Duke de Beaufort's ill-fated expedition against the Turks despite the protestations of his father and D'Artagnan. Athos, nearly 70, began fading the day his son shipped out and was further discouraged when Aramis and Porthos stopped by for help during their flight from royal troops. He dreamed about his son's death the night the boy was killed in battle, lost his will to live, and died peacefully in bed shortly before D'Artagnan arrived to tell him of Porthos' death.

Roleplaying: Athos is a sad, silent man haunted by his past and clinging desperately to his honor. His friends know only that he avoids women because of some long-ago betrayal. Athos carefully guards his identity, a secret he is willing to kill to keep. The only clues are his lordly manners (he's always lecturing his friends on the finer points of honorable conduct) and an ancient, jewel-encrusted sword that he keeps in his room. Athos has often chosen to go hungry rather than part with the sword. He goes on drinking binges as the anniversary of his marriage approaches (a habit he quit after adopting Raoul) and loves to gamble even though he always loses. Athos is left-handed but can fence equally well with either hand. In his later years, he is dignified but much less grim, delighting in the accomplishments of his son.

All his actions are governed by Athos' chivalric code of honor. He will insist on standing up to face a musket volley rather than squatting safely behind the battlements, haughtily turn his back to soldiers of lesser rank, and will force his friends to walk slowly away from an approaching regiment rather than fleeing. He refuses to retreat during a duel even when gravely wounded and, unlike his companions, won't go through the pockets of a slain opponent. When captured, he will break his rapier rather than surrender it to his foes. At the market, he chooses only top quality goods and pays full price for them without haggling. Above all, he never forgets his rank: Athos will be condescending toward characters of lower social status even though they may have more wealth and own more land than he does. The Count, unlike his companions, will never lie to the PCs and will never take what he considers unfair advantage of them.

CHARLOTTE BACKSON ALIAS LADY CLARICK, COUNTESS DE WINTER (1603?-1628)

History: Diplomat, spy and assassin, Milady de Winter had almost as many aliases as she had lovers. She became D'Artagnan's nemesis and very nearly succeeded in destroying the Three Musketeers. She had the wealth and influence to do so, but her most powerful weapons were her hypnotic beauty and her chameleon-like ability to change her identity.

Charlotte Backson began her criminal career at the tender age of 16, while she was a nun in a convent near Lille. She seduced the young priest who conducted services at the convent. They stole and sold sacred vessels in order to run away together but were caught. She quickly escaped by seducing the jailer's son but was found and branded by the executioner of Lille, the priest's older brother. He let her go, probably because he was acting unofficially. The priest also escaped and they fled to Berry, where she posed as Anne de Bueil, his sister. Backson abandoned him to marry the Count de la Fere, and the priest surrendered to the authorities and hanged himself. How she survived being hanged by Athos is unknown, but she made her way to England where she married the Count de Winter. She bore him a son around 1625. Lord de Winter died of a mysterious disease that came on suddenly and lasted only three hours. However, her husband's 300,000 livre fortune went to her brother-in-law, the Baron de Winter. Deprived of her expected income and facing suspicion that she may have poisoned her husband, Lady de Winter returned to France, leaving her son in the care of a hired nurse.

Her charm, foreign social contacts and willingness to do anything for money made her an attractive candidate for Richelieu's spy network. Milady de Winter soon gained a high-level security clearance and received orders directly from Cardinal Richelieu. In 1625, he had her steal two of a set of diamond studs Queen Anne had secretly given England's Duke of Buckingham; Richelieu hoped to present them to Louis XIII to destroy the Queen's influence over foreign policy. A young palace guardsman, D'Artagnan, stumbled onto the scheme, warned Buckingham, and delivered duplicate studs to the Queen. In revenge, de Winter had D'Artagnan's mistress, Constance Bonacieux, kidnapped but the young woman escaped and went into hiding. D'Artagnan, meanwhile, began courting the Countess in hopes of learning Constance's whereabouts. Instead, he discovered Milady's brand and earned her undying hatred. She sent him poisoned wine and hired soldiers to shoot him in battle, attempts that nearly succeeded.

In 1627, Richelieu sent de Winter to England to either negotiate an end to Buckingham's aid to Huguenot rebels or slay the duke. She took the assignment on the condition that Richelieu pardon her in advance for D'Artagnan's murder. The Three Musketeers overheard the plot, stole the written pardon, and sent a letter of warning to Milady's brother-in-law. She was arrested by naval officers upon her arrival and imprisoned by Lord de Winter, who intended to ship her to the colonies. However, Milady persuaded her jailer, the Puritan zealot John Felton, the Buckingham and Lord de Winter panned to abandon the French Protestants. He helped her escape, knifed Buckingham, and watched Milady's ship sail without him. Upon her arrival in France, de Winter went into hiding in a convent and discovered Constance Bonacieux there. Unable to kill D'Artagnan, she contented herself with poisoning his mistress.

Athos, knowing Milady was immune from prosecution, decided to take matters into his own hands. He gathered Baron de Winter, D'Artagnan, the executioner of Lille, Aramis and Porthos and



hunted his wife down. After each man had recited his own history of Charlotte Backson's crimes, the executioner beheaded her. Terrified, she died without making any defense or final statement.

Her son was stripped of his title and lands by Charles I upon her death and abandoned by the nurse two years later for lack of payment. The Baron de Winter refused to assist the child, and he grew up swearing vengeance upon the men who had killed his mother.

Roleplaying: Charlotte Backson is an accomplished actor, able to raise doubts in people who know she's lying and charm people who know she's out to get them. She has just enough virtue left to be ashamed of her brand; she hides it with clothing and make-up and will kill to keep it secret. Passionate and ruthless, Milady de Winter enjoys seducing and corrupting her victims but goes berserk if she's jilted. Men who have resisted her angelic beauty are rare; those who have done so and lived are rarer still. NPCs will generally be loath to attack her and won't be able to keep her in captivity for long. The GM should warn PCs that going up against her is like going up against James Bond; not only are her skills formidable but she's got Richelieu's carte blanche for almost any atrocity she may wish to commit.

PORTHOS AKA ISSAC DE PORTAU (?-1661)

"We did some fine things in our time, and we gave that poor Cardinal some skeins to unravel."

History: We know less about Porthos than any other Musketeer, ironically because he had no deep, dark secrets to hide! A braggart and shameless social climber, Monsieur du Vallon seems to have adopted the pseudonym Porthos merely for the mystique it gave him. He was a stalwart companion to D'Artagnan and company, notable for his incredible strength and his habit of terrorizing innkeepers rash enough to suggest that he pay for his gargantuan meals.

Nothing about Porthos was subtle. Physically, he was a giant well over 6 feet tall with a booming voice and the strength to hurl casks weighing 80 pounds at opponents. He delighted in expensive, gaudy costumes; if he couldn't afford a gold sword belt, he'd have the front of an ordinary one gilded and claim it was the real thing. Porthos was a natural tall-tale spinner and bragged incessantly about his exploits. He lacked the ability to plan ahead and never fully comprehended the political and legal consequences of his adventures.

Sent to England as emissaries of Mazarin, the two ended up assisting Charles I instead of negotiating with Cromwell and were arrested upon their

return. Porthos tore through the bars of their cell and hauled in a pair of guards so that he and D'Artagnan could switch uniforms (the seams split in his purloined costume). Mazarin, hesitant to displease someone capable of crushing a man's head with one punch, had Du Vallon made a baron as soon as the Fronde was over.

In 1661, Porthos was enjoying life as a Parisian playboy but retained his thirst for adventure even though his knees had weakened with age and his girth had grown with prestige. When Aramis informed him that an imposter was on the throne, he willingly kidnapped and imprisoned Louis XIV, not realizing he'd been tricked until the friends were in exile on Belle-Isle. Cornered in a cavern by royal troops, Porthos hurled a lit cask of gunpowder at his foes. His knees gave out, however, as he turned to leap into the sea. Du Vallon was crushed by the huge slabs the explosion tore from the cavern walls.

Roleplaying: Lord Porthos du Vallon de Bracieux de Pierrefonds (he loves fancy titles) is amiable but quick tempered, and his monumental vanity is easily wounded. He won't, for instance, allow tailor's assistants to measure him for his suits; his entire wardrobe is based on measurements of his chubby valet. He laughs easily but becomes bored just as quickly. When this happens he tries to pick a fight merely to have something to do, a task that has become increasingly difficult as his fame has spread. While not a cold-blooded killer, Porthos feels no remorse when his opponents are slain. If they tried to hurt him or his companions they must have been wicked people, so what's the problem? Adventurers will find him generally trustworthy and somewhat gullible. Porthos is incapable of deceit and doesn't expect it in others.



ALONSO QUIXADA
ALIAS DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA
(1550-1616?)

History: Terror of windmills everywhere and defender of Truth, Justice and the Chivalric Way, Alonso Quixada was a mild-mannered armchair adventurer until he experienced a late mid-life crisis. At age 50 he tired of living in genteel poverty with his niece Antonia, tired of satisfying his craving for excitement by discussing medieval literature with his friends, tired of longing hopelessly after Aldonza Lorenza, the pretty young daughter of his neighbor. He wanted to do something, accomplish great deeds, end his idle life with a bang rather than with a whimper! Modeling himself on his favorite fictional hero, the wandering knight Amadis de Gaul, Quixada polished his great-grandfather's armor, renamed himself and his horse, and set out in search of adventure. As Quixote, he claimed to be inspired by the Lady Dulcinea del Toboso, an idealized image of Quixada's Aldonza. His neighbors thought he was crazy (imagine the middle-aged insurance salesman next door donning a Lone Ranger costume and going out to fight bandits) but some scholars since have wondered if perhaps Don Quixote was the world's first role-player. Whatever his mental stability, Don Quixote de la Mancha actually succeeded in helping some people and won international renown.

On his first adventure, Quixote mistook an inn for a castle and had the bemused proprietor officially dub him a knight. He got beat up by merchants when he attacked their mule train and was carried home by a neighbor. His concerned friends burned his many books on chivalry and endeavored to keep him in bed but Quixada escaped and persuaded the peasant Sancho Panza to be his squire by promising him the governorship of an island. Don Quixote attacked a windmill, saying it was a giant. He scattered a flock of sheep, claiming it was an army, stole a barber's shaving basin, declaring that it was a magic helmet, and released a chain gang of galley slaves, who ungratefully pelted him with rocks when he demanded that they tell Lady Dulcinea of his deed. During his wanderings Don Quixote also reunited two pairs of estranged lovers. He was about to be arrested by police for robbing the barber and freeing the convicts but Quixada's friends arrived and persuaded the authorities to allow them to take him home. They did so by putting him into a makeshift cage while he slept and telling him he had been enchanted by an evil sorcerer.

Don Quixote might have remained a quiet embarrassment to his family but for an account of his exploits published by Cid Hamet Benengali (whom the author Cervantes claimed was his primary source). When he escaped again one month later, Don Quixote had become something of a folk hero. Antonia and Quixada's housekeeper begged Samson Carrasco, a student with designs on Antonia, to stop him. Carrasco followed Quixote and, disguising himself as the Knight of Mirrors, challenged him to a duel. Beaten, Carrasco vowed to end Quixote's career.

Meanwhile, Don Quixote stared down a pair of lions being taken to the King, enabled a girl being forced into marriage to wed the

man she loved, and became the guest of a real duke and duchess at a real castle who had heard of him and decided to have fun at his expense. They subjected Quixote and Sancho to numerous practical jokes but were stunned when their servant, Donna Rodriguez, asked the knight to defend the honor of her 16-year-old daughter, who had been seduced by a young man who had since refused to marry her. After finding the girl a husband, Quixote traveled to Barcelona, where he was welcomed as a celebrity. There, however, he was challenged and defeated by the Knight of the White Moon, Samson Carrasco again in disguise. Carrasco refused Quixote's pleas to slay him and instead ordered him to go home and give up arms for a year. At home, Quixote's discouragement and his inability to locate a real Dulcinea destroyed his will to live. He sickened and died, renouncing knighthood and instructing Antonia to marry a man with no knowledge of chivalry.

Roleplaying: Modern interpreters have seen Don Quixote as a tragic hero because of his dauntlessness in the face of humiliation and cruelty. This view fails to take into account that Cervantes was writing humor, not a defense of the human imagination. Player-characters who encounter Don Quixote and Sancho Panza can get a more accurate feel for the pair if they imagine Quixote as Daffy Duck and Sancho as Porky Pig. Any encounter with Don Quixote should have the frantic pace of a Warner Brothers cartoon and the slapstick pratfalls of a Three Stooges romp. Like Daffy Duck or Moe Howard, Don Quixote never gets seriously hurt, always gets up to ride again, is persistent to the point of masochism, and sometimes succeeds in spite of himself.

Don Quixote de la Mancha has the courage of a lion, the virtue of a saint, the stubbornness of Sancho's mule, and the luck of Wile E. Coyote. His problem isn't so much incompetence as it is overconfidence. In single combat he's actually quite dangerous. He could succeed if he would tackle smaller goals but he insists on biting off more than he can chew. Quixote rarely challenges fewer than 10 opponents at a time, and when there are no human adversaries available he'll take on stampeding herds of cattle or swine.

If the PCs meet him on the road, he'll demand that they state their names and their business and will attempt to impede their progress until they do so. Don Quixote will also require them to agree that his Dulcinea is the most beautiful woman in the world and will become furious if they refuse, even if they protest that they've never seen her. When he's not trying to run them through with his lance, however, the PCs will find him intelligent, learned, courteous and honorable. He'll even offer to pay for the damage he's caused. If Quixote defeats adventurers in combat or if they decide to humor him, he'll release them if they promise to submit themselves to Lady Dulcinea of Toboso. And he'll believe them; Quixote is so honest it never occurs to him that someone might lie to him. His madness, if that's what it is, is curiously selective: Don Quixote may take innkeepers for castle lords and windmills for giants, but if one of the PCs points out that "gleaming castle" on the hill, Quixote will replay, "Don't be stupid. Anyone can see that it is an inn."



10.3 NPC STATS

	Melee		Firearm	AT													
	Hits	OB	OB	(DB)	Lvl	Profession	St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re	
Historical Figures																	
Count Gondomar	85	50 rapier	—	5(5)	7	Diplomat	52	76	90	55	58	58	70	51	76	73	
Skills: Admin. 65; Diplomacy 65; Duping 65; English, spoken and literacy lvl 8; Lipreading 55; Perception 60; Spanish literacy lvl 10; Stalk/Hide 60																	
Anne of Austria	45	20dagger	—	1(0)	5	No Profession	49	56	72	70	73	56	58	71	75	77	
Skills: Admin. 55; Bribery 60; Dance 55; Diplomacy 60; French spoken and literacy lvl 10; Gambling 55; Leadership 55; Music 55; Spanish literacy 10																	
d'Artagnan	120	100 rapier	70 musket	1(80)	10	Duelist	78	100	75	55	58	63	100	55	77	74	
Skills: Acrobatics 65; Adrenal Defense 50; Adrenal Moves (speed) 60; Climbing 65; Diplomacy 40; Disarm, Armed 75; Quick Draw 65; Riding 65; Seduction 60; Stalk/Hide 40; Tumbling 65																	
Cyrano de Bergerac	95	60 rapier	—	1(60)	8	Duelist	65	90	75	55	55	58	90	55	75	75	
Skills: Acting 60; Acrobatics 65; Adrenal Defense 50; Adrenal Moves (strength) 45; Duping 60; Mimicry 55; Playwright 55; Quick Draw 65; Streetwise 60																	
Duke of Sully	48	40 rapier	—	1(0)	3	Noble de Robe	52	56	90	55	55	54	58	53	76	79	
Skills: Accounting 55; Admin. 65; Duping 65; Economics 55; French literacy lvl 8; Latin, spoken&literacy lvl 8; Leadership 55; Propag. 65; Riding 40																	
Henry IV	105	90 Lsword	75 pistol	17(0)	9	Fighter	85	76	100	59	54	63	75	58	74	73	
Skills: Animal Train. 40; Foraging 40; Leadership 65; Maneuvering in Plate 90; Public Speaking 65; Riding 60; Seduction 65; Tactics 60; Tracking 60																	
Louis XIII	57	40 rapier	40 rifle	1(0)	4	No Profession	65	56	78	65	64	50	59	63	57	58	
Skills: Administration 60; Cookery 55; Diplomacy 60; Gambling 40; Hunting 55; Public Speaking 40; Riding 55; Tactics 40; Tracking 55																	
Louis XIV	79	50 Ssword	50 musket	18(0)	7	No Profession	65	70	78	71	70	58	70	69	57	53	
Skills: Acting 60; Athletic Games 55; Dancing 55; Diplomacy 60; French literacy lvl 8; Gambling 55; Hunting 55; Leadership 55; Plate Armor Maneuvering 75; Public Speaking 60; Riding 60; Seduction 60; Tactics 55																	
Oliver Cromwell	135	100 Bsword	90 carbine	18(10)	10	Fighter	94	94	73	90	90	63	91	97	76	75	
Skills: Administration 60; Adrenal Moves (speed) 85; Animal Training 40; Duping 60; English Literacy 8; Later spoken ad literacy 8; Leadership 70; Legal Procedure 55; Plate Armor Maneuvering 90; Public Speaking 60; Riding 65; Tactics 70																	
Count Olivares	47	40 rapier	—	1(0)	7	No Profession	50	60	90	70	70	58	60	70	90	90	
Skills: Administration 65; Bribery 65; Diplomacy 65; French spoken and literacy lvl 8; Interrogation 65; Italian spoken and literacy lvl 8; Leadership 65; Public Speaking 40; Riding 55; Spanish literacy lvl 10; Streetwise 65; Tactics 65; Trading 65																	
Cardinal Mazarin	84	50 rapier	50 carbine	1(10)	8	Diplomat	50	90	94	73	69	58	71	78	76	75	
Skills: Acting 65; Administration 65; Appraisal (art) 55; Bribery 65; Diplomacy 65; Duping 65; French spoken and literacy lvl 10; German spoken and literacy lvl 10; Italian literacy lvl 10; Music 55; Riding 40; Seduction 65; Spanish spoken and literacy lvl 10																	
Marie de Medici	32	—	15 pistol	1(0)	3	No Profession	67	55	75	74	71	56	59	72	58	57	
Skills: Diplomacy 60; Duping 60; French spoken and literacy lvl 8; Italian literacy lvl 10; Perception 55; Riding 40																	
Gaston d'Orleans	47	40 saber	40 pistol	5(5)	3	Cavalier	51	75	79	52	57	53	55	50	76	79	
Skills: Diplomacy 60; Duping 60; Propaganda 60; Public Speaking 60; Riding 40; Tactics 40																	
Anne Marie d'Orleans	81	90 lance,saber	80 carbine	1(40)	7	Fighter	98	75	97	58	55	90	79	58	60	59	
Skills: Adrenal Defense 40; Adrenal Moves (speed) 55; Diplomacy 65; Disguise 55; Duping 65; French literacy lvl 10; Leadership 60; Public Speaking 65; Riding 60; Rigid Leather Armor Maneuvering 45; Stalk/Hide 60; Tactics 55; Tumbling 60																	
Cardinal Richelieu	98	50 rapier	50 pistol	1(50)	12	No Profession	68	79	102	101	100	58	75	100	100	101	
Skills: Acting 70; Administration 100; Adrenal Defense 50; Bribery 70; Diplomacy 95; Duping 70; English spoken lvl 10, literacy lvl 8; French literacy lvl 10; Interrogation 70; Italian spoken lvl 10, literacy lvl 8; Leadership 90; Plate Armor Maneuvering 85; Playwright 55; Propaganda 120; Public Speaking 70; Riding 60; Seduction 70; Spanish spoken lvl 10, literacy lvl 8; Tactics 70																	
Moliere	67	45 rapier	—	1(5)	7	Actor/Poet	65	76	100	74	77	58	84	79	99	79	
Skills: Acting 70; Disguise 55; French literacy lvl 6; Italian spoken and literacy lvl 6; Italian Comedy 55; Latin spoken and literacy lvl 6; Leadership 55; Mimicry 65; Playwright 70; Public Speaking 65; Streetwise 55																	
William Shakespeare	42	30 rapier	—	1(0)	5	Actor/Poet	51	59	65	94	90	53	57	93	98	99	
Skills: Acting 40; Administration 60; Appraisal (real estate) 55; Bribery 60; Classical Drama 55; Diplomacy 60; English literacy lvl 10; Latin spoken and literacy lvl 3; Leadership 55; Playwright 70; Trading 60																	
Charles I	49	50 rapier	50 musket	—	6	No Profession	77	75	76	59	51	54	75	50	74	78	
Skills: Administration 60; Diplomacy 60; English spoken and literacy lvl 10; French spoken lvl 4; Hunting 55; Leadership 55; Public Speaking 60; Riding 60; Tactics 60																	
Charles II	55	50 rapier	—	1(5)	7	No Profession	64	75	77	61	49	63	86	60	53	51	
Skills: Acting 40; Diplomacy 60; Disguise 55; Dutch spoken lvl 4; English spoken and literacy lvl 8; French spoken and literacy lvl 8; Gambling 55; Leadership 60; Riding 40; Seduction 65; Stalk/Hide 60																	
James I	67	—	40 musket	1(0)	8	Scholar	57	60	87	95	92	50	62	99	101	100	
Skills: Administration 60; Bribery 60; Diplomacy 60; Duping 60; English, French, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish spoken and literacy lvl 8; Public Speaking 60; Riding 55; Scots spoken and literacy lvl 10; Theology 55; Tracking 75; Writing 65																	
Duke of Buckingham	87	50 rapier & main gauche	—	1(45)	7	Duelist	79	75	74	61	50	58	84	56	65	69	
Skills: Acrobatics 60; Administration 60; Adrenal Defense 45; Climbing 60; Diplomacy 60; English spoken and literacy lvl 10; French spoken lvl 4; Riding 60; Seduction 60; Spanish spoken lvl 4; Tactics 40; Tumbling 60																	



	Melee		Firearm	AT												
	Hits	OB	OB	(DB)	Lvl	Profession	St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
Fictional Characters																
Aramis	98	100 rapier	90 pistol	1(60)	10	Duelist	71	89	75	54	57	60	75	61	94	96
Skills: Administration 60; Adrenal Defense 60; Animal Training 40; Bribery 60; Diplomacy 60; English spoken and literacy lvl 6; French spoken and literacy lvl 10; Interrogation 60; Italian spoken and literacy lvl 8; Latin spoken and literacy lvl 8; Perception 65; Riding 60; Seduction 60; Spanish spoken and literacy lvl 8; Stalk/Hide 65; Tactics 40; Trickery 60																
Athos	130	90 rapier	70 pistol	17(10)	10	Fighter	90	85	100	71	77	94	85	70	76	73
Skills: Adrenal Moves (speed) 75; Animal Training 55; Diplomacy 65; Drug Tolerance (Alcohol) 55; English spoken lvl 8; French Literacy lvl 8; Gambling 40; Latin Literacy lvl 4; Leadership 60; Perception 60; Maneuvering in Plate 75; Riding 60; Smithing (gunsmith) 40; Tactics 60; Tumbling 60																
Milady de Winter	97	110 dagger,garotte		1(10)	13	Assassin	65	90	115	70	70	58	90	70	75	75
Skills: Acting 75; Administration 70; Bribery 70; Diplomacy 70; Duping 70; English spoken and literacy lvl 10; French spoken and literacy lvl 10; Martial Arts lvl 1; Quick Draw 65; Riding 40; Seduction 90; Streetwise 70; Toxicology 65; Trickery 65																
Porthos	124	110 rapier	75 pistol	5(10)	10	Fighter	102	93	91	56	50	97	69	49	43	42
Skills: Adrenal Move (strength) 85; Animal Trainer 40; Appraisal (fine foods) 55; Diplomacy 40; Martial Arts lvl 1; Riding 60; Tactics 40																
Don Quixote	89	80 Bsword,lance		19(30s)	7	Cavalier	65	82	65	78	68	63	75	70	49	51
Skills: Chivalric Romances 55; French spoken lvl 4; Latin spoken and literacy lvl 8; Plate Armor Maneuvering 100; Public Speaking 60; Riding 60; Smithing 55; Spanish literacy lvl 6; Tumbling 40																
Sancho Panza	38	25 Ssword	—	1(0)	2	Farmer	51	59	33	50	61	58	54	61	75	70
Skills: Cookery 55; First Aid 60; Foraging 60; Riding 40; Streetwise 55																
Key: Ssword = Small Sword or Short Sword; Lsword = Longsword; Bsword = Broadsword; rap & MGa = Rapier and Main Gauche																
Note: Skills shown are the most notable for the character.																



11.0 THE SETTING

11.1 FRANCE

France is Europe's largest and most populous nation-state. Its 17 million people enjoy a variety of climates, from balmy Mediterranean beaches to icy glacier-packed mountains. Most of them live on the broad northern plain which contains the country's richest farmland. Regional differences are pronounced. Besides Paris, major cities include Lyons, Marseilles, Rouen, Le Havre and Orleans. France is separated from England by La Manche (the English Channel) at a distance of only 22 miles at nearest point. Border disputes with neighbors Spain, Italy and Germany are ongoing; the kings and cardinals of France use the Thirty Years War as an excuse to seize Rousillon in the south and begin the conquest of French Comte and Lorraine to the east.

GEOGRAPHY (11.1.1)

Even though it contains five mountain ranges, France has more farmland than any other nation in Europe. A vast, fertile plain curves west from northern France to the southwest coast. The northern plain surrounding Paris is especially productive, the nation's breadbasket, while the southwestern plain is grape and wine country. The Brittany peninsula in the extreme west is dominated by rocky hills, dairy farms and orchards. Mountains screen the country from its enemies. The Pyrenees separate France from Spain in the south. On France's eastern border, it is separated from the Holy Roman Empire by the Vosges, from Switzerland by the Jura Mountains, and from Italy by the Alps. Another huge range, the Massif Central, rises in south-central France, separated from the Pyrenees and the Alps by long, narrow valleys. Forests cover these mountainous areas, and glaciers creep across the Alps. Giant sand dunes are spreading along the southwestern plains. France has four major rivers. The Seine wriggles northwest across the northern plains and is navigable for most of its length. The Loire curves west from the Massif Central and reaches the sea to the south of Brittany. The Rhone flows from the the Jura Mountains to the Gulf of Lions, through the balmy Mediterranean valley between the Alps and the Massif Central. And the Garonne stretches from between the Massif Central and the Pyrenees to the southwest coast.

PARIS (11.1.2)

Supposedly founded by King Priam after the destruction of Troy, Paris is an ancient city that has survived occupation by the Romans, attacks by the Vikings and the English, the rebellions that seems ingrained in the French character, and severe annual winter flooding of the Seine. Its patron is Saint Genevieve, a 5th Century nun who successfully defended the city both from the Huns and the Franks. The French capital is divided into 16 quarters and has a population of 400,000. The King's Provost is its chief judicial and police official but it also has a city council. Paris is the nation's intellectual and cultural leader as well as it's political center, and its inhabitants tend to be rather smug and arrogant toward people from the provinces, whom they regard as ignorant rubes. The University of Paris has trained such notables as the poet Dante, Society of Jesus founder Ignatius Loyola and reformer John Calvin; before the Reformation it was the theological center of Europe.

However, one-tenth of the city's population consists of beggars, and its 15,000 to 20,000 prostitutes are world famous. In an age of unpaved, filthy streets, Paris is noted for its particularly loathsome thoroughfares; they would be hazardous even if they weren't crammed with lackeys forcing paths for their masters' carriages and footpads stalking their next victims. The streets do have colorful and descriptive names: "The Street Where God Was Boiled," "The Street of the Fishing Cat," "The Street Where Whores Stroll." There are no street signs; they're named informally by the people who live there. The only numbered houses are on the Pont Notre Dame. Finding your way around can be difficult if you're not from the neighborhood.

Paris is roughly laid out in a series of concentric ovals, the result of expansion over the centuries, and is bisected east to west by the Seine. In general, the city's commercial district is on the Right (north) Bank of the river, its academic district on the Left (south) Bank. Political and religious administration is concentrated on the Ile de la Cite in the middle of the Seine. Paris is surrounded by a medieval wall; sections of previous walls are scattered haphazardly throughout the interior. Like any modern city, Paris has suburbs along the river to the east and west where the rich build chateaus for themselves and their lovers and religious orders establish quiet retreats.

SITES AROUND PARIS

Grenelle: This small village southwest of the city is a favorite spot for the rich to tryst with the poor. Characters who don't want it known that they're dating someone of a different social status might want to meet their romantic interest at the windmill here.

The Palace Complex: Consisting of the Louvre and le Tuileries downstream, these magnificent buildings on the Right Bank make up the largest palace in the world. They are in a constant state of expansion and remodelling from the reign of Henry IV until 1680, when Louis XIV moves into Versailles. Most of the royal family and their close relatives live here, although Louis XIII lives apart from Anne of Austria at the Palais Royal, just north of the Louvre. Louis XIV lives at the Palais Royal until he turns 14.

Monastery des Petits Augustins: Queen Margot lives here from 1606 until her death. Her palace, on the Left Bank, houses various religious orders during her stay (she gets bored with one group, kicks them out, and invites another). Louis XIII sells it after her death to pay off her debts.

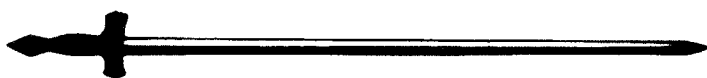
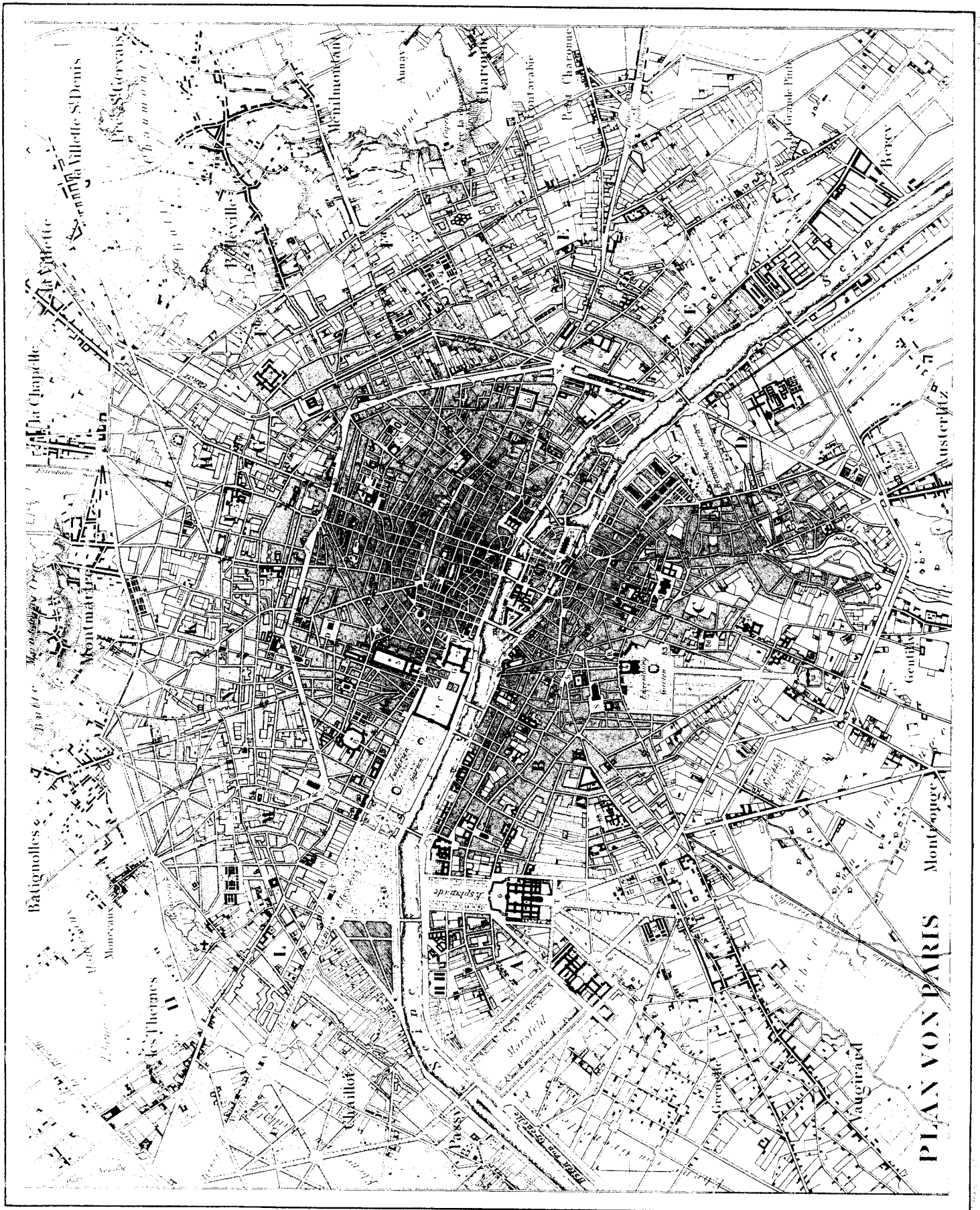
Palais de l'Institut: Home of the Academy Francoise, founded 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu, upstream from Queen Margot's palace. An informal literary club was transformed into an quasi-governmental agency to determine correct usage of the French language, compile a French dictionary, and censure authors and playwrights who don't uphold national ideals. It consists of 40 Immortals who oversee five academies dealing with various areas of learning. The Immortals meet in secret every Thursday. Being named an Immortal is France's highest literary honor, although some of the best writers have been blackballed because their work isn't politically correct.

Hotel des Mousquetaires: On the rue de L'Arbre-Sec. Before Louis XIV's majority this is where many of the King's Musketeers, including d'Artagnan, are quartered.

Les Halles: The largest market in Paris, it essentially feeds the city. Grocers have been hawking their wares here since the year 1135.

Grand-Chatelet/Pont Au Change: The Grand-Chatelet is a fort defending the Pont Au Change, which leads from the Ile de la Cite to the Right Bank. It is the headquarters for the King's Provost and the police, housing





the courts of common justice and La Morge, where the police study the faces of criminals so they will recognize them on the street and where anonymous corpses are displayed three days for identification. It also houses the most horrible prison in Paris. The bridge is much more pleasant, featuring shops that deal in perfumes, hats, jewels and curios. It is named for the goldsmiths and jewelers who have operated there since the Middle Ages. There is a flower market there Wednesday and Saturday mornings and a bird market on Sundays.

Petit Chatelet/Petit Pont: Opposite the Grand Chatelet, guarding the bridge to the Left Bank, the fort houses the city jail. The Petit Pont is a toll bridge often closed to keep rowdy Latin Quarter students on their own side of the river. Passage is free to the owners of performing monkeys. The bridge's merchants are proverbial for their foul language.

Ile de la Cite: The site of the original Gaullic town which grew into Paris, the Ile is the city's administrative center and has some paved streets. The Cathedral of Notre Dame, begun in 1163, dominates the island, traditionally a place of sanctuary. The homeless can sleep here, slaves are freed here, and captured battle standards and curiosities from foreign lands are displayed in the church. The Palais de Justice was originally the royal palace but now houses the higher courts. La Sainte-Chapelle, inside the palace courtyard, supposedly houses Christ's crown of thorns and pieces of the True Cross. The Conciergerie is a 14th Century fort whose dungeons are notorious for filth, plague and crowding.

Hotel de Ville: Paris' city hall, on the Right Bank near the Grand Chatelet. The city council meets here, and royal executions take place in the courtyard in front of it, the place de Greve. Until 1641, the riverbank to the immediate west is a slaughtering ground for cattle bound for the Chatelet butcher's market.

Chateau de la Tournele: On the Left Bank opposite the Ile St. Louis, this tower is the launching place for convicts sentenced to the galleys from 1632 onward. Vincent de Paul persuaded the king to keep them here instead of in the dungeons, and his monks supply the convicts with food and medicine. The slaves are shipped out each May and August, bound for Brest or the Mediterranean.

The Latin Quarter: Paris' academic and ecclesiastic stronghold is a city within a city, under the jurisdiction of the University of Paris and the Pope. The Provost is required to come to the University's offices at the Church of St.-Julien-le-Pauvre every two years to swear to respect and enforce its privileges. The inhabitants speak Latin and are under church law. It's been a center of higher learning since the 12th Century, and the College de Sorbonne is one of the finest theological schools in Europe. The University controls the surrounding parchment makers, copyists, booksellers and illuminators. If it's one of the brightest spots in France, the Latin Quarter is also one of the darkest. Students are notorious for hard drinking and trouble making. The galley slaves depart from its shores. And the tangled web of unsavory streets adjacent to the river is site of public executions, Hueguenot burnings and the headquarters of the beggars' and robbers' guilds. Each guild has its own jargon, and individuals who are not members of the Confrerie can be spotted instantly.

Place Royal: Henry IV had this model housing development built in Le Marais, "The Marsh," one of the oldest parts of the city. The square, containing four-story houses with ground floor shops, was intended to provide low income housing and breathing room for the poor. After Henry's death, it instead becomes the home of political and social celebrities such as Cardinal Richelieu, playwrights Corneille and Moliere and high society call girl Ninon de Lenclos. Wealthy social climbers quickly build fancy houses nearby.

Rue des Francs-Bourgeois/Rue des Ecouffles: Located within The Marsh, these streets contain hostels for the poor and the offices of moneylenders. The rue des Ecouffles (the Street of the Hawks) is especially noted for its loan sharks.

The Arsenal: Established in 1550 on the Right Bank, this is where the army's cannon are forged and where its gunpowder is made until 1634. It also makes bronze statuary.

La Salpetriere: Located in an empty stretch of farmland on the Left Bank across the Seine from the Arsenal. The army's gunpowder production is

moved here between 1634 and 1648 after a 1562 explosion at the Arsenal causes public outcry. The building is idle during the Frondes but Louis IV reopens it as a shelter for indigent women in 1656 as part of his Hospital-General program. In reality a mandatory work center, La Salpetriere opens with 1,024 inmates, including 192 children. Girls stay with their mothers until age 14. They are then trained as weavers and seamstresses for six years and sent out to jobs at age 20.

La Bastille: This 14th Century fortress was built to protect Paris' easternmost gate, the Porte St. Antoine. A moated monstrosity with eight 80-foot towers, it serves as a royal prison for those who have displeased the king or have been placed in protective custody. In spite of its bulk, it has room for only 50 prisoners, and accommodations are pretty cushy compared to the other prisons in town. It is located on the Right Bank in a blue-collar neighborhood. In 1662, the city's first public bus departs from in front of the fort, a service dreamed up by Blaise Pascal.

THE PROVINCES (11.1.3)

Normandy was an independent Viking kingdom from the 10th to the 13th Centuries and was controlled by the English in the 15th Century during the Hundred Years War. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake at its capital, Rouen, in 1431. In the 17th Century, its inhabitants are more interested in agriculture than military heroics. They produce camembert cheese, butter, hard cider, and calvados, a powerful apple brandy. Normans tend to be taller and calmer of temperament than other Frenchmen and often have blond hair and blue eyes. Military recruits from Normandy are sometimes accused of cowardice by their peers because they are less quick to pick fights and take offense.

Rouen and Le Havre act as the gateways to Paris, the latter being the largest port in the nation. Le Harve, located in the desolate marshes of the Seine estuary, was built in the late 16th Century to replace Honfleur, a famous medieval port on the opposite bank whose business is dwindling because shifting sandbars are clogging its harbor with silt. However, Honfleur is a launching point for French voyages of discovery, frequented by Samuel de Champlain and other notable explorers. On a rocky island off the coast is the magnificent abbey/fortress Mont St-Michel. The needle-like church is visible for miles and was the home of William the Conqueror before he invaded England.

Caudebec-en-Caux, a small village in the treacherous tidal marshes, is notable for the tidal bore that occurs there three times a year. On these occasions, a towering wall of water sweeps along the river at 9 mph twice a day for three consecutive days.

Rouen, 80 miles east of Le Harve, is also a major port because ships can reach it without difficulty. It was formerly the capital of the Viking kingdom. Nearby is la cote des deux amants (the hill of the lovers). According to legend, a poor squire named Raoul saved a cruel knight, Rulph, from a wild boar. As a reward, Raoul asked to marry the knight's beautiful but hefty daughter, Calixte. Furious but bound to keep his word, Rulph said he would consent if the squire could carry his corpulent daughter to the top of the hill without stopping and without dropping her. Raoul succeeded but died of a heart attack as he reached the top. Distraught, Calixte threw herself off the hill into the Seine.

Brittany is a remote, wildly beautiful peninsula whose independent Breton peasants are descended from Celtic refugees who settled here around 500 A.D. They speak Breizh, a language related to Irish and Welsh, and maintain that it was here that King Arthur sought the Holy Grail. Most of them fish for a living, although villagers on the northern coast are known to light bonfires on the shore to lure ships onto the rocks so they can salvage the wrecks. The small islands and coastal villages also harbor pirates. The region came under royal control in 1532; it is administered



from Nantes. Physically, Brittany is a place of lonely, sea-swept cliffs, wind-sculpted boulders, and wooded hills, liberally peppered with ancient stone monuments. Places of interest include:

Isle of the Priestesses: West of Brest, this island's matriarchal society is the source of numerous sailor's yarns. Basically, the women run things because their men are literally always gone fishing.

Alignements de Menec: at Carnac more than 1,000 standing stones make up a 2 kilometer line for purposes known only to their prehistoric architect. There are also ancient burial mounds in the area.

Belle-Ile: South of the Brittany peninsula, this island features high cliffs, thick underbrush and a seaside grotto. Two of the Three Musketeers, Aramis and Porthos, make their last stand here, defeating royal marines though outnumbered 20 to 1.

The Loire Valley, famed for its castles, hunting lodges and fine white wines, consists of three provinces: Orleanais, Touraine and Angou. The river was a favorite medieval trade route, and a lot of French history has happened here. Joan of Arc freed Orleans from the English in 1429 and the Grand Mademoiselle will "liberate" it from royal control in 1653. At the secret passage filled Chateau de Blois, Henry IV's predecessor had two of his rivals assassinated in 1588. South of town is the chateau at Chambord, a royal hunting lodge with 440 rooms, 75 staircases, surrounded by a 20 mile long wall. Lucky PCs might be invited to join the king there. Leonardo da Vinci spent his last years designing the Chateau d'Amboise and is buried there. Who knows what secrets the Renaissance genius may have hidden in its walls? The city of Saumur was a Protestant stronghold during the wars of religion. Chinon features a village of caves carved into the sides of a mountain.

Poitou is known for its fine cuisine: duck, sea food, blended brandies such as cognac (made, where else, at Cognac), stuffed snails, goat cheese. The region is a Huguenot stronghold until the 1620s, when Cardinal Richelieu persuades Louis XIII to break promises made to them by his father. The Protestants resist and hole up in the fortified port of La Rochelle, where they are eventually starved into submission despite English intervention. The city's harbor is protected by a huge chain that prevents enemy warships from entering. Rochefort, south of La Rochelle, later becomes a major French naval center.

Guyenne is an ancient part of France crisscrossed by rivers and pocked by numerous caves. A number of towns and villages are built into the sides of cliffs. It conceals truffles, undiscovered prehistoric cave paintings, and, some say, the entrance to hell. The cave paintings will remain unknown for another 250 years unless the PCs stumble onto them. Places of interest include:

Gouffre de Padirac: Northeast of Rocamadour, this huge sinkhole has never been explored because the locals maintain that it is the entrance to hell. Whether the devil is in residence or not, it would make an eerie adventure setting for the PCs. The cavern is 100 meters deep and contains a subterranean river.

Cahors: Surrounded on three sides by the Lot River, this town is protected by three towers on the Pont Valentre. The central tower keeps collapsing, however. In the 14th Century, its builder supposedly bargained with the devil to speed its construction but used trickery to get out of the contract. The devil is alleged to topple the tower in revenge.

Mountainous Gascony is the home territory of heroes such as Henry IV and d'Artagnan, and its inhabitants boast of being smooth talkers and fierce fighters. These are abilities they need, living on the border with Spain. It is also the home territory of the mysterious Basques, who live on both sides of the Pyrenees and defy the authority of both French and Spanish kings. People here are fond of drinking, dancing, bright colors, bullfighting, and pelote, a form of bare-handed jai alai. The mountains harbor all sorts of wildlife, including antelope.

Bayonne is a major port and military installation, and the bayonet was invented here around 1640. Female PCs beware: quarrelsome women in Bayonne are often sentenced to be dipped in the Nime River until their tempers cool. St-Jean-de-Luz, another port, is the home base for French privateers against the English. Louis XIV will come here to make peace with Spain and to marry Marie-Therese. Pau, capital of Bearn (Navarre), is the birthplace of Henry IV. Bearn, surrounded on three sides by Gascony, is a separate kingdom until Louis XIII annexes it. Auch is d'Artagnan's birthplace.

Languedoc and adjacent Provence are hotbeds of Protestantism. When Louis XIII seeks to subdue the Huguenots in the 1620s, Montalban is the last Languedoc stronghold to be taken, in 1629. Les Baux, in Provence, is destroyed in 1632. (Bauxite, or aluminum ore, was first discovered there in 1822.) The region exhibits Spanish influence in its language, architecture and cooking. The medieval language of the troubadours, Occitan, survives in the south despite Parisian attempts to eradicate it. Both provinces were part of the Roman Empire and have classical ruins.

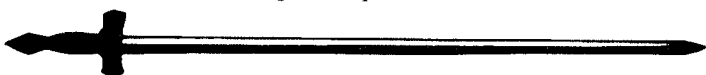
Roquefort cheese is made at Roquefort-sur-Soulzon in Languedoc. Nimes, an ancient Roman city, has a functional arena and a Roman temple. The people are poor, and famines are common. During one such starving time, rumors that Louis XIV planned to raise taxes spark a full-scale revolt joined by local troops. The king dispatches d'Artagnan and an army of dispassionate northern veterans to crush the rebellion.

Dominated by the Alps, Dauphine contains Europe's tallest peak, Mont Blanc, almost 16,000 feet tall, the Mer de Glace (Sea of Ice), a massive glacier, and Lac du Bourget, France's largest lake. The peasants are frugal and tough, not only because of the rugged terrain but because of ongoing skirmishes with adjacent Savoy, a duchy of Italy. PCs can decide for themselves whether the monks of the Monastere de la Grande Chartreuse have indeed discovered the elixir of longevity. The monks came up with the concoction in 1605; is it a medical miracle or merely excellent booze?

People in central France have been invaded and pillaged so often that they tend to be rather somber and suspicious of strangers. Lyons, along the Italian border and south of the Franche Comte region disputed with Spain, is one of the largest cities. It's notable for its important role in the silk trade since the 15th Century and for its underground crosswalks, tunnels connecting the houses of many streets. Bourges, in Berry, was the national capital during the 15th Century. The province of Auvergne is a land of extinct volcanoes and hot mineral springs. Vichy is the favorite place for the sick to take the waters. At Le Puy, the church of St. Michael on the Needle sits atop an 80 meter natural spire of volcanic rock. The Moorish church is reached by narrow stairs that wind around the mountain. It would be a challenge for PCs to sneak into or seize.

Burgundy, on France's eastern border, is famous as the country's chief wine producing region. The city of Dijon (where the mustard comes from) saved itself from Swiss invaders in 1513 by sending the enemy so many casks of wine that they cheerfully staggered away. The dukes of Burgundy reside at Beaune, but the province's traditional center of power is Cluny, whose huge abbey has been the headquarters for the Benedictine order since 910. Perhaps because drink flows freely, Burgundians are incessant talkers who love oratory and have refined arguing to a fine art.

The Seine originates on Mont Tasselot in an eastern portion of the province known as the Cote-d'Or (Golden Hillside). It is an isolated area of springs and dense woods. The Romans worshipped the water nymph Sequana here, and the ruins of their temple remain. (If the GM is running a fantasy-oriented campaign, he may



choose to have the goddess remain as well.) The Romans believed the waters of the pool below the springs had healing properties. A small village, Saint-Seine-l'Abbaye, is one mile downstream.

Chatillon-sur-Seine is a small town some miles westward which harbors a secret. Mont Lassois, a grassy hill north of town, is the burial mound of a 6th Century B.C. princess. In addition to her bones, it contains a golden diadem, an ornamental carriage, bronze objects, jewelry, cups, and a 5'6" bronze Grecian vase. If the PCs don't uncover the treasure, it won't be discovered until 1953.

Immediately north of Burgundy is Champagne, whose namesake beverage is just now being perfected in private cellars. The city of Reims is the traditional place for the coronation of French kings since 496. The German duchy of Lorraine, where real men do eat quiche, is right across the border. French kings have long coveted it, and when the current monarch feels ambitious, the farmers here are the ones who get the brunt of the battles.

On the border with the Spanish Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire, the provinces of Picardy and Artois are some of the most embattled territory in France. This flat farmland is a major crossroads of Europe, and when someone wants to invade they usually do it here. Picardy is the Musketeer Athos' stomping grounds. Arras, in Artois, is the site of a famous Thirty Years War siege where Cyrano de Bergerac helped resist Hapsburg invaders. The city's name is a pun, referring either to the tapestries made there or to the rats that so infested its streets in the Middle Ages that the French king was able to conquer it. Arras residents celebrate their rodent-assisted annexation annually with the Fete des Rats.

11.2 ENGLAND

The bulk of England's 4.5 million population is concentrated in London and the surrounding counties. Northern England and the Welsh marches are thinly populated, poverty stricken backwaters. Wales, annexed in 1536, still has its own language, customs and folklore, as does Cornwall in the extreme southwest. Besides the capitol, the major cities are Norwich, population 20,000, Bristol, 12,000, and York, 8,000 to 10,000. However, England is a rural nation; cities, even London, are not the center of British life. Many provincial farmers worked blissfully through the civil war, barely aware that anything was going on.

GEOGRAPHY (11.2.1)

Northern England is separated from Scotland by the Cheviot Hills and the Tweed River and is dominated by the Pennine Mountains, which stretch south to the Trent River. There are picturesque lakes on the western side of the range. Wales is mostly taken up by the Cambrian Mountains, although there are lowlands on the north and south coasts. Mount Snowden (Yr Wyddfa) in northwestern Wales is the highest spot in the country and is one of the many supposed grave sites for King Arthur. England's southwestern peninsula is a plateau oozing with peat bogs and swamps. The rest of the country consists of lowlands that slope gently toward the island's southeast corner. Many rivers snake across the island but the Thames running through London and the Severn in Wales are the largest. The country's lowest point is The Fens along the central eastern coast, inhabited by the swamp-dwelling Slodges who resist all attempts to drain their beloved wetlands.

LONDON (11.2.2)

London was founded in the 1st Century by the Romans and has been England's economic center, though not always its capital, ever since. Administrative functions were moved upstream to

Westminster in the 11th Century, but London has grown to the point of engulfing it. In fact, the city is spreading east and west along the Thames so rapidly that monarchs are constantly trying to discourage new building. It doesn't help; London is cramped, dirty and hazy with smoke. The bulk of London is on the north bank of the river. Some development is going on in Southwark, a suburb on the other end of London Bridge, but it's a seedy red light district filled with brothels, taverns, bearbaiting pits and several play-houses including The Globe. It's known for its good beer.

The metropolitan area has a population of 300,000 at the start of King James' reign. By 1635, as many as 5,000 foreigners live here to engage in finance and trade. There are 30 landing places but only one bridge on the Thames, which serves as a highway for 20,000 boats carrying goods, fishermen, passengers and laundry. River boatmen row passengers across for a fee but sometimes rob their clients. A horse ferry connects southwest London to the suburb of Lambeth. The city familiar to Shakespeare, Charles I and Cromwell is destroyed in 1666 by the Great Fire, a three-day conflagration that stops the plague but incinerates 400 streets containing 89 churches and more than 13,000 homes.

SITES AROUND LONDON

The Tower of London: It serves as the national mint, armory and maximum security prison. It also houses the royal zoo, located in the southwestern corner. Sir Walter Raleigh lives in luxurious captivity in the Bloody Tower near the Traitor's Gate, the main entrance on the south side of the complex. He's periodically allowed to receive visitors. The White Tower, in the center of the complex, is the original keep begun in 1078 by William the Conqueror. It is frequented by ravens, and legend has it that if they ever leave, England will fall. The White Tower's Chapel of St. John the Evangelist is reputedly haunted by the ghost of Anne Boleyn, one of Henry VII's unfortunate wives. Her body and the bodies of thousands of other executed traitors are beneath the floorboards of the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula, in the northwestern corner of the fort. The fortress is surrounded by a functional moat whose waters are notably foul.

London Stone: Installed in a pillar on Cannon Street in the center of town, this 18-inch square of black limestone is supposedly linked to the fate of the city. Whatever happens to it happens to London.

London Bridge: Built in 1176, this massive stone structure provides the main access to the south bank of the Thames. It is crammed with multistoried houses, and the actual thoroughfare is relatively narrow. Like the Pont Neuf in Paris, it is a favorite spot for strollers and pickpockets.

Royal Exchange: London's financial center, the Exchange is where ambitious PCs can mingle with England's fledgling capitalists and invest in overseas ventures to India and the Americas.

Guildhall: This is the headquarters of the Lord Mayor of London, the governing Corporation of London, and the city's numerous guilds. Only guild members can elect the Lord Mayor, and the guilds have a major influence on city affairs.

The Inns of Court: These four inns—Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple, and Inner Temple—are the city's legal headquarters. They're located on the north bank of the Thames southwest of St. Paul's and south of Temple Street, so named because the Knights Templar built the round 12th Century church that stands north of the inns. Prominent lawyers have their offices and apartments at the inns, and legal trainees must come here to be certified. Originally, the inns were regular taverns where barristers tended to congregate, but the legal eagles eventually bought them out and moved in full-time.

Whitehall Palace: There are other palaces in town, but this has been the main royal residence since 1512. Whitehall sprawls along the Thames, a magnificent jumble of rose-colored brick buildings, marble statues and green lawns that resembles a miniature city. Charles I has Inigo Jones add a banqueting house to the east end in 1625, complete with interior decorations by Rubens. The king is later beheaded in front of the addition. The complex burns down in 1698 when a Dutch washerwoman knocks over a candle.



Queen's Chapel: A small Catholic chapel for Charles I's wife, Henrietta Maria, located off Pall Mall. Jones builds it between 1623 and 1627.

Piccadilly Circus: The area derives its name from the tailor shop here, which sells lace collars known as "piccadills."

Westminster Hall: A palace for British kings until 1512, this massive hall is now the meeting place for Parliament when it is in session. The House of Commons meets in St. Stephen's Chapel, which has been deconsecrated, while the House of Lords meets in the White Chamber.

Westminster Abbey: Located across from Westminster Hall, this Benedictine abbey is where monarchs have been crowned since 1066. The royal tombs are in the extreme east end of the abbey, surrounding the Henry VII Chapel. Westminster Abbey is still a church, though no longer a Catholic one. Behind the altar and west of the Henry VII Chapel is the Chapel of Edward the Confessor, which contains the Coronation Chair under which is clamped the Stone of Scone (Destiny). The stone supposedly groans when a true king sits on it, and Oliver Cromwell has it taken to Westminster Hall in 1653 for his installation as Lord Protector. Edward I stole the stone from the monastery of Scone, Scotland, in 1296, and the talismanic rock has been a source of friction between the two countries ever since. (To be fair, the Scots stole it from the Irish in the 5th Century, and the Irish stole it from Spanish invaders in 700 B.C.) On the southeast end of the church is the Chapter House, where the King's Council and later Parliament met during the Middle Ages. On the west end of the abbey is Westminster School, originally a training center for abbey clerks but now a private school for boys.

Lambeth Palace: The home of the Archbishop of Canterbury is located in the suburb of Lambeth on the south bank of the Thames. The senior clergyman of the Church of England dwells behind high walls, and few visitors are allowed through the gatehouse. The palace has been the scene of numerous power struggles between the religious and secular arms of the government.

St. James' Palace: A brick palace built in the 1530s by Henry VII on the site of an 11th Century leper colony, hence its name. Royalty lived here until Whitehall was built. However, foreign ambassadors are still accredited at St. James'.

Hampton Court Palace: Upstream from Richmond, Hampton Court is a traditional getaway for British kings. James enjoys hanging out here. The sumptuous Tudor house was built by Cardinal Wolsey in 1514 but was immediately taken over by a jealous Henry VIII, who spent much of his career here. The palace is allegedly haunted by the ghosts of two of Henry's wives: Catherine Howard and Jane Seymour.

THE EAST AND SOUTHEAST (11.2.3)

This is the richest, most densely inhabited part of England, its cultural and economic center. Oxford and Cambridge universities, both north of London, have been educating scholars for centuries. Oxford serves as the Royalist capital during the civil war. The counties of Norfolk and Suffolk on the east coast are England's prime knitting and spinning regions and are a haven for Huguenot refugees from France. Norwich, the nation's second largest city, has 36 churches and a variety of industries. The Navy operates out of the ports of Chatham and Gravesend to the east of the capital. Sussex, south of London, has the nation's largest iron deposits.

The east is the nation's breadbasket, producing crops of fruit, hops, barley, wheat and rye. The farms experience seasonal labor shortages because of the huge fishing fleets that leave for the North Sea and Newfoundland; some villages are left with only women and children. The many bays and inlets on the southern coast make things easy for smugglers, who sneak in raw foreign wool, wines and brandies.

People here are generally more progressive and politically aware than elsewhere. Busy ports bring in lots of ideas as well as merchandise, and the prosperous merchants and squires have the

leisure to consider them. They're also the first people to get the pinch from the Stuart kings' monopolies on shipping and manufacturing; the east quickly rallied to the Parliamentary cause when the civil wars broke out. Because most of the fighting took place in the northern and western portions of the nation, some eastern counties were largely unaffected by the war.

THE SOUTHWEST (11.2.4)

Crawling with legends and prehistoric monuments, the southwest isn't as wealthy as the east or as wild as the north. It's sheep and dairy country with fishing and mining for iron, coal, lead and tin thrown in. Cornwall's 10,000 to 12,000 miners are notorious hell-raisers. Bristol, England's third largest city and second largest port, takes goods from western England to London, Ireland and Brittany. It's a cramped city with notably narrow and crooked streets. Exeter, on the southern coast, is known for its fine cloth and lace. Cornwall, the westernmost portion of the island, is noted for its sunny weather and sandy beaches.

This is fairy tale and King Arthur and Hound of the Baskervilles territory. The giants and fairies that originally inhabited England fled here, to the empty moors and treacherous bogs of Devonshire and Cornwall, when man invaded. The Celts fled west when the Britons invaded. Stonehenge on the Salisbury plain is merely the largest of the surviving pagan religious structures; stone circles, holy wells and Druidic sacrificial altars are all over the place. Joseph of Arimathea brought the Gospel and the Holy Grail to Glastonbury, Somerset, 1,700 years ago. Arthur supposedly held court nearby, although Carlisle in northern England also claims to be the site of Camelot.

Many battles of the civil war take place in the southwest. People here basically want to be left alone. Farmers tired of being shaken down by soldiers from both sides organize into armed bands that seek to drive all armies off their lands.

THE NORTH AND WEST (11.2.5)

The northern counties and Wales constitute England's Wild West in more ways than one. Because their rugged terrain prevents grain production, they are prime stock-raising areas, and cattle drives to Bristol and London are common. Rival mining companies compete in digging iron and coal from the mountains, and violent feuds sometimes break out among them. Lords and gentry still live in medieval fortresses for protection against the Scots and each other. They have to control larger spreads to make a living than landowners in other areas of the country; they are forever jumping each other's claims and seizing each other's lands, either by force or legal chicanery. The inhabitants must battle savages (the Scots), cattle rustlers, and outlaws to survive. It's no coincidence that the north was Robin Hood's stomping ground. Those who aren't miners or cattlemen raise sheep or make woolen cloth. Fishing is also a major profession, and seamen report seeing mermaids off the western coast of Wales into the 19th Century.

People here are conservative in both politics and religion. The north and west support the Royalist cause and resist the Puritan regime. York holds out for the king throughout the civil wars. Lancashire is a Catholic stronghold; Liverpool is a port of entry for Irish Royalists. Local government in Wales remains intact during the wars. The Welsh are resistant to the Reformation in general and Puritanism in particular, not least because of the language barrier. Missionaries report that Catholicism hasn't totally replaced the old Celtic practices and beliefs. The legendary Myrddin Emrys, alias Merlin the Magician, was born and spent much of his career in northern Wales. Bards are still being trained here, although the



advent of the printing press and the encroachments of the English language are making it harder for them to earn a living. In general, southern Wales is much more Anglicanized than northern Wales.

Northerners are hard drinkers. Carlisle in Cumberland and Leeds in Yorkshire are famous for their breweries. Newcastle is the major port of the north, exporting coal, salt and glass. In Wales, Swansea and Cardiff are the major ports, although a lot of Welsh goods are shipped through nearby Bristol. Swansea is a center for leather goods, coal and dairy products. A favorite local dish is laver bread, made out of boiled seaweed. Cardiff ships some iron and coal but is a major gun production center. Weapon exports are strictly regulated, but gun runners still manage to carry on their trade here. It's Llandaff Cathedral is turned into an alchouse for Cromwell's troops. Shewsbury, in northern Wales, is the regional textile manufacturing center; Welsh flannel is shipped all over Western Europe.

OTHER SITES AROUND ENGLAND

Carlisle: England's first line of defense against the Scots for centuries, as its military architecture and surrounding Roman ruins attest. Hadrian's Wall begins just north of Carlisle and stretches west to Newcaste-upon-Tyne. Its effectiveness as a defense in the 17th Century is questionable: the Scots invade three times and pull down the cathedral's nave in 1646 to repair the city castle and walls after Carlisle is captured for their Parliamentary allies. They don't, however, smash its magnificent east window, the finest display of stained glass in England. Carlisle is also a center for Arthurian legend. It claims to be Camelot, Arthur supposedly met a Roman delegation here, Gawain encountered the Green Knight nearby, and Arthur and his knights are said to sleep in an underground chamber at Sewing Shields.

Durham: Notable for its cathedral and its cuisine. The cathedral is part Norman church, part fortress against northern invasion, and housed the uncorrupted body of St. Cuthbert for 11 centuries (what happened to it during the Reformation is unknown). In 1650, 3,000 Scottish prisoners of war are held in the cathedral; they smash the church's woodwork and burn it for warmth. If they're not imprisoned, visitors can enjoy Durham's culinary specialties: venison, lamb, smoked kippers, Cotherstone cheese, thick, sticky gingerbread and stottiecakes (flat brown loaves).

York: Almost a capsule history of England. The city was founded in 994 B.C. by King Ebrauc of Trojan ancestry and was occupied by the Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans. York Minster rivalled Canterbury during the Middle Ages, and the lantern tower of All Saints Church still guides travelers across the moors north of town. Stone crosses are also posted in the bogs to aid wayfarers. Charles I transfers the royal mint and printing press to St. William's College here on the eve of the civil war. St. Anthony's Hall houses a weaving sweatshop intended to employ vagabonds and the poor.

ENGLAND'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SCOTLAND AND IRELAND (11.2.6)

In a word, none too good. Scotland and England have a long history of mutual hatred and distrust. The Scots won their independence in the 14th Century but religious and political infighting have seriously weakened the nation by the 17th Century. James I unites England and Scotland under a single crown, but he rarely returns to his homeland. The independent, cantankerous Scots are wishy washy in their support for his son and grandson. They rebel against Charles I when he attempts to enforce Anglicanism in Scotland, invade northern England, and eventually betray the king to the Puritans. When the Puritans attempt a similar religious and intellectual domination, the Scots fight for Charles II and are beaten into submission by the Parliamentary army. Political union

officially occurs in 1707, but Scotland maintains its own church and legal system. In some ways, Scotland is very feudal: absentee king, bitter and violent rivalries among opposing lairds. On the other hand, the Presbyterian Church provides a unifying faith; powerful church councils provide a primitive sort of republicanism.

Ireland is a Catholic stronghold which England is attempting to colonize in much the same way as it is attempting to colonize North America. Protestant English and Scottish settlers are establishing plantations in the eastern portion of the island, moving the natives out of the way and seizing their harvests and lands. The population consists of the Catholic Irish majority, Old Protestants (descendants of previous centuries' settlers who now consider themselves Irish), and New Protestants (the current crop of settlers). The Irish understandably aren't overly fond of England; they vent their frustration through piracy and provide bases for Moslem raiders. Old Protestants don't necessarily feel loyal to England; in 1640 both the Catholic lords and the Old Protestants take advantage of the Scottish invasion and rebel. This turns into a three-way struggle between Irish Catholics, Irish Protestants, and the English; both Charles and Cromwell hesitate to bring in troops from Ireland to use against the Scots for fear they'll have an agenda of their own. After he beats the Scots, Cromwell takes advantage of Irish disunity to brutally establish English military rule on the island. The hatred generated by this campaign lingers after 300 years.

11.3 THE REST OF EUROPE

France and England, for all their flaws, are among Europe's most advanced nations, politically, culturally and technologically. The territory east of the Alps, however, is a different world. With notable exceptions, the countries of central and eastern Europe are still living in the Middle Ages, and conditions grow more primitive the further east you go. Feudal lords grow rich on the sweat and blood of their serfs and defy the kings they've sworn loyalty to. Technological advances are largely limited to military equipment. Balkan nobles play their Moslem masters against their Catholic neighbors to stay in power as they have for centuries. Orthodox Russia is only a few steps removed from Conan-style barbarism. Nevertheless, characters may find it profitable or expedient to travel here. Below is a brief description of the conditions and events French and English adventurers can expect to experience abroad.

SPAIN (11.3.1)

Spain controls a massive international empire but is gradually committing economic suicide to pursue its spiritual and political goals. It's unceasing campaign to stamp out the Reformation and protect Europe from the forces of Islam is propped up by American gold and silver, but this same wealth is destroying its ability to function as a nation. Kings spend the money on religious wars, nobles and clergy spend it on ostentatious luxury, officials grab every dollar they can get, and its 8 million people are taxed to destitution to make up the difference. No thought is given to developing industry and trade or improving transportation. As a result, food production has dwindled in favor of growing wool, and wealthy Spain has to import much of its food. The roads are so bad that it is actually cheaper to import than to transport locally grown foodstuffs. Because there is no Spanish merchant fleet, the nation depends on the Genoese and Dutch to carry on its foreign trade, and these middlemen absorb much of the profits.





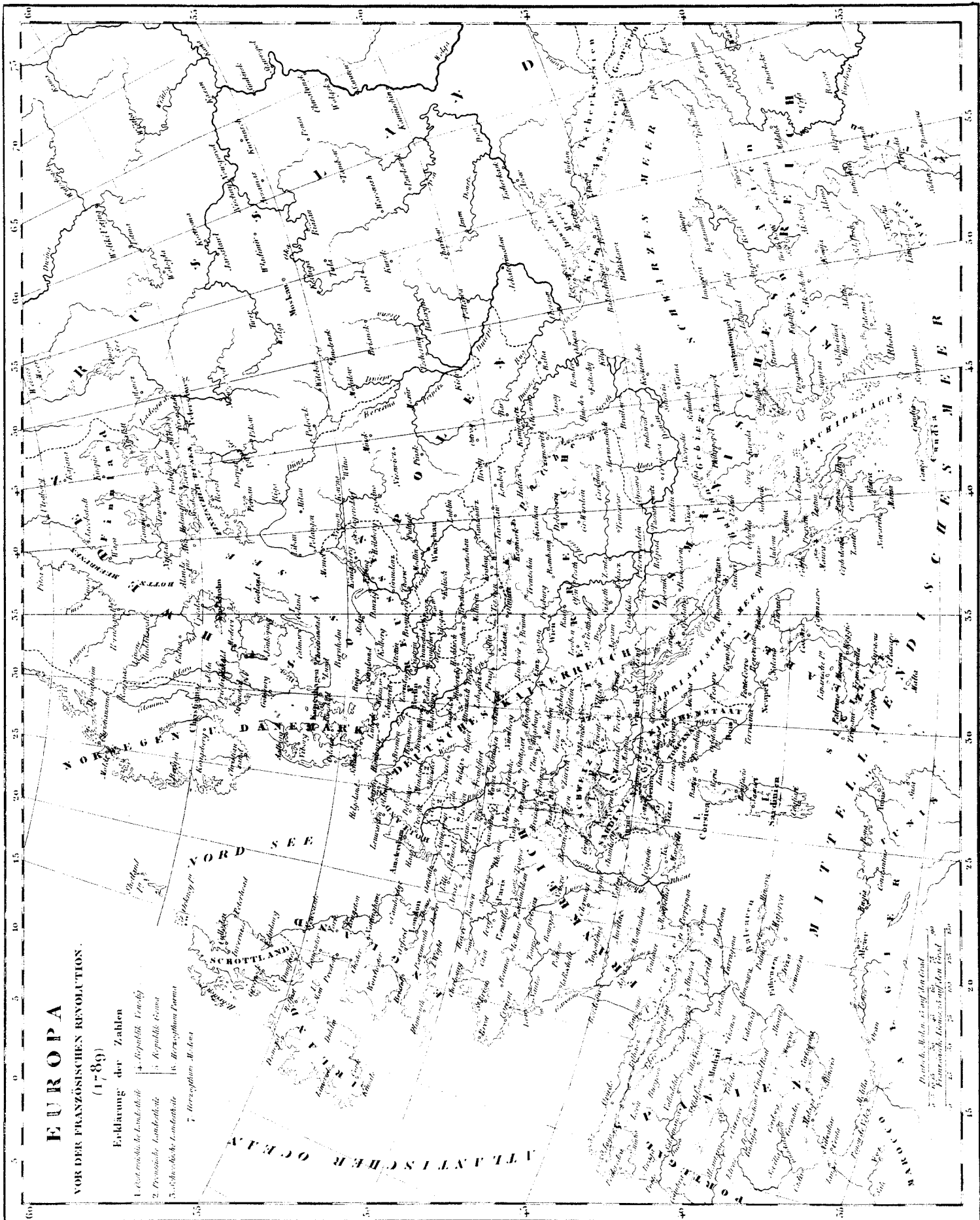
EUROPA

VOR DER FRANZÖSISCHEN REVOLUTION.

(1789)

Erklärung der Zahlen

- 1. Österreichische Länder
- 2. Preussische Länder
- 3. Russische Länder
- 4. Republik Venedig
- 5. Republik Genua
- 6. Herzogthum Venedig
- 7. Herzogthum Mailand



Its commoners make fanatical soldiers but scorn labor; Spain's working class consists of the Moriscos (Moors converted to Christianity), African slaves and prisoners of war. In 1609, the Moriscos are given three days to leave for Africa because it is feared they will soon outnumber the rest of the population and that they might become a subversive element useful to Spain's enemies. Although this is a popular political move, it effectively kills Spain's economy. In succeeding years the mighty empire finds itself repeatedly surrendering to its enemies because it is too broke to continue fighting.

Poor leadership contributes to its failures. Philip III is a pious wimp who leaves the government in the hands of Francisco Gomez de Sandoval y Rojas, Duke of Lerma. The greedy duke loots the national treasury until Philip removes him in 1618, but the king appoints Lerma's equally greedy son, the Duke of Uceda, as his replacement. Philip IV succeeds his father in 1621. He's no weakling but is too busy siring 32 children and sponsoring fine art to bother with politics. The ruthless Count of Olivares manages Spain's affairs until military defeats in 1643 persuade Philip rule himself. Philip, however, continues Olivares' wars and high taxes and is forced to make peace with France, England and the United Provinces in 1659.

The empire remains mighty, however, in spite of its decline. It rules the Spanish Netherlands (modern Belgium), Franche-Compte (a German duchy later seized by France), the duchy of Milan in northern Italy, the Kingdom of Naples i.e. most of southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, the Philippines, Portuguese colonies in Asia, Africa and Brazil, Central America, most of South America, and parts of North America. In addition, it has a controlling interest in the Italian states of Savoy, Parma and Tuscany. Its nobles are the proudest, richest and haughtiest in the world. Its generals are ruthlessly efficient, its soldiers brainwashed into fanatical bravery by the Inquisition. Spanish troops really believe they are fighting for God and Europe's ultimate good. Any nation capable of running three or four separate wars simultaneously is not to be sneezed at.

PORTUGAL (11.3.2)

Portugal was conquered in 1580 by a Spanish general frustrated because he hadn't been able to overcome Calvinist rebels in the Netherlands. It's been a vassal state since. In 1640, rebels backed by the French and English seize the provincial capital and make John, Duke of Braganza, king. The Spanish don't counterattack until 1661. The Portuguese, with English support, win independence in 1668. For more information, see the scenario *His Eminence's Envoys*.

ITALIAN STATES (11.3.3)

Italy is a mishmash of independent city-states held hostage by Spain. Of the four remaining independent republics, Genoa and Venice are the strongest. Central Italy is controlled by the Papal States, an 18-city conglomeration ruled by the Pope from Rome. In spite of its political weakness, Italy remains a cultural and religious leader. Rome, population 100,000 is the art center of Europe. In addition, the Popes still play an important role in international affairs via diplomacy, even when the nations involved don't recognize their authority.

The Republic of Venice is a northern group of seven cities that controls trade in the Adriatic Sea and is Europe's first line of naval defense against the Turks. It receives caravans from central Asia, trades slaves, and produces glass, silk, lace and fine art. It is administered by a doge and policy is set by a senate. Venice trades

with anyone and grants religious freedom to all creeds. The famous University of Padua is here. The republic's foreign policy consists of balancing the power of Spain against that of France to avoid absorption by either power, and it was one of the first nations to recognize Henry IV as king of France. Its spies are the best in Europe. The city of Venice it noted for its state sponsorship of harlots; as long as they pay their taxes, ladies of the evening can live and dress as they please and even have police support for collecting from defaulting customers.

Naples, controlled by Spain, is notable for its fine painters and a bizarre 1647 tax revolt led by a 24-year-old fish vendor. On June 7, street vendors refuse to pay a fruit tax intended to fund a navy. Tommaso Aniello leads 100,000 armed and irate merchants to the Viceroy's palace to protest the tax and takes over the city when the terrified official surrenders. He rules for 10 days, enriching himself and ordering the execution of 1,500 opponents, until his July 17 assassination by Spanish-paid toughs.

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE (11.3.4)

The Holy Roman Empire is a jumble of princedoms, ecclesiastical states and free cities nominally under the control of an emperor who rules from Prague, Austria. (In 1618, the capital is moved to Vienna.) Actually, the "Empire" is an old-fashioned feudal society, run by local lords. Emperors have direct control only over Austria, Bohemia, and the western third of Hungary wrested from the Turks. Each principality has its own currency, economy, and religious allegiance (that of the ruler). The Empire is allied with Spain; both are ruled by members of the Hapsburg family. Austria and Hungary serve as Christendom's bastion against the Turks.

With the exception of Frankfurt am Main, the empire's main trade and financial city, people are poor. The peasants are officially reduced to serfdom by 1616. In the cities, industrial workers put in 15-hour days six days a week. Gluttony and drunkenness are national pastimes, but the Germans are also famous for their wood carving and musical expertise.

Religion is a major divisive factor in Imperial society. Austria and Hungary are Catholic, Bohemia is a Lutheran and Calvinist mixture, Switzerland is staunchly Calvinist, and the German states are generally Protestant in the north and Catholic in the south. Protestant sects fight among themselves as well as against the Papists. All sides denounce each other as heretics in the strongest terms. Non-Catholic princes form a Protestant Union in 1608 for their mutual protection; a Catholic League is organized the next year. The empire is flooded with religious propaganda in the form of sermons, pamphlets and books, and this decades-long war of words prepares the Holy Roman Empire for the last and worst of Europe's religious wars, the Thirty Years' War.

The Thirty Years' War lasts from 1618 to 1648. A police action to return Bohemia to Catholic control escalates into a Continental conflict involving troops from Spain, Sweden, France, England, Holland, Denmark, Italy and Poland. Heaven for mercenaries, hell for the inhabitants, the war reduces the German population from 21 million to 13.5 million. Five out of six villages are abandoned or destroyed. The countryside is ravaged by mercenary rape gangs, epidemics and famine. Enemy soldiers kill citizens, burn churches and destroy farms for fun. Too busy running from foreign armies to grow food, the peasants are reduced to eating grass, pets, carrion, even the bodies of executed criminals. Sporadic witch-hunting frenzies add to the chaos; 100,000 witches are executed.



What sparks the conflict is Archduke Ferdinand's ascension to the throne of Bohemia. The Protestant kingdom isn't thrilled at the prospect of getting a Catholic ruler, so when Ferdinand's deputy governors arrive, the citizens literally throw them out. The governors' 50-foot fall out of the castle window is cushioned by a pile of refuse; only their pride is hurt. The Protestant rebels in 1619 offer the crown to Calvinist prince Frederick V. He accepts, and immediately stirs up bad feelings by suppressing Catholic worship. Ferdinand II is named emperor the next day, raises an army and kicks Frederick out. Eventually, Catholics conquer all of Bohemia and the Palatinate.

Princes of all faiths are disturbed by Ferdinand II's muscle-flexing, and they're not the only ones. France's Cardinal Richelieu is horrified by the prospect of an Empire unified under Austrian control. He quickly organizes a seven-nation alliance to cut off communications between Austria and Spain, win back the Palatinate and sabotage centralized authority. Within three years, however, the allies are fighting among themselves: Denmark with Sweden, France with England. Ferdinand summons Bohemian noble Albrecht von Waldstein, popularly known as Wallenstein, to raise an army and take back Italian mountain passes seized by a French-Venetian force. Wallenstein defeats the bickering allies, forces the northern principedom of Brandenburg to support the emperor, and in 1627 seizes mainland Denmark. When the Empire loses Wallenstein, however, their forces are crushed.

The Peace of Westphalia establishes France and Sweden as the dominant nations in Europe. The Empire is weaker and less united than before. Important rivers are under Dutch and Swedish control, reducing trade. Merchant princes are replaced by territorial military leaders. Brandenburg's Frederick William, with French support, establishes Europe's first standing army in 1656 and acts to counterbalance the power of Emperor Leopold. French language and manners become fashionable among German nobles, who begin to use German only to address their servants. Protestantism survives, but the people are attracted to Pietism, a movement emphasizing a personal relationship with God rather than flashy outward worship.

THE UNITED PROVINCES (11.3.5)

The Netherlands revolted against Spain in the mid-1560s when Philip II established the Inquisition there to root out Calvinism. The resulting 80-year conflict evolved from a religious war into a battle for Dutch independence and turned the seven northern provinces into a mercantile power that carries on four-fifths of Europe's trade. The southern portion of the Spanish Netherlands, Flanders, was reconquered and re-Catholicized during the 1570s.

The United Provinces is one of the most unusual nations in 17th Century Europe. While other countries are ruled by kings, the U.P. is administered by an oligarchical system of town councils and provincial assemblies, overseen by a national assembly, the States-General. Military affairs are under the direction of a hereditary stadholder (war leader). Most people on the Continent make their livings by farming; fully half of the United Provinces' 3 million population is urban, engaged in trading, shipbuilding, fishing or manufacturing. Catholics outnumber Protestants, and Jews are valued for their mercantile skills, so in spite of occasional flurries of intolerance, the Dutch are pretty much free to worship as they please. The Amsterdam Gazette and Leiden News are highly sought out and read throughout Europe because, unlike most newspapers, they're privately published and free from government censorship and propaganda. There are schools in every village; the country has five world-famous universities, the most distinguished

of which is at Leiden. Because of this, the Provinces have Europe's highest literacy rate. The publishing business is booming, and reading material is printed in many languages. There are 400 book publishers and sellers in Amsterdam alone.

Holland is the wealthiest and most influential of the provinces. Its major port, Amsterdam, has a population of 300,000. The Bank of Amsterdam, founded 1609, is the strongest financial institution in Europe, with deposits of \$100 million. Dutch currency is highly sought after.

Dutch wealth (the U.P. has the highest per-capita income in Christendom) is based on trade and colonization. The Provinces build more ships than England, Spain and France put together, send traders as far as Japan and Persia, and have colonies in India, South Africa, North and South America, Formosa, and the Spice Islands. The Dutch East India Company, founded 1601, has 44 times the capital of its English rival. The Dutch will traffic with anyone, Moslem infidels included, and manage to trade profitably with the Spanish even while they're fighting them.

On the dark side, farmland is wrung from the sea only by laboriously building dikes. Riches are concentrated in the hands of merchants, industrialists and absentee landowners. Farmers and fishermen live in bestial poverty and console themselves with drunkenness and obsessive gambling. And much of the nation's wealth comes from the slave trade, although this isn't widely publicized at home.

DENMARK (11.3.6)

Denmark, Sweden and Russia are vying to monopolize the north's forests, a source of timber and naval stores vital to world shipping. Denmark has the upper hand at the beginning of the century. It controls Norway, southern Sweden, the entrance to the Baltic Sea, Iceland and Greenland. However, wars to solidify its control of the Baltic are mismanaged, and Sweden replaces Denmark as the major northern power by the 1650s.

Christian IV rules his 1 million subjects from Copenhagen until his death in 1648. He's a hard-drinking, sulphur-tongued, fearless-in-battle good ol' boy, beloved by the people but thwarted by the thaler-pinching feudal nobles who make up the National Diet and Council of State. These 800 nobles own half the land, keep the peasants in serfdom, and aren't willing to shell out for Christian's military ventures. The Lutheran clergy doesn't have much money or political influence, but it does oversee education and press censorship.

The king hires mercenaries to wage the Kalmar War (1611-1613), an effort to stop Sweden from avoiding fees for getting in and out of the Baltic. Sweden buys peace and free passage through the Sounds for about \$10 million. Christian makes an uncomfortable alliance with his old rival Gustavus Adolphus against Austria in 1630, but by 1643 Denmark and Sweden are fighting each other again. After two years, Sweden wins territory on the Scandinavian peninsula and control of the Baltic entrance.

Christian V (1648-1670) attempts to correct the problems that plagued his dad by centralizing his authority with the help of the clergy and the middle classes. This doesn't prevent him from losing the southern provinces of Sweden in 1660.

SWEDEN (11.3.7)

Sweden is rapidly becoming a world power. Led by a series of gutsy, colorful rulers, the Swedes take on and beat Denmark, Russia, Austria and Poland; King Gustavus Adolphus, who rules from 1611 until 1632, succeeds in turning the Baltic and North seas into a Swedish lake. Sweden reaches the peak of its influence by



1658 and remains a central figure in international affairs for about 50 years.

Like its contentious neighbor Denmark, Sweden is a feudal Lutheran nation of about 1.5 million whose kings must gain the cooperation of a national diet (assembly of nobles). It is ruled by Polish king Sigismund III until 1599, when the diet, fearing Catholic influence, throws its support behind Duke Charles. The duke resists Polish might and is crowned Charles IX in 1607. During a campaign against Polish ally Russia that year, he seizes Moscow. He dies of old age during the Kalmar War; son Gustavus Adolphus pays off Denmark so he can capture Livonia, Esthonia and Ingria from Russia (1615-1617), controlling Russian access to the sea. Gustavus reforms the civil service and promotes public education and foreign commerce. When Sigismund demands his throne back, Gustavus defeats him twice, in 1621 and 1625, then tackles Polish ally Prussia in 1626. His foes respect him enough to join his campaign against the Holy Roman Empire in 1630. Before he leaves, he hands the regency to cool-headed minister Count Axel Oxenstierna.

The count, a master of foreign policy, successfully manages Sweden's wars until Gustavus' daughter, Christina, turns 18 in 1644. The queen is an impetuous tomboy who dazzles Europe with her wit and learning. She speaks eight languages and corresponds with the Continent's greatest scholars and philosophers. She also shocks Europe by adopting masculine dress and manners; she curses like a soldier and refuses to marry. Christina rules well, but her popularity and personal energy fade during the rigors of overseeing victory in the Thirty Years' War. Burned out, she falls ill in 1648 and swears to adopt Catholicism if she recovers; she does but her conversion occurs gradually during a six-year period. The nobles oppose her policies, she puts down a 1651 revolt, and sneaks Jesuits into the country the following year. Realizing she can't continue as queen if she renounces Lutheranism, Christina abdicates in 1654 at age 28. The diet, perhaps relieved to see her go, grants her a lifetime income and the right to keep her retinue. She spends the next 15 years traveling around Catholic Europe, a sort of celebrity at large. The French court enjoys her lively conversations but is unnerved by her unladylike conduct.

Meanwhile, her cousin and would-be husband, Charles X Gustavus, is attempting to rebuild the nation's war-exhausted economy. He puts the nobles in their place, refills the national treasury and spurs development by nationalizing feudal lands. In 1655 he attacks Poland, hoping to seize as much territory as possible before the Russian-backed Cossacks can do the same thing. His success stirs up the opposition of an Austrian/Danish/Dutch coalition; Charles retaliates by taking over Denmark in '58 but his sea forces are beaten by the Dutch navy the next year. The weary king collapses while making a speech to the diet in 1660 and dies several days later. The regents for his 5-year-old son, Charles XI, sign a treaty with Russia and Poland in 1661 that keeps the peace for 15 years.

POLAND (11.3.8)

In the 17th Century, Poland is not a nation to joke about. Her brilliant generals and fearless soldiers champion the Catholic cause and help keep the Turkish wolf from Christendom's door. Unfortunately for the Poles, they are trapped in a circle of hostile neighbors. Wars among the Austrians, Swedes, Russians and Turks wear the once proud nation down, as do Sigismund III's vain attempts to enforce his legitimate claim to the Swedish throne. Poland is repeatedly invaded by foreign powers. By the century's end, it finds itself being gobbled up by the Russians on one side and by the Turks on the other.

Like its neighbors, Poland is a feudal, rural, male-dominated society. Nobles have absolute authority over the peasants on their lands and force their will on the king by means of the Sejm, or national diet. The lords are so jealous of their autonomy that by 1652, a single dissenting member can veto policies favored by the rest of the Sejm and the king. This disunity prevents the nation from effectively dealing with Poland's aggressive rivals, Sweden and Russia.

On the positive side, the Polish are very moral. Single women obediently marry the men picked out for them by their parents and rarely cheat on their husbands. Poland also has one of the most liberal religious policies outside of the United Provinces. It is patriotic to be Catholic, but kings and clergy tolerate and protect a wide variety of Protestant sects as well as a large Greek Orthodox minority in Lithuania. The public isn't always so open-minded; occasional violent attacks on non-Catholics are reported. The religious minorities engage in a propaganda war similar to that in Germany. In 1638, a Calvinist-Lutheran coalition persuades the Sejm to close all Unitarian schools, and Unitarians are ordered to leave the country in 1658. On the whole, however, the Catholics can afford to be tolerant. By 1648, they're clearly in the majority.

RUSSIA (11.3.9)

Russia is one of the most alien and perilous places adventurers can visit without leaving Christendom. The czars, who consider themselves successors to the Byzantine emperors, rule this sprawling, thinly populated country of endless plains and dense forests with an almost god-like authority. Spiritual authority is held by the Patriarch of Moscow, who rules alongside the czar in the Kremlin. The Russian Orthodox Church fears that outsiders will corrupt the pure faith and has instilled in the people a hatred and terror of foreigners. Merchants and technical advisors visiting Moscow have been attacked on the street and burned alive by xenophobic crowds. Unlike other national rulers, the czars would never consider marrying a foreign princess. To discourage the spread of alien ideas and practices, Czar Alexis forbids dancing, games, spectator sports, instrumental music, theater, and sleight of hand.

Although the czars enjoy a degree of authority even Louis XIV would covet, actual daily administration is run by the Prikazy, an army of corrupt, inefficient petty officials that make up 30 to 40 redundant departments. The core of Russia's military is the Streltsy, regiments of professional soldiers who act as palace guards, border patrols, municipal police and firemen.

Most of Russia's 8 to 10 million people are peasants and serfs, living in tiny, secluded villages of chimneyless log huts. Religion dominates village life, but local priests are often corrupt, drunken, ignorant and superstitious. On top of the heap are the boyars (hereditary nobles), forever arguing over titles and precedence and scheming to control the throne. The rich also live in homes of logs: maze-like palaces whose tiny windows let in so little light that they must be illuminated by rows of candles even on a summer's day. Even Moscow's streets and fabulous churches are of wood. Most Russians are illiterate; nobles' educations are limited to basic reading and writing (in Russian only, of course). Women are separated from men, are rarely seen on the street, and are usually heavily veiled. In wealthy families, daughters aren't allowed to play with their brothers and are confined to the terem (women's apartment) until their wedding day. Peasant women have more freedom of movement because their husbands need their help in the fields. Wife-beating is legal; fathers hand bridegrooms a whip as part of the marriage ceremony. Because of this segregation of the sexes, male Russian society is coarse and violent; the national



pastime is attempting to drink one's companions under the table. All Russian men wear beards which are combed daily but never cut.

The 17th Century initially brings hard times to Muscovy. The period from 1598 to 1613 comes to be known as the Time of Troubles. Czar Boris Godunov was popular as an advisor to the previous king because he worked to improve the lives of the peasants. These reforms earned him the undying hatred of the boyars, however, and as czar, Boris is forced to use espionage and terror to protect himself from the nobles' conspiracies. His heavy-handed tactics and crop failures in the century's first four years destroy Godunov's public support. In 1600 a man appears in Poland claiming to be Dmitri Ivanovich, prince and heir to the throne who died nine years earlier under questionable circumstances. With the support of both the Poles and the boyars, "Dmitri" invades in 1604 and takes Moscow (Czar Boris, worn out, dies before his foes reach the city). Prince Vasili Shuiski, who investigated the prince's death, says he was mistaken and certifies the conqueror as genuine.

"Dmitri," however, is actually ex-monk Grigory Okrepyev, servant of Feodor Romanov, a conspirator exiled by Godunov. He rules well for three years but his actions and refined manners quickly make it obvious that he's neither a Russian nor a believer in the Orthodox faith. He is quickly deposed, and Czar Vasili IV is put in his place.

Almost immediately, malcontents rally around a second Polish-supported "Dmitri," who claims to be the first one. Shuiski persuades the Swedes to attack Poland but is deposed and exiled by the Polish army (1610). "Dmitri" is fatally wounded by one of his followers when his army fails to reach Moscow (whether this is accidental or an assassination is not clear). The Poles put their Prince Ladislav on the throne. The peasants revolt and burn Moscow, forcing the young "czar" and his troops to hole up in the Kremlin. A third "Dmitri" shows up within months, is betrayed, and is executed in Moscow in 1612. Meanwhile, butcher Kosma Minin joins his rebel forces with those of Prince Dmitri Troubetskoy (a real Russian prince with no claim to the throne) and besieges the city. The Poles give up and flee. Michael Romanov, 15-year-old son of the exiled conspirator, is elected czar in 1613. He recalls his father, who has since become a monk and changed his name to Philaret, and the two restore public order as king and chief minister. (The Russians say, only half-jokingly, that there are two czars.)

Michael's reign launches a period of rapid expansion. His explorers establish a chain of forts across Siberia and reach the Pacific in 1639. Michael encourages settlement by cancelling the debts of peasants willing to move there. This enables Russia to control northern Asia and to trade (and skirmish) with Manchu China. Relations with its southern neighbors are generally peaceful, however. In spite of slave raids by the Tartars, Russia maintains close ties with the Ottoman sultan's court. Both the Swedes and the weather cut off trade with Western Europe. Even the intrepid British merchant adventurers can make it through the icy waters to Riga and Archangel only at certain times of the year.

Alexis Romanov's reign (1645-1676) doesn't go quite so smoothly, marred by civil violence and war with Poland (1655-1667). In 1648, the Streltsy revolt, attacking the homes and churches of foreigners and touching off more than a year of anti-foreign riots. Alexis' harsh suppression of political and religious dissent causes other revolts in Moscow, Novgorod and Pskov. Outraged by the execution of Charles I, the czar expels all Englishmen from Russia and sends condolences and cash to Charles II. He keeps up the subsidies until Charles' restoration.



In 1652, the devout Alexis allows Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow, to begin reforms of the Russian Orthodox Church, effectively permitting the trusted church leader to run Russia for the next six years. The iron-willed Nikon removes and exiles drunken and lazy priests; he also conforms Russian worship services to Greek Orthodox practice and attempts to exalt Church authority over civil authority. When prominent conservative Archpriest Avvakum opposes these changes, the patriarch exiles his former friend to Siberia. Eventually, Nikon's imperious manner leads to a rift with Alexis. When Nikon goes off to a monastery to sulk in 1658, the czar calls in Greek Orthodox officials to impeach him for abandoning his post. They do in 1667 but uphold the former patriarch's reforms. Conservative "Old Believers" rebel, and Alexis retaliates with persecution.

Later, the Cossacks annexed in 1648 rebel against their new Russian masters. Bandit leader Stenka Razin forms a Cossack republic on the Volga, seizes Astrakhan and Tsaristsyn (Stalingrad), and almost takes Moscow. The Russian Robin Hood is eventually caught (1671) and tortured to death.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE (11.3.10)

The Ottoman Turks rule a vast empire equivalent to Spain's in scope. It stretches from Hungary and Greece to Syria and Arabia, controlling also the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes. Venetian ownership of Crete is being disputed by the Turks; the island is the site of a 25-year war between the two powers. The empire is closely allied to the Crimean Tartars that raid Russia and Poland and with the North African sultanates that harry Christian shipping in the Mediterranean. The Turks have been fairly quiet since their naval



defeat at Lepanto, Greece, in 1571, although their corsairs continue to operate as close as the Adriatic Sea and as far away as Ireland.

Sultans rule the empire from Constantinople, aided by provincial pashas. The bureaucracy and military are controlled by the Janissaries, sons of Christian families raised to be a fanatical Moslem elite. Like Russia's Streltsy, the Janissaries are touchy about their pay and political power and have been known to mutiny when their wishes aren't met. The pashas tend to be independent and corrupt, too, especially the ones distant from the capital. Crime is rampant; gangs of thieves haunt the nation's roads, defying the military to catch them. The empire is too large to manage effectively with Turkey's slow land-based communications and trade. Because travel is slow and local officials can't be trusted, sultans find it difficult to concentrate the massive Ottoman military machine against Turkey's many enemies. When Turkish warriors do reach the battlefield, however, their fatalism and fanaticism make them dangerous opponents even though their equipment is outdated (they're still using bows and arrows).

The Turks have lost the technological and scientific edge they enjoyed in the Middle Ages. Except for an intellectual and literary elite, the empire's cultural life is stagnant. The rich and educated write poetry, read numerous books in Turkish, Arabic and Persian, and decorate their homes with tile, calligraphy, miniature paintings and fancy rugs. For most citizens, however, life crawls slowly by and never seems to change; they greet both good fortune and ill with an apathetic, "As Allah wills." Men and women are segregated, females staying home in the zenana. There is almost no male-female contact outside the home. Much of the nation's labor is performed by Christian slaves seized in Italy, Poland or Russia. Theoretically, Islam grants religious freedom to Christians and Jews, and some Balkan peoples actually prefer Ottoman rule to that of staunchly Catholic Austria. However, Christians are excluded from public office, pay heavy taxes in lieu of military service, and must surrender one child out of ten to be raised as a Janissary.

The Ottoman Empire is not a place most PCs will visit frequently or willingly. The Turks have a deep and long-standing hatred of "Christian dogs" and will be more likely to rob and enslave adventurers than to trade or negotiate with them. Unfortunately for player character diplomats, the Ottomans insist that all treaties and agreements with them be signed in Constantinople. Philanthropic PCs may have to enter Turkish waters or cities to redeem Christian captives. Merchants hoping to do business with Spain or Italy and students planning to study at famous Italian universities will risk capture by Moslem pirates. On the other hand, escaping from Turkish slave pens would be the adventure of a lifetime; it did wonders for the reputations of Miguel Cervantes and Vincent de Paul.

OTHER INTERESTING PLACES (11.3.11)

It would be impractical to catalogue all the exciting places adventurers can travel to. Listed below are a few of the most popular locations to visit outside of Europe. Player-characters can make their fortunes here as mercenaries, advisors, diplomats or traders. They can also die ignoble, often horrible, deaths in these heathen lands.

AFRICA

Northern Africa is controlled by vassal states of the Ottoman Empire, and Islam is filtering its way south through the Sahara trade routes. Morocco, capital Marrakech, is an independent king-

dom ruled by the Sharifian dynasty. Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli are under various degrees of influence, depending on how close they are to Constantinople. Egypt has its sultan appointed by the Turks. The Portuguese have explored and established settlements on all African coasts, but no European knows what lies in the interior.

PERSIA

The Persian Empire stretches from the Euphrates to the Indus. Unlike the hostile Turks, Persians welcome Western visitors and go out of their way to encourage tourism and trade. Shah Abbas (rules 1598-1629) recognizes that he and Europeans have a common enemy in the Ottomans; in fact, he owes his ability to hold his own against the Turks to English traders, who brought knowledge of modern firearms and artillery in 1598. Abbas beats the Turks in 1605, winning back Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Bagdad. Merchants from Poland, Spain and France as well as England gather at the shah's spacious new capital, Isfahan, to bargain for silk, tobacco, coffee, rugs and other fine textiles. (The previous two capitals, Bagdad and Tabriz, keep being captured by the Ottomans.) In 1622, Abbas expels the Portuguese from Hormuz with English help.

The turbaned, robed Persians are famous as musicians, poets, flatterers and smooth talkers—qualities would-be traders should keep in mind. Adventurers can admire the fruits of the shah's massive public works program and enjoy horse racing and polo. Unfortunately, Persia is as decadent as it is sophisticated; the streets are crowded with drunks, tricksters, harlots and gigolos who would love to make a fast dinar off the PCs.

INDIA

India, that Promised Land for Western spice traders, is rapidly being subjugated by the Moslem Mughal Empire. Akbar seized northern India in the late 1500s, and his successors will succeed in taking most of the subcontinent by 1707. Akbar's grandson, Shahjahan, rules from 1627 to 1656 before being toppled by a civil war. His main hindrance is a rival Hindu kingdom, the Marathan Empire, spreading along the west coast under Sivaji (reigns 1627-1680). Shahjahan's successor, Aurangzeb, will complete the Mughal domination of India but won't be able to eliminate the Marathas.

While all this is going on, the English, French, Portuguese, Danes and Dutch are all scrambling for trading rights. The lone French trading post is at Chandernagore, in Bengal near Calcutta. The English have Bombay on the west coast, Fort St. David, Madras and Masulipatam on the east coast, and Calcutta in Bengal. The Dutch have nine trading stations, mostly on the southeast coast and Ceylon. The British East India Company is rapidly growing in wealth and power. After concessions made by Cromwell in return for loans, the company becomes a government in its own right, maintaining a navy and minting currency.

CHINA

China is experiencing civil turmoil not unlike that of France and England. The ancient Ming dynasty is in decline: conservative to the point of stagnation, brutal and over-centralized. The emperors leave actual ruling to their eunuchs. Terror, taxes and crop failures ignite rebellions from 1627 onward, and by 1636 these have become a full civil war with central, northern and northwestern China in revolt. Meanwhile, a foreign empire, Manchuria, is expanding in the north with the aid of Chinese dissidents. The Manchus invade Inner Mongolia in 1625 and Korea two years later. Mongolia is annexed in 1635 and Korea made a vassal state in 1637. By 1644, when Chinese rebels take Peking and the last



Ming emperor commits suicide, the Manchus control all the territory north of the Great Wall. Taking advantage of China's chaos, the Manchus invade and establish the non-Chinese Ch'ing dynasty. They control most of the country by 1652 and mop up Ming resistance in the south by 1659. Ming loyalists flee to Taiwan in 1662 and wrest it from the Dutch, who have ruled the independent island since 1624.

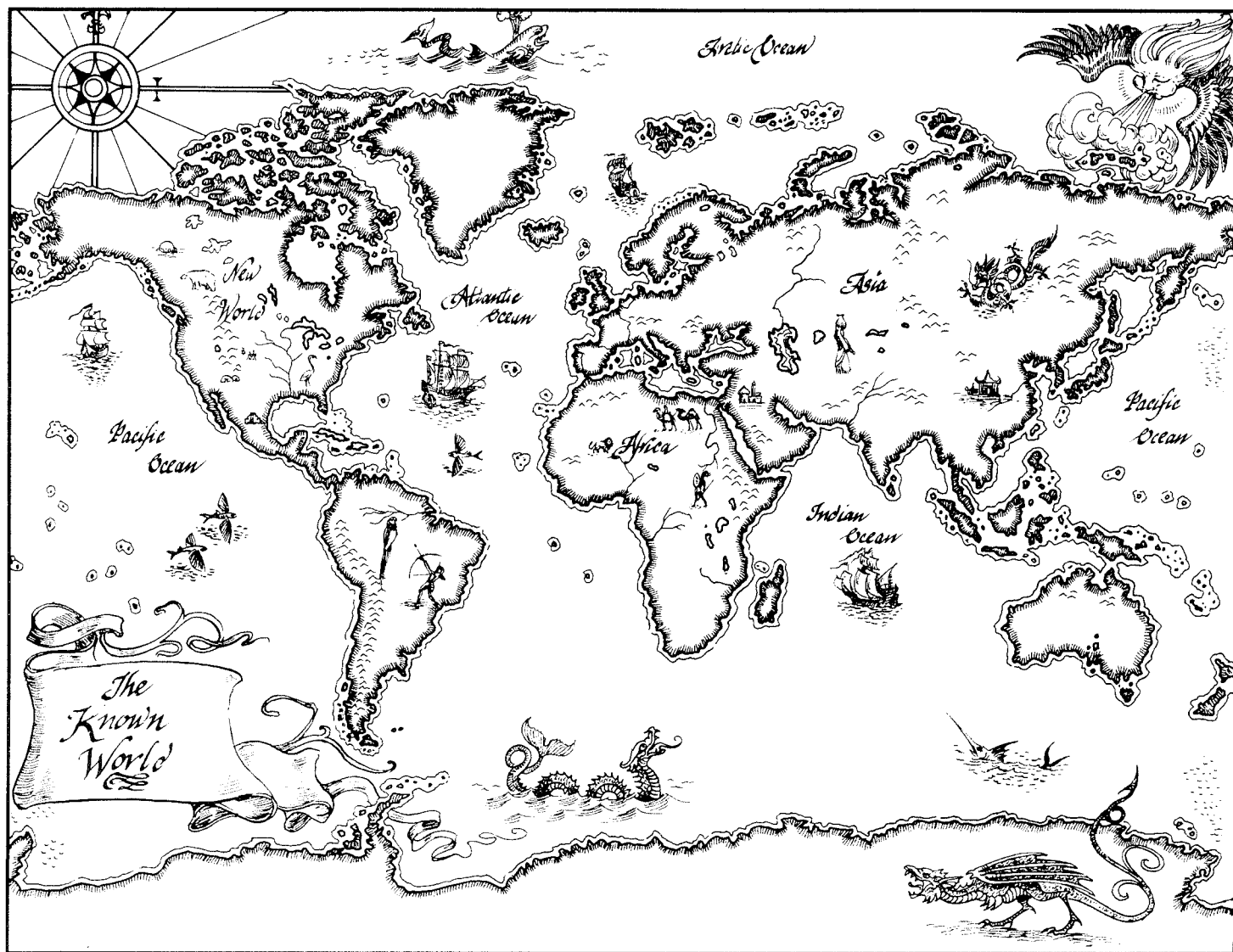
JAPAN

Feudal Japan has just finished an era of civil wars and is under military rule by the Tokugawa shoguns. Emperors reigning at Kyoto are merely figureheads; the shoguns at Yedo (Tokyo) are the men who really run things. The nation is unified in the 1580s by bandit chieftain Hideyoshi, who becomes the "regent" for the emperor. Upon Hideyoshi's death in 1598, rival bandit Iyeyasu ousts his son, slays his grandchildren, and has seized control as Japan's first shogun by 1603. To encourage the samurai to curb their military impulses, Iyeyasu has them study philosophy and literature. He at first tolerates the Catholic population growing in Nagasaki territory but becomes convinced that Christians will serve as fifth-columnists for a Spanish conquest. In 1614 he orders

all converts to either leave the country or renounce their faith. His son, Hidetada (1616-1623), is content to rest on dad's laurels, but Nippon's third shogun, Iyemitsu (1623-1651), is as active as his grandfather. He foils an attempt to restore power to the emperors, briefly seizes Korea before it is taken from him by the Manchus, and vigorously persecutes Christianity. In 1638, 37,000 Japanese Catholics make a last stand on Shimabara peninsula and are massacred after a three-month siege. Westerners are not welcome in Japan after that year, although the Dutch maintain a closely watched outpost at Nagasaki.

THE SPICE ISLANDS (INDONESIA)

The islands of southeast Asia are ruled by weak Islamic sultans. The Portuguese established a series of forts and trading posts here in the 1500s but the Dutch East India Company (chartered 1602) is systematically seizing them and is taking advantage of Moslem rivalries to grab even more territory. Holland signs a treaty with England in 1619 to share colonial development in the East Indies, but in 1623 the Dutch massacre English settlers in the region. Afterward, the English deal mainly with the western islands and leave the rest of them to the Dutch.



12.0 TREASURES

Treasures play a less important role in swashbuckling adventures because of the scarcity of magic items and because many characters have a steady income e.g., a regular, if meager, commission from the government or their patron. Of course, if the characters are smugglers or pirates (or just plain greedy), you're in a whole different ball game. While hard cash can be forthcoming to resourceful and/or dishonest PCs, there are a number of other valuables a GM could throw into a campaign.

FIREARMS

Especially accurate or unusual weapons will be prized by adventurers. Rifles were available but expensive. The grenade pistol was developed in the late 1500s. French inventors produced airguns for Henry IV before 1608, and German gunsmiths made a variety of them around mid-century.

In the mid to late 1640s, revolving rifles with multiple barrels and repeating rifles were developed in Denmark and Germany. The barrels of revolvers (some weapons had as many as 10) had to be turned by hand. Gunsmiths also experimented with multi-barrel pistols. Repeating weapons had a series of charges packed in the barrel. When the first bullet was fired, it lit the fuse for the next, sort of like a Roman candle. Such guns kept firing at intervals until they ran out of ammunition. These unusual guns weren't very reliable; they tended to jam, misfire, break or even explode during use. To simulate this, the GM can double the fumble range for each shot fired.

A primitive machine gun, called an organ gun or volley gun, was also available late in the period. It had 10 to 15 barrels laying side by side on a table-like mount and could loose a deadly volley of bullets. Unfortunately, all of its barrels were muzzle-loaded, so reloading took a good five minutes or more.

Hand-held volley guns were made for sporting purposes. These short-range weapons typically had seven barrels. The effect was similar to a modern shotgun.

TREASURE MAPS

There are a lot of these floating around, and their accuracy and authenticity leave much to be desired. However, they are much sought after items. PCs can expect to have to fight or pay a pretty penny for one the owner claimed was seized from a Spaniard knowing the location of the lost land of El Dorado. If nothing else, treasure maps are good springboards for adventures.

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS

Items such as barometers, telescopes, microscopes and assorted navigational instruments could come in handy for travelers or investigators. They are all handmade and finely crafted. The GM should give skill bonuses for the appropriate task a device is used for.

UNUSUAL DRUGS OR CHEMICAL FORMULAS

Many medical prescriptions of the day were pretty disgusting, mixtures of animal parts and feces whose healing value was dubious. Botanists were still busy trying to produce a systematic study of European medicinal plants and had hardly begun to

examine specimens encountered in the New World. Quinine was regarded as a miracle drug; the discovery of a South American tree whose bark cured fevers was so amazing that some medical experts refused to believe it. Characters who discover new plants and substances, or combinations of familiar ones, that are effective medicines can strike it rich provided they have the proper licenses and keep their active ingredients a secret.

PROTOTYPE SUBMARINE

The first submarine was demonstrated by Dutch scientist Cornelius van Drebbel in England in 1620. It consisted of a rowboat sheathed in oiled leather and could hold one or two men beneath the surface of the water for a short time. It is not clear how the craft was propelled. Authorities failed to recognize its value.

Van Drebbel's craft need not be the last word in submarines. Developments in mechanics and physics between 1620 and 1660 would enable PCs to build a more useful underwater boat. Such a boat's military value would probably be negligible; it would be small, slow-moving, unwieldy to navigate, and couldn't carry cannon (the torpedo hasn't been conceived of yet). On the other hand, a submarine could prove quite handy for smugglers, saboteurs and spies, whose missions depend on stealth rather than speed and firepower. It would have to be carried aboard ship and launched near a coastline; ocean voyages of any distance would be suicidal, especially in rough seas. The usual technique would probably be to stay on the surface as long as possible and submerge only when it came within hailing distance of land.

PRIMITIVE STEAM ENGINE

Tinkerers in both France and England experimented with steam power throughout the 1600s. Charles I granted a patent on steam powered devices in 1630. Early engines were of the one horsepower variety and exploded regularly. In 1700, a working steamship was demonstrated.

The possibilities of a steam engine developed 50 or so years early may be obvious to the players but it may not be so obvious to their characters. To most people, this device was a useless scientific toy. Characters who invent or get their hands on a steam engine will probably have trouble finding investors for the project, especially if they are so rash as to suggest that it could propel a carriage or warship! Dutch and German parties are most likely to be interested, which could cause political problems for the PCs. If they do manage to build a steam engine of sufficient size to be useful, it should be massive, inefficient, tricky to maintain, and dangerous to operate.

MERINO SHEEP

Yes, sheep! England's economy was based on its wool trade, and English merchants faced disastrous competition from high-quality Spanish wool woven from the heavy, white fleece of the merino. The Spaniards were quite aware of this, of course, and restricting the breed to Spanish soil was a matter of national security. A character who manages to smuggle a breeding pair of merinos or even a pregnant ewe out of Spain can expect rich rewards from the English government.



13.0 SCENARIOS

13.1. HIS EMINENCE'S ENVOYS

Below is an episodic adventure set in London in spring of 1640. It is intended for a historical campaign though it could be modified to fit a fantasy game. Most of the players in a historical game will run French characters but several of them could run British characters.

PREMISE (13.1.1)

Sent to London to seek British support for the Portuguese rebellion, the player-characters soon find their efforts hindered by a ring of Spanish spies.

BACKGROUND (13.1.2)

New taxes imposed on the Portuguese by their Spanish overlords in 1637 turned longstanding discontent into rebellion. Leading citizens secretly plotted to overthrow Spanish governor Margaret, Duchess of Mantua, and proclaim John, Duke of Braganca, king. The conspirators were encouraged and supported by the French. However, John was a practical, greedy and somewhat cowardly man made rich by the status quo and fearful of failure. Only the promise of foreign backing and the nagging of his wife Luisa persuaded him to join the rebels.

England was a traditional ally of Portugal, and sympathy for the rebels ran high. King Charles was engaged in a losing war with the Scots, however, and Parliament was wary of funding a standing army. On May 2, 1640, a Captain Billingsley who had been gathering recruits for a proposed Portuguese expedition showed up at the Tower of London with 100 men. He demanded entrance in the King's name and was refused by Sir William Balfour, the constable. This "First Army Plot" convinced Parliament that any troops it funded would be used to enforce Charles' claims of absolute authority; the incident effectively killed any chance of English intervention.

When Lisbon rebels staged their coup December 1 they were backed by French and Dutch fleets but no English troops. Margaret of Mantua had the chutzpah to argue with the rebels who overwhelmed her few sentinels but was firmly informed that she was no longer in power. Her strongman, Miguel de Vasconcelos, was killed during the otherwise quick and bloodless takeover.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED (13.1.3)

Temporarily stationed in Paris during the Spanish invasion, the players are ordered by their commanding officer to attend midnight Mass at a certain cathedral. During the service, a priest motions to them to follow him and leads them into the church's inner recesses. They are soon joined by Francois "Father Joseph" Le Clerc du Tremblay, Cardinal Richelieu's wildest diplomat. This is a surprise as "His Gray Eminence" is supposed to be negotiating in Switzerland. Father Joseph informs them that they are to leave immediately for London to seek English aid for an upcoming revolt in Portugal. They are to speak to royal minister Robert Ings and Portuguese envoy Christovao de Fronteira but keep as low a profile as possible. Richelieu wants English ships and soldiers for a joint



operation planned for June or July. In return, France will pay the royal treasury a sum large enough to enable Charles to mount an expedition against the Irish or the Scots. The PCs can also offer England favorable political and trade treaties with both France and Portugal. Boarding passes are shoved in their hands, and the characters are led by the priest to a back-alley exit.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ADVENTURE (13.1.4)

EPISODE ONE

If the GM wishes, getting to London can be an adventure in itself. Northern France is swarming with Spanish and German troops, and the players have a long journey to the coast ahead of them. In addition, one of Richelieu's enemies, such as Gaston of Orleans, may have heard something about the mission and would love to embarrass the first minister by causing his plans to fail. The players might be assaulted by paid thugs as they go to pack their bags or they might be ambushed by foreign patrols as they leave the city. Once on board ship, a sailor will try to knife one of the PCs then throw himself overboard rather than be captured. The captain will tell them the sailor was a new man filling in for a regular crewman who said he was sick. Privateers might further enliven the journey.



EPISODE TWO

A closed carriage awaits the PCs as soon as they step off the ship. They might be inclined to be suspicious after all they've been through but the driver will furtively show them an ecu [French coin]. They will be driven to the palace where they will be greeted by Queen Henrietta Maria, Louis XIII's sister, and the French ambassador. The Queen will thank them for coming and pump them for news from Paris. The ambassador will warn them to be careful. Anti-French and anti-Catholic sentiments are at an all-time high because of the political-religious quarrels between the King and Parliament. He will then introduce them to Robert Ings and Christovao Fronteira.

Ings is a fussy little man whose nitpicking and squeaky voice would be humorous were he not such a formidable negotiator. Fronteira is a haughty son of Portuguese nobility who resents the French butting in on what he considers his mission. (If any of the PCs are English, this would be a good time to introduce them. They're members of Ings' staff or are in charge of security for the talks.) Fronteira will tell Ings and the players that his people are ready for independence but won't rebel unless the rightful heir to the throne, the Duke of Braganca, leads the movement. The duke won't commit to revolution unless he is assured of foreign backing. Ings will reply that the Portuguese cause is popular with the King and the public but that Charles hesitates to act because of the expense and the continuing Scottish threat. To intervene, the King will either need to persuade Parliament to give him the funds or find an alternative way to finance the venture.

When the talks break up for the day, Ings will offer to show the characters around the city. He will even take them to the theater after they drop their things off at their private quarters near the palace. Fronteira will decline the invitation, saying he isn't feeling well. If the players decline, Ings will insist on at least serving them a proper English dinner (a prospect which may horrify French gourmets). Dinner will be long and uneventful, though some PCs might enjoy role playing their reaction to the assorted dishes while attempting not to offend their host.

Whatever option the PCs choose, sometime during the afternoon or evening one of the lackeys hired to serve them will attempt to sneak into their room and poke around during their absence. They might catch him slipping out as they return or he might try to investigate while they are sleeping. He will fight to escape but if subdued will explain in an offended tone that he was just straightening up. If he escapes, the players can attempt to follow him. If the valet eludes them then during the next few days they may notice a swarthy man with a scar above his left eye watching their apartments. Nothing will have been taken from their rooms but their things have been inexpertly gone through. Ings, mortified, will have the man arrested and the other servants questioned. They don't know anything. The lackey will confess under torture that he was paid by a masked man to go through the players' papers and await further instructions at the Loyal Citizen, a tavern.

If the adventurers accept Ings' offer of a tour, he will take them to see Richard Brome's latest comedy, *The Antipodes*. They will be jeered by Puritans as they enter the theater. During the performance a wealthy gentleman will push rudely into the balcony box next to theirs. He will fumble around, loudly munch on a snack he has brought, heckle the actors just like a groundling, and finally throw the remains of his food at the stage. His aim is bad; some of it will splatter on the PCs. If they protest, he will notice they are foreigners and reply that it is shameful how Papist bootlickers are attaching themselves to the royal household, an unforgivable insult to both the Queen and themselves. Ings will warn the characters

that the gentleman is the Earl of Kent, troublemaker in the House of Lords and notorious Duelist. He will live up to his reputation if they agree to meet him behind the theater. If he is beaten by a PC without being killed, the Earl will oppose Portuguese aid if it is leaked to Parliament. If they refuse to fight, the Earl will cause a scene and fill all London with tales of their cowardice. Either way, the players will find it difficult to keep their presence in London a secret.

EPISODE THREE

During the next day's session, Ings will say he possibly has found a way to fund an overseas expedition. The King might be able to bypass Parliament by soliciting loans from wealthy aristocrats. To do so, however, he will need to have a fighting force assembled to demonstrate that the plan is not just a ploy to fill the royal treasury. The nobles would be promised Spanish war booty as a return on their investment. Fronteira will proudly announce that such a scheme is already underway; before the talks began, he was in the process of hiring mercenaries. Fronteira's agent, a certain Horatio Billingsley, has been recruiting in London for several months.

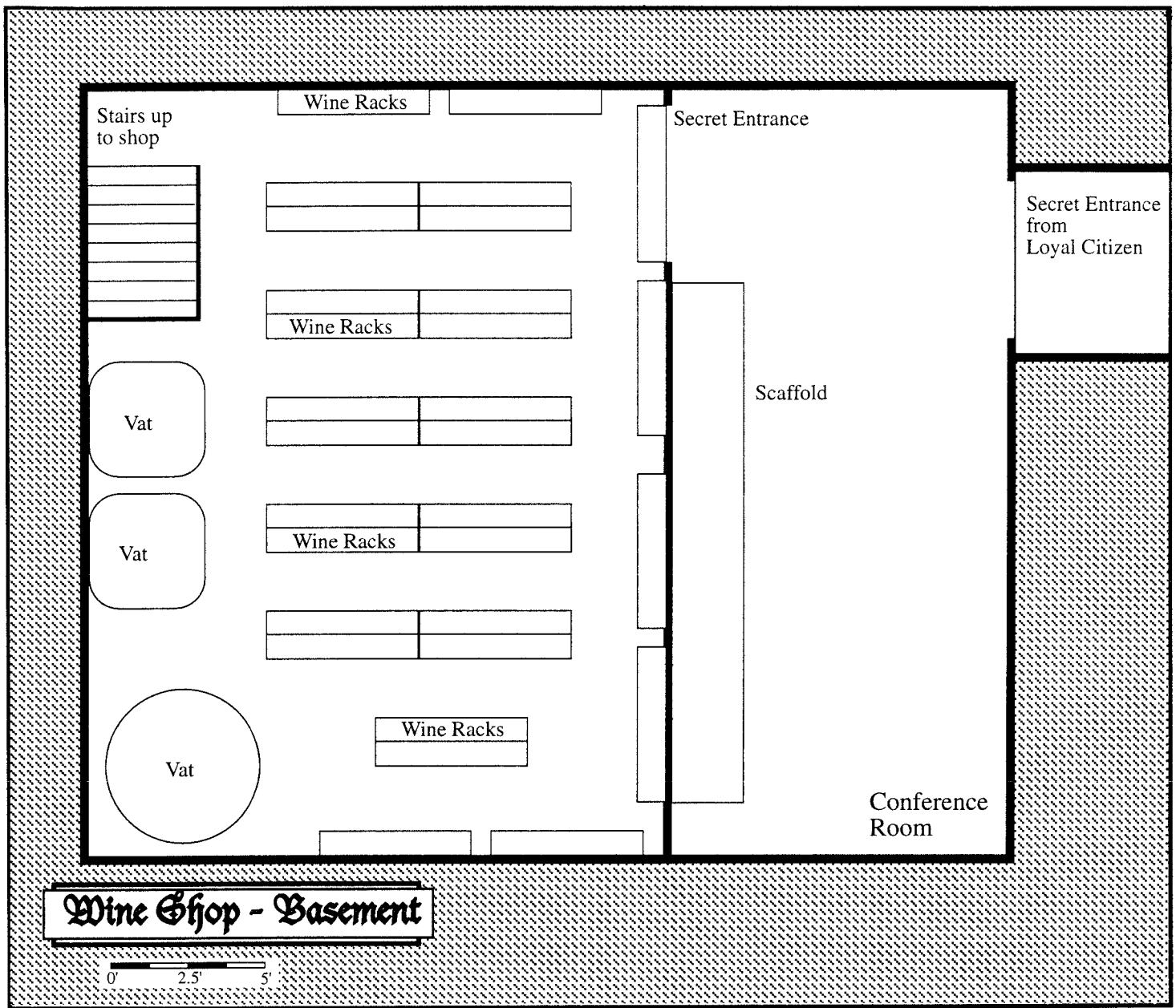
At this point, servants will bring in refreshments. Perceptive characters may notice that something is not quite right with the wine. The wine's smell and color may not match that of the product named on the label or it may have a slightly bitter aftertaste. If the players fail to detect these things, their snack will be interrupted by the arrival of the French ambassador. They will return to the table to find Fronteira gasping his death agony. The servant who brought the wine, one of Fronteira's men, will say he's been getting it for weeks at a shop pointed out to him by a man he met at the market. If the players analyze the wine or have it analyzed they'll learn that it doesn't contain enough poison to kill a healthy man outright. Fronteira is apparently the victim of cumulative poisoning. If the players drank any of the wine they will be a bit weak for a day or two (RR vs. 5th level poison or operate at -20 for 2 hours/5 failure) but will otherwise be all right.

The PCs have several options. They may have followed the escaped valet from Episode Two. They may notice the man who has been watching them and attempt to seize or shadow him. Or they may want to check out the Loyal Citizen or that wine shop.

If the adventurers follow the valet or the swarthy observer without being seen, they will be led to the Loyal Citizen. The man they are following will go into a back room. If they eavesdrop or stake out the room, they'll see their quarry leave a few minutes later. Shortly afterward, a second man—well-dressed and with a military air about him—will step out of the back room. He'll go to a table just out of earshot and confer briefly with a distinguished-looking gentleman before leaving. If the PCs don't recognize the gentleman, Ings or the ambassador will later be able to identify him as John Pym, prominent member of the House of Commons, from the players' description. They won't know anything about the other two men.

The players will get similar results if they go direct to the tavern. They may want to follow the lackey, the swarthy man, or the well-dressed man after they leave the Loyal Citizen. Any NPC who realizes he's being followed, either before or after the players get to the tavern, will lead them into an ambush by local low-lives. If they attempt to follow Pym, he may call for guards to arrest them or order his footmen to attack. If the PCs are indiscreet in their investigations, tavern owner Anthony Remley, a brawny bigot who despises Frenchmen, will have them thrown out.





EPISODE FOUR

Horatio Billingsley, the well-dressed man, is a spy both for the Puritan faction in Parliament and for a Spanish espionage ring led by Estaban Vazares, the swarthy man. Pym knows Billingsley is dealing with the Spanish but Vazares is unaware of his dual activities. Both Pym and Vazares are intent on sabotaging the players' mission. It was Billingsley who hired the shipboard assassin and bribed the valet while Vazares arranged to have Fronteira and the players poisoned. The Spanish spies have their headquarters at the wine shop and use the Loyal Citizen as a meeting place. The two locations are within a street or two of each other and are connected by an underground passage. Billingsley and Vazares have grown careless lately due to their rivalry over Beth, the pretty hired help at the wine shop. She enjoys the attention but doesn't know her would-be suitors are spies. Vazares carries five to eight throwing knives on his person at all times and will attack any character he catches flirting with Beth.

The wine shop has three levels. The street level is the shop proper, lit by a pair of small chandeliers suitable for swashbuckling maneuvers. Brief stairs lead to a small loft above, which contains the shop's office and sleeping quarters for the proprietors, and to a cellar beneath. A wall-mounted wine rack in the cellar has an odd-sized bottle on one end. If the bottle is pulled, the rack will swing forward to admit characters to the spies' headquarters.

Inside the secret room is a scaffold to a peephole that allows occupants to view the shop unobserved, a large wall map of London, a locked cabinet containing Vazares' supply of poisons and Spanish code book, and a table and chairs. A second secret door is activated by twisting a candleholder on the wall. The passage beyond leads to the storeroom of the Loyal Citizen.

If the characters walk in to the shop and ask to see the proprietor, Beth will tell them he isn't in and won't be back for a while. If they continue to hang around and ask questions, some rough customers will saunter in, criticize the players' choice of wines and pick a fight. They don't have noticeable Spanish accents, but might slip



if wounded or frustrated. If the players beat them, they might also have Spanish coins in their pockets—though this isn't necessarily suspicious by itself.

Players who enter and pretend to be shopping will notice that customers who ask for a particular brand and year of wine are admitted to the cellar. Beth will let the players into the cellar if they do likewise, especially if they flirt with her first.

Adventurers who manage to find the secret room will have a GM-determined amount of time to poke around before Billingsley and Vazares show up with some henchmen. They might discover a partially encoded message describing their activities and mentioning Billingsley by code name. His real name is in the code book. Or they might hide in the passage and overhear the spies plotting to hijack their carriage tomorrow morning. The players might attempt to arrest the spies themselves, a dangerous business. If they escape and get back to their apartments in one piece, the PCs might participate in a raid on the shop. Or they might devise a trap for the would-be hijackers. Either event will turn Billingsley and Vazares against each other, giving the players the advantage while the two rogues slug it out.

If Billingsley escapes, or if the players fail to identify him as Frontiera's agent, he will try to carry out the publicity stunt planned earlier by Pym and himself: leading his recruits to the Tower. The PCs should have one last chance to stop him. He has 100 men but they will turn on him if the PCs can persuade them that their commander is a Spanish spy. If they succeed, Pym will accuse Billingsley of treason and have him executed before he can talk. If they fail, Pym will whip Parliament into a frenzy; the players' mission is blown, and Ings will regretfully send them home.

AFTERMATH (13.1.5)

In the wake of a successful mission, Father Joseph may send them to negotiate with the Dutch. Or they might get to participate in the coup itself, sneaking into Lisbon to join the raid on Duchess Margaret's palace. The players will be out of favor if they fail, though Father Joseph knew it was an iffy venture when he sent them. They might be sent to Spain as agents provocateurs in Catalanian rebellion and get to participate in the taking of Barcelona, where rebels will burn the city and slaughter all Spanish officials. If Billingsley and Vazares failed to kill each other, one of them might contrive to flee England and hunt the players down.

HORATIO BILLINGSLEY

Hits	Melee		Fire	AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession		
86	70 w/Ssword		-	5(5)		7	Rogue		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
90	71	70	56	50	58	95	50	77	71

Skills

Acrobatics 60; Administration 60; Diplomacy 60; Disguise 60; Gambling 55; Spanish spoken and literacy lvl 8; Stalk/Hide 60; Streetwise 60; Tactics 40

ROBERT INGS

Hits	Melee		Fire	AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession		
37	30 w/Ssword		-	1(0)		2	Diplomat		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
46	56	65	50	51	43	50	59	75	81

Skills

Bribery 40; Diplomacy 60; Duping 60; English spoken and literacy lvl 10; French spoken and literacy lvl 8; Portuguese spoken lvl 8

EARL OF KENT

Hits	Melee		Fire	AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession		
71	60 w/Rapier, Ssword		-	1(35)		5	Duelist		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
71	94	50	56	71	55	94	57	50	68

Skills

Adrenal Defense 35; Adrenal Move (speed) —; French spoken and literacy lvl 8

CHRISTAVAO FRONTEIRA

Hits	Melee		Fire	AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession		
44	40 w/Ssword		40 w/Musket	1(10)		3	No Prof.		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
41	93	50	77	75	63	55	82	54	50

Skills

Diplomacy 60; English spoken and literacy lvl 8; Portuguese spoken and literacy lvl 10; Riding 55

SPANISH SPIES

Hits	Melee		Fire	AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession		
32	40 w/Rapier		-	1(0)		2	Rogue		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
50	57	65	52	50	48	55	50	63	66

Skills

Ambush 3 ranks; English spoken lvl 10; Stalk/Hide 60

VALET

Hits	Melee		Fire	AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession		
39	20 w/club		-	1(5)		3	No Prof.		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
52	79	50	53	50	49	78	50	83	75

Skills

Perception 60; Stalk/Hide 60; Surveillance 60; Trickery 60

ESTABAN VAZARES

Hits	Melee		Fire	AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession		
38	40 w/Club, Knife		445 w/Knife	1(10)		3	Rogue		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
90	85	65	53	50	68	55	52	51	59

Skills

Adrenal Moves (balance) 40; English spoken lvl 10; Frenzy 60; Stalk/Hide 55; Surveillance 55; Toxicology 55



13.2 HOUR OF NEED

This is an open-ended adventure. Depending on the players' decisions and the GM's discretion it could either be used to add a touch of the macabre to an otherwise rational plotline or it could change the course of the campaign and history entirely. Characters would find a knowledge of Latin useful in this adventure.

PREMISE (13.2.1)

After stealing horses for their side during civil strife in France or England the players are approached by a strange old man who offers to buy them. If they cooperate with him, they could get a chance to discover and revive the slumbering King Arthur.

BACKGROUND (13.2.2)

Arthur, a sixth century Briton warrior chieftain, fought several battles to halt the Saxon invasion of England. He was killed at the Battle of Camlan in 537. Within 100 years, numerous legends had sprung up about his adventures in the British Isles and in north-western France. It was said he was not dead but in an enchanted sleep and would return again to rule at the hour of England's greatest need. There are as many grave sites for Arthur as tales so that this adventure could take place anywhere in England or even in Brittany, France. One of the legends says that a mysterious old man wanders about purchasing either black or white horses. When he has enough steeds for Arthur and all his men, the legendary king will ride forth.

The late 1640s and early 1650s were a time a great turmoil in England and France. Charles Stuart was captured and later beheaded by rebels who desired to replace the British monarchy with a republic. Charles' son, Charles, was forced to flee England after his Scottish army was routed by Cromwell's forces. The very basis of traditional English society was being challenged, arguably a threat greater than a foreign invasion. Meanwhile, France was being torn apart by the Frondes. Louis XIII was dead, leaving Anne of Austria regent for her young son Louis XIV. The aristocracy saw this as an opportunity to regain the feudal powers that the former king had stripped them of and rebelled. Cardinal Mazarin, the Queen's chief minister, fled France, leaving Anne and Louis at the mercy of scheming nobles, rival armies and rioting mobs.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED (13.2.3)

The adventurer's commanding officer tells them that forces loyal to the King are lacking horses needed to retaliate against the rebels. However, a nearby gentleman farmer with rebel sympathies is known to have a quantity of good riding steeds in his stables. The players' mission is to raid the farm and escape with as many horses as possible. A few men are at their disposal, the King's cause has only a few at this point, though too many soldiers will make surprise difficult. Summer nights have been dark, perfect for the characters' purposes. If players check their calendars, they'll notice that tonight is Midsummer's Eve.

Getting away with the horses shouldn't be too difficult, though keeping them together afterward may be a challenging and embarrassing task. The GM should let the players come up with their own plan for the raid. Unless they are careless, the players will have surprise. The gentleman and his farmhands will put up a belated resistance; most of them will be armed with farm tools but some will have firearms or swords. PCs should be able to escape and elude any pursuers in the resulting confusion.

THE OLD MAN (13.2.4)

As soon as the characters have gotten far enough from the farm to breathe easy they will see a lone rider leisurely approaching them. It's a white-bearded old man on a magnificent coal-black stallion shod in silver. If the players attack him on sight he will ride into the darkness and disappear. In addition to being familiar with the territory, the old man is skilled at ventriloquism and mimicry. Characters who try to follow him will be led on an all-night wild goose chase through bog and bramble and will probably wind up hopelessly lost and hip-deep in bog. If they allow him to approach, he will graciously compliment them on their horses and will offer to buy any black ones in their herd. He is willing to pay twice what the horses are worth and will offer ancient gold coins familiar only to characters knowledgeable about old-fashioned currency.

The GM should play up the spookiness of the old man: his wild eyes, his archaic speech and clothes, his flowing beard that seems to have a mind of its own, his uncanny ability to hide in the woods. Is he Merlin? A madman? The king of the fairies? Keep the PCs guessing and emphasize the subtle weirdness that surrounds him.

If the PCs try to steal his horse or his gold the old man will be furious but won't resist. Instead he will tell them he can show them where many such fine mounts are stabled if they will let him keep his. He will lead them into the woods and attempt to lose them as above, remaining always within taunting distance but just out of sword or pistol range. Once the players are trapped or exhausted he will make off with their horses.

If the adventurers treat the old man respectfully but refuse to sell he will keep raising his price and will finally offer to trade, especially if they plead that the horses are for the King's service. He will lead them through the woods to a grass-covered mound with a dimly lit doorway in one side. The old man will enter and lead out beautiful white mounts, complete with expensive-looking saddles and bridles, to exchange for their black steeds. Dawn will break soon after; there will be no sign of a doorway in the mound and the old man will have slipped away. Any characters who went inside the mound won't be seen again, at least not in this century.

If the PCs sell him the horses, the old man will ride along with them for a while asking questions about the nation's current state of affairs. Told about the religious and civil strife, he will mutter, "T'was never like this in the old days." Shaking his head sadly, he will start to ride off but then ask the players to accompany him upon an urgent errand. If they do so, he will lead them to the mound and bid them enter.

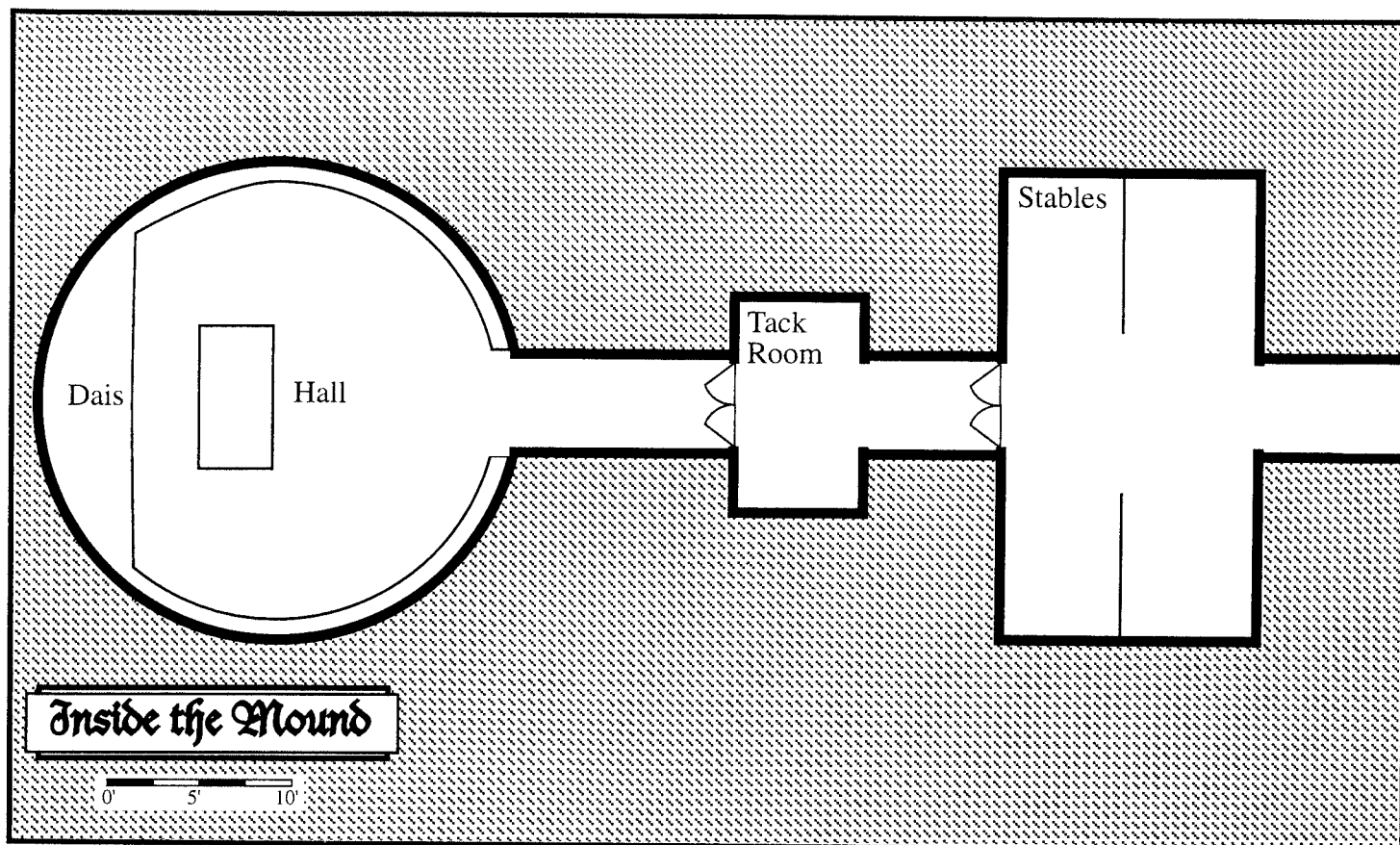
The old man's gold and horses are what they seem to be unless the players treat him badly. In that case, at sunrise the coins will turn into hazel nuts and the horses into goats with ratty rope harnesses.

INSIDE THE MOUND (13.2.5)

The stables inside the mound are much more extensive than exterior would seem to permit. Scores of stalls are occupied by fine black and white horses, all of which are asleep. They will awaken if the players take hold of their bridles to lead them out. Beyond the stables is an equipment room filled with appropriate quantities of gilded and jewelled riding gear. While the players are taking this all in, the old man will contrive to conceal himself and leave them to their own devices.

Beyond the equipment room is a huge circular chamber with a dais against the wall opposite the door. Seated on benches along the walls are 100 sleeping warriors clad in iron helms and scale or leather armor. They are armed with swords, spears, wooden shields and longbows. A majestic figure wearing an iron crown





slumbers regally on a throne upon the dais. Before the dais is a low table (not round) on which rests a horn and sword bound in its sheath by a black garter.

To successfully awaken Arthur the players must both blow the horn and draw the sword completely from its scabbard, cutting the garter. The sleeping warriors will begin to stir as soon as a player-character attempts to do either but will fall asleep again if he sets the horn back down on the table or sheaths the sword. If this occurs, the old man will step out from hiding crying, "Woe, woe upon ye who but for your failing courage could have raised the goodliest king that ever ruled!" The ceiling will begin to collapse and players will have moments to flee the mound before it comes down around their ears. If the players complete only one of the steps necessary, Arthur and his warriors will indeed awake and ride forth, but will crumble to dust as soon as daylight strikes them. If the players attempt to steal anything from the mound its occupants, man and animal, will awake and attempt to prevent the culprits from leaving. The warriors can't exit the mound. Players who escape with stolen booty will have incredibly bad luck (-30 to all rolls, fumble ranges doubled) as long as the items are in their possession.

IF ARTHUR IS RAISED

Arthur, upon awakening, will step down from the dais and take his sword from the player who drew it. His warriors will be on the alert but won't attack unless the PCs do something stupid. He will solemnly address the adventurers in Old Welsh, announcing himself as Arthur, King of the Britons, and will demand to know who they are—loyal subjects or Saxon invaders? Seeing that they don't understand, he will try Old Irish, Frankish, and finally Latin. The warriors, meanwhile, will chuckle at the players' strange clothes and puny swords. It is up to the players to convince Arthur that they are on the up and up.

From this point on, the possibilities are endless. However, the GM should keep several problems in mind. Arthur is 1,100 years behind the times. He doesn't speak modern English or French and might consider the current inhabitants foreigners. For all his charisma and genuine political savvy, he isn't the gilded figure the public will expect from the medieval romances. His warriors are tough and crude and not at all gallant. If he is a Christian, he will probably lean toward Catholicism, a real problem in Protestant England. He will probably consider the Stuarts Pictish usurpers to the English throne and will treat them accordingly. If the adventure occurs in France, he might insist that Brittany be returned to English rule. He and his men aren't used to modern weapons and tactics, particularly firearms. And his conservative outlook is sure to offend some powerful political faction. Whether Arthur is pragmatic enough to adapt to the modern world and how quickly he does so is up to the GM.

Arthur's sword, Excalibur, is an ordinary blade of fine craftsmanship (+30). Its scabbard, however, is a magic item that prevents him from bleeding to death in combat no matter how badly he's wounded. This isn't an obvious effect, but any character can find out about it by familiarizing himself with the Arthurian legends.

Several possible outcomes of this adventure include:

Arthur experiences culture shock. After a brief tour of the modern world he decides England is not ready for him and returns to his mound.

The English Civil War continues. The nobles and common people rally around Arthur while the Parliamentarians make their peace with Charles Stuart and support him against the ultraconservative newcomer. British monarchy is preserved but at what cost to constitutional development?



Arthur gets involved in the Frondes. He might back up the boy king in return for French support for an English invasion or the return of Brittany to English control. Or he might become a Frondeur, seeking to seize control of the French throne for himself and restore order by force. (It's for their own good, really! Someone has to teach these Gauls some manners.) These actions could either polarize France as in the above scenario, or anti-English sentiment could result in the country uniting behind Louis XIV.

In any of the above scenarios the PCs might decide that they have released a monster and attempt to assassinate Arthur. This will be difficult at any time but especially after his cause gets rolling.

KING ARTHUR

Hits	Melee				Fire	AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession		
131180	w/Bsword,Lance				90 w/ Bow	17(50s)	20	Leader		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re	
90	97	102	79	76	93	90	74	91	96	

Skills
Acrobatics 60; Acting 75; Administration 75; Adrenal Move (speed) 40; Diplomacy 40; Duping 75; Latin spoken and literacy lvl 6; Leadership 75; Maneuver in Plate Armor 100; Public Speaking 75; Riding 60; Tactics 65

ARTHUR'S WARRIORS

Hits	Melee				Fire	AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession		
80 75	w/ Bsword,Lance				50 w/ Bow	17(30s)	5	Fighter		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re	
90	76	71	58	55	93	75	54	50	56	

Skills
Animal Training 40; Foraging 55; Latin spoken lvl 6; Riding 60; Tactics 40

13.3 FOR HIS OWN GOOD

This is a scenario for up to four players that would work particularly well in a historical campaign. The NPCs have French names, but it could take place in either Paris or London at any time during the period covered by *At Rapier's Point*. The player characters probably shouldn't be Musketeers or Yeomen of the Guard because the adventure would pit them against their fellow soldiers. It would be ideal for non-conformists and members of the city underworld.

PREMISE (13.3.1)

Followers of an outspoken religious dissident hire the PCs to kidnap their hero for his own protection and smuggle him out of the city. The adventurers will have to avoid the authorities and deal with a "client" who doesn't want their help.

BACKGROUND (13.3.2)

For the past three weeks, Protestant evangelist Bernard Montclair has been turning the city upside down with his fiery preaching, calling on the Church to reform and the populace to repent. Montclair manages to pop up in different parts of the city, speak briefly but eloquently, and slip away with the aid of the dissident

underground. The authorities are furious, and some of Montclair's associates are wondering how long he can continue to elude them.

For His Own Good can be played in one of two ways. First, the people who contact the PCs are who they claim to be: friends of Montclair who believe the situation has become too dangerous for him to continue preaching and want to help him leave before he gets caught. Rene Ducret will give the PCs a password, "And how is Master Simon tonight?," to enable them to get cooperation from the underground during their journey. Second, the scheme is a police set up. The authorities want to arrest Montclair quietly so that the multitudes he's been speaking to won't riot when he is seized. Ducret is a police officer well-versed in the dissident sect's beliefs and catch phrases. Which option the GM chooses should depend on the PCs. If the players trust their contacts, let their patron be a royal agent. If they're suspicious of everybody, let their contacts be stalwart members of the underground. Keep them guessing.

If the scenario takes place in Paris, the adventurers will be up against the secret police, backed by city militiamen. They'll be heading northwest along the Seine toward Le Havre, a journey of almost 100 miles, and will have to figure out how to get past the city of Rouen. If it is set in London, they'll face the city guard and the King's spy network, and their escape route will follow the Thames due east. The PCs will be only 25 or 30 miles from the open sea, but the authorities will be sure to have watchers stationed along the river. They may be forced to flee by land in hopes of reaching a coastal village where they can catch a ride across the Channel. In either case, they'll be pursued by royal troops if they manage to leave the city. This adventure should have a strict time limit (the PCs have to get Montclair to the coast before his ship leaves), with the adventurers always one step ahead of the authorities.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED (13.3.3)

If the PCs are members of the city underworld, they'll be contacted by one of their shady middlemen or by their thieves' guild leader about a job for pay. They are to meet their prospective client at Ducret's stables near the river. If they are non-conformists, they may be contacted direct by Rene Ducret. Or the PCs could see an 11-year-old boy being set upon by thugs on one of the city's side streets. If they come to his aid, he will ask them to accompany him to his destination, which turns out to be one of Montclair's secret meetings. Ducret will hear of the characters' intervention and will ask to speak to them.

THE PLAN (13.3.4)

Ducret will tell the PCs he believes Montclair's survival is essential to the revival's success and that the situation has grown too risky for Bernard to keep preaching. Montclair, however, insists that leaving the city would be a cowardly betrayal of those who have risked their livelihoods and lives to listen to him. Ducret, Antione Goossens and other dissident leaders want to hire the PCs to abduct Montclair and smuggle him to safety.

In two nights, Ducret will host a meeting at his stables. The PCs are to attend, seize Montclair as soon as he finishes speaking, and hustle him into a waiting closed carriage. They are to have him change into the garb of a common laborer while the carriage heads for the river. At the docks, Montclair will be put aboard a fishing boat, which will take him to the coast. There, dissidents have chartered a ship to take him to Holland, where he will be relatively safe from extradition. The PCs aren't expected to go all the way to



the coast with Montclair but will need to travel at least part of the way to keep him from escaping, to elude the authorities themselves and to ensure that the boatmen keep their end of the bargain. Goossens will accompany Montclair the length of the trip and will pay the PCs when they debark.

THE COURSE OF THE ADVENTURE (13.3.5)

No matter which scenario is used, Antione Goossens is police spy. He was recruited a week ago after his wife and 5-year-old daughter failed to return from the market. Two men approached him, telling him to assist the police investigation if he wanted to see his family again. Goossens told them of the upcoming meeting and received instructions to slow Montclair's flight however he could. If the abduction is a police trap, Goossens doesn't know it and doesn't know Ducret is also working for the police. He is a man in torment, guilt-ridden over his betrayal of Montclair and terrified for the safety of his family. His attempt to help the authorities will be half-hearted, and he may blurt out the whole story if the PCs are kind to him.

The cell meeting at Ducret's stables will be attended by 8 to 15 people, some of them children. After a time of prayer, one of the group will give a report on the status of members in jail and on the surveillance patterns of the city guard. As Montclair stands to read the scriptures about 20 halberd-bearing troops will burst into the stables. Adult dissidents will offer passive resistance to allow Montclair and the children time to escape and will be subdued brutally. Montclair will fight the PCs until Goossens joins them, and their way to the carriage should be blocked by two to four guards. If they defeat or escape the troops, the characters should proceed quickly to the riverfront, but calmly so as to not arouse suspicion. Behind them, the guards will have begun a house to house search.

At the river, Captain Piet Lebel will nervously demand to be paid up front. His boat is barely large enough to accommodate the PCs' party and his crew of three. Goossens will fuss with wrapping Montclair's old clothes around a rock and dumping them in the river. Troops will show up just as the boat is launched, and Lebel's first impulse will be to surrender. The PCs will have to intimidate him into fleeing in spite of a hail of musket fire. (If the kidnapping was a police plot, authorities had planned to grab Montclair here.)

From here on out, the progress of the adventure is up to the PCs. Their success depends on how well they can gain the confidence of the NPCs. Goossens' possible behavior has already been noted. The adventurers will have to persuade Montclair that they are on his side. He doesn't know them, and indications that the scheme may be a trap will make him all the more suspicious. If they fail, he will do his best to escape them and make his own way to safety. If they succeed, they'll find him a loyal companion whose bravery and contacts may save their skins. Lebel and his crew are true mercenaries, willing to help out only as long as the price right and the risks are moderate.

The PCs have four or five days to reach the coast before the chartered ship leaves for Holland, one or two if the adventure takes place in England. At each stop, they should be dogged by soldiers on the lookout for them and Montclair, a fact that should encourage them to stick together. If the river route is cut off or the PCs realize that the scheme is a set up, they'll have to flee by land, hoping to encounter members of the underground who can hide them and arrange another means of transport. If Montclair escapes them, the characters can try to continue their scheduled route, hoping to track

him down. They'll be at a real disadvantage without his knowledge of the dissident network but the password Ducret gave them may help.

CLUES

If the GM decides that the abduction is a police scam, he should leave clues for the PCs:

The people who first contacted the characters won't be at the meeting at the stables. This isn't necessarily suspicious in itself but the dissidents won't recognize the names of the PCs' contacts if the characters mention them.

Troops raiding the stable won't try very hard to stop Montclair's escape. They'll give token resistance to keep up appearances, but they already know where he's going. Soldiers will show up unaccountably fast once the characters reach the river.

The PCs may have to discuss the terms of their employment with Montclair to gain his trust. If they do, the man they know as Ducret won't match the description of the stable owner Montclair is familiar with.

THE SHIP

Even if the police are behind the scheme, dissidents will have a ship waiting for Montclair. Goossens, in a moment of repentance, sent word to have one ready. The adventurers need not go to Holland but circumstances may force them. Getting Montclair aboard shouldn't be a simple matter. The captain will be suspicious and demand to see his (or their) travel papers, requiring the PCs to fast talk or bribe him. Also, the captain was expecting one covert passenger, not a group, and will be none too pleased to have Goossens and the PCs on his ship. Making these arrangements will take some time, and the ship will cast off just as soldiers arrive on the wharf. If the PCs and Goossens stay behind, they'll have to figure out some way to hide or escape—fast!

If the GM wishes to make the finale more interesting, the authorities may already be there, waiting for the characters. This could require the PCs to hide Montclair, Goossens and/or themselves among the cargo while the ship is searched. They might try to pass themselves off as crewmen. Or the adventurers might come aboard as dockhands toting cargo and change clothing in the hold with non-conformist crew members, who will then debark as dockhands. The latter two courses will require good acting skills and nerves of steel. If the characters are lucky, the officer in charge won't think to check their hands for calluses or their faces for a seaman's tan.

RESOLUTIONS (13.3.6)

If the adventurers get Montclair safely to the ship, they'll be paid as promised. If they accompany him to Holland, one of Montclair's wealthy Dutch converts will pay their passage home. The return trip could be a springboard for further adventures (shipwrecks, pirates and suspicious customs officials come to mind). The PCs will have earned the respect of the dissident sect, and the GM should award them favorable contacts or other appropriate Perks for future use. If Goossens is still with them, he may ask them to help him rescue his family.

If Montclair escaped the PCs or was captured, the sect won't retaliate against the PCs. However, they won't be able to collect their fee and will be actively avoided by the dissidents.

The authorities will treat the PCs with disdain even if the kidnapping was their idea. If the PCs willingly turn Montclair in, they'll be paid a small fee and retained as informers. They will be



“free” but under constant surveillance. If the PCs help Montclair escape, they’ll be wanted by the authorities themselves. If the scheme wasn’t a police trap, the PCs’ identities won’t be known, for which they can be grateful.

Captured PCs can expect to be roughed up by the troops, interrogated and imprisoned. Let them face the threat of torture or mutilation. It isn’t necessary for them to suffer directly; a couple fellow prisoners returning to the dungeon with fresh brands or missing ears should suffice. They might encounter Goossens’ wife and child while incarcerated. Escape will be difficult, and if the PCs fail to get out their fate will be pretty grim. If the PCs assisted Montclair and he escaped, the wealthy Dutch convert might offer to ransom them and arrange their transport to Holland. If the PCs cooperated with the authorities, they may have their sentences commuted and be sent to the colonies as slaves or indentured servants (a rough fate but one that could work to their advantage if they’re clever and lucky).

ANTIONE GOOSSENS

Hits	Melee		Fire		AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession		
29	10 Rapier		-		1(0)	2	Dissident		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
54	55	44	61	67	55	56	62	50	71

Skills

Bribery 55; Diplomacy 55; Drug Tolerance (alcohol) 60; Perception 55

PIET LEBEL

Hits	Melee		Fire		AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession		
33	50 w/ Knife		-		1(5)	3	Sailor		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
90	79	59	54	50	90	74	56	52	50

Skills

Marine Piloting 55; Navigation 55; Public Speaking 55; Streetwise 55

BERNARD MONTCLAIR

Hits	Melee		Fire		AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession		
52	50 w/ Rapier		40 w/ Pistol		1(10)	7	Dissident		
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
75	90	75	78	84	58	60	74	75	95

Skills

Diplomacy 60; Duping 60; Marine Piloting 40; Martial Arts lvl 1; Public Speaking 60; Riding 40; Stalk/Hide 60; Streetwise 60; Weaving 55

13.4 A WOMAN SCORNE

This scenario is set in France any time between the years 1600 and 1610. It can be used for any type of campaign.

PREMISE (13.4.1)

Henry IV’s jealous former fiance has arranged an “accidental” death for the King during a vacation at her accomplice’s country chateau. The player-characters must detect and defeat her plot.

BACKGROUND (13.4.2)

Henriette de Balzac d’Entraques has hated Henry IV every since he dumped her to marry Marie de Medici. She has remained a member of his court, sometimes trying to seduce him, sometimes trying to eliminate him. Henriette has seduced the ambitious Comte de Anjou into helping her assassinate Henry with the Holy League’s blessing. She has made sure the Count’s pretty young ward, Margueritte d’Angers, has crossed paths with the King, and the lusty monarch has taken the bait. The Count has invited Henry to his country estate for a weekend of hunting, hinting that Margueritte will be there as well. The League sent a fanatical monk, Brother Xavier, to assist the conspirators. Henriette and the Count plan to have Xavier shoot the King from hiding during the hunt and claim his death is a hunting accident.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED (13.4.3)

How the PCs stumble onto the plot depends on their careers and social status. Musketeers or palace soldiers might be assigned by the Duke of Sully to escort the King during his vacation. The characters should be present to overhear a tempestuous conversation between Henry and his chief minister: Sully fears for the King’s safety and would rather he not go at all. Henry insists and complains that too many guards will hinder his amorous activities. (“Damn it, Max, you never let me have fun anymore!”) Sully will relent as long as the King agrees to take the PCs along. Henry will storm out of the adjacent chamber to snarl at them: “Do you duty, gentlemen, but by all means be discreet!”

If they have enough status, the players might be invited as guests to the hunting party. They’ll have more freedom to investigate any unusual happenings but will have to put up with constant bickering between Henriette and Marie de Medicis. The jealous queen assumes this vacation is an excuse for Henry to have a fling with his old girlfriend and will try to make everyone else as miserable as she is.

NPC GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS (13.4.4)

Characters attempting to protect the King will find themselves in as much danger from their friends as from their enemies.

Henry IV: The King is blinded to any danger by his desire for Margueritte and a good time. If he perceives the threat to himself, his sense of manhood and love for adventure won’t let him avoid it. He will make his would-be protectors’ task difficult, slipping away to secret rendezvous with the ladies or charging off ahead of the party during the excitement of the hunt. Henry will shamelessly flirt with every woman in the party but his wife, feeling that Marie’s crabbiness justifies his affairs. The King resents the PCs for cramping his style, and woe be to any character who interrupts him while he is attempting to romance Margueritte!

Henriette de Balzac d’Entraques: Gorgeous, witty and charming, Henriette will play the perfect party companion. She will do her best (and her best is very good) to put the PCs off their guard, to distract them, to separate them from the King and each other, and to pump them for useful information. She will make a special effort to seduce characters that she thinks know something. If the conspiracy unravels, Henriette will gladly sacrifice both the Count and Xavier to escape.



The Count of Anjou: The Count resents Henry's "usurpation" of aristocratic rights and wouldn't mind having him replaced with a more tractable monarch. He hopes that participation in the assassination plot will improve his financial position, allowing him to better pursue his two loves: scientific research and Henriette. He has, in fact, made considerable advances in physics and mechanics; some of the gadgets on display in his study are 40 or 50 years ahead of their time. The Count will appear the perfect host, reasonable and attentive, and will try to charm female PCs while Henriette works on the males. He is suave and polite at all times, even when dueling or strapping a victim to one of his machines. The only break in his cool demeanor is where Henriette is concerned. He flirts tastefully with her in public, but becomes passionate as soon as he thinks the King and the PCs are looking the other way.

Marie de Medicis: The Queen is, with some justification, in an ugly mood. She will order the PCs around as if they were her personal valets and waiters, will insist that they protect her from imagined threats, will snoop through the chateau with the subtlety of a charging bull, and blunder onto the scene just as they are about to do something clever or sneaky. If she catches the King trysting with another female it would be unwise for the characters to intervene. Neither she nor Henry (assuming she survives) would forgive them.

Margueritte d'Angers: A true ingenue, 16-year-old Margot is shy, demure, and has no idea what her treacherous uncle is up to. She is equally intimidated by the lecherous king and her formidable duenna, Olga, but is convinced that Henriette is her best friend. When danger threatens, she will throw her comely self into the arms of the nearest male PC and will develop a crush on him when he protects her, much to the King's annoyance. (This tendency could result in interesting complications if the nearest PC is a female masquerading as a man in order to pursue a military career.)

Olga: Margueritte's nurse is a brawny matron of indeterminate age and nationality. She's nearly 7 feet tall and half as wide, rarely speaks in sentences of more than two words, and will blindly obey the Count's orders as long as they don't result in harm to Margueritte. She's been known to twist the rapiers and walking sticks of the girl's would-be suitors into pretzels. Olga might become an ally if the conspirators threaten Margot.

Brother Xavier: Xavier is purely and simply a nut case. He is sure that Henry IV plans to turn France over to King James to form a Protestant confederacy and that anyone who doesn't agree with him is a heretical traitor. Normally quiet and reserved, Xavier quickly slips into a murderous rage when he hears heresy and blasphemy. Unfortunately, theology is his favorite topic of conversation, and almost anything the PCs say will be considered blasphemous. The Count and Henriette will attempt to keep him away from the PCs and the King until the most opportune moment. The PCs will have to kill him to stop him; if injured or restrained, he will keep struggling as long as he is conscious even if he is bleeding to death.

THE CHATEAU (13.4.5)

The weekend festivities are not at the Count's Angers chateau, a massive pentagonal 13th Century fortress complete with drawbridge and conical-topped towers, but at his smaller, modern luxury home outside town. This is a palatial two-story mansion with a large, tastefully laid out rear garden, all surrounded by a

functional 10-foot deep moat. The chateau resembles a giant capital E: a central domed hall flanked by a pair of L-shaped wings. In front, two tiers of broad steps lead to a narrow bridge that crosses the moat, giving access to a porch that stretches the length of the building. Behind the garden, an even narrower bridge spans the moat, leading to an iron-fenced courtyard for carriages. Drivers can reach it by a wide paved walkway that runs along the outside of the moat. Beyond the courtyard is a ancient round tower, the remnant of an earlier castle that the Count has partially restored. It is of typical three-level design: a ground-floor "basement" topped by two rooms. A "dungeon" is reached through a trap door in the basement floor.

First Floor: Kitchen, Dining Area, Sitting Rooms, and the main Guest Room (for the King).

Second Floor: Count's Quarters, other Guest Rooms, Library/Study (where the Count shows off his scientific toys), and a Chapel.

The Tower (not shown in the layouts): This houses the Count's workshop, supplies, gadgets, scientific library. Note that there is an underground passage leading from the Chateau to the tower's "dungeon." This secret passage also branches off, forming an escape tunnel into the garden.

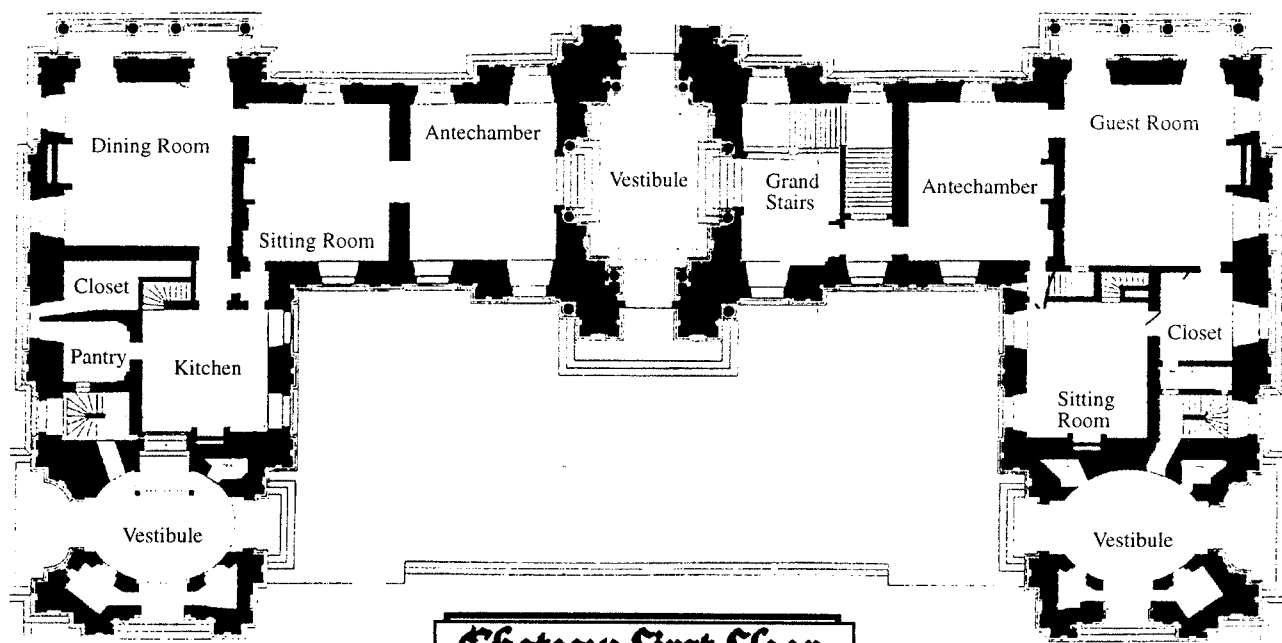
THE COURSE OF THE ADVENTURE (13.4.6)

The trip to Angers will be long and irritating; during the constant bickering between Marie and Henriette, the Queen will insinuate that the mistress has had secret rendezvous with her husband during other country outings. Henriette will respond that she has never been to Angers before. Upon their arrival, the Count will greet Henry and his other guests warmly. Alert PCs may notice that Margueritte greets Henriette as an old friend before she is herded away by Olga. The day will be filled with aristocratic entertainments: billiards, cards, riding, indoor tennis. The Count will graciously give the King and any interested PCs a tour of the chateau, lingering in the study where a number of his scientific toys are on display. These include small water-filled bulbs that spin when heated, models of machines proposed by Leonardo da Vinci, etc. During the day's activities, the adventurers might note the following:

The Count has a small number of guards visible, no more than what would be expected for a provincial ruler. However, many of the servants may betray a military air, almost (but not quite) coming to attention when the Count enters, grasping at swords they don't have when someone makes a sudden move in the Count's direction. Some may perform household tasks clumsily or improperly (Marie de Medicis will complain that the luncheon servers acted as if they'd never waited on tables before). If asked about these things, the Count will explain with a chuckle that his butler is former drill sergeant and demands precise execution of the most menial tasks. Several of the previous servants were dismissed for not measuring up, and the new help hasn't yet been whipped into shape. He will apologize profusely for any inconvenience, offer to have the erring lackeys reassigned, and will berate them thoroughly within earshot of the PCs.

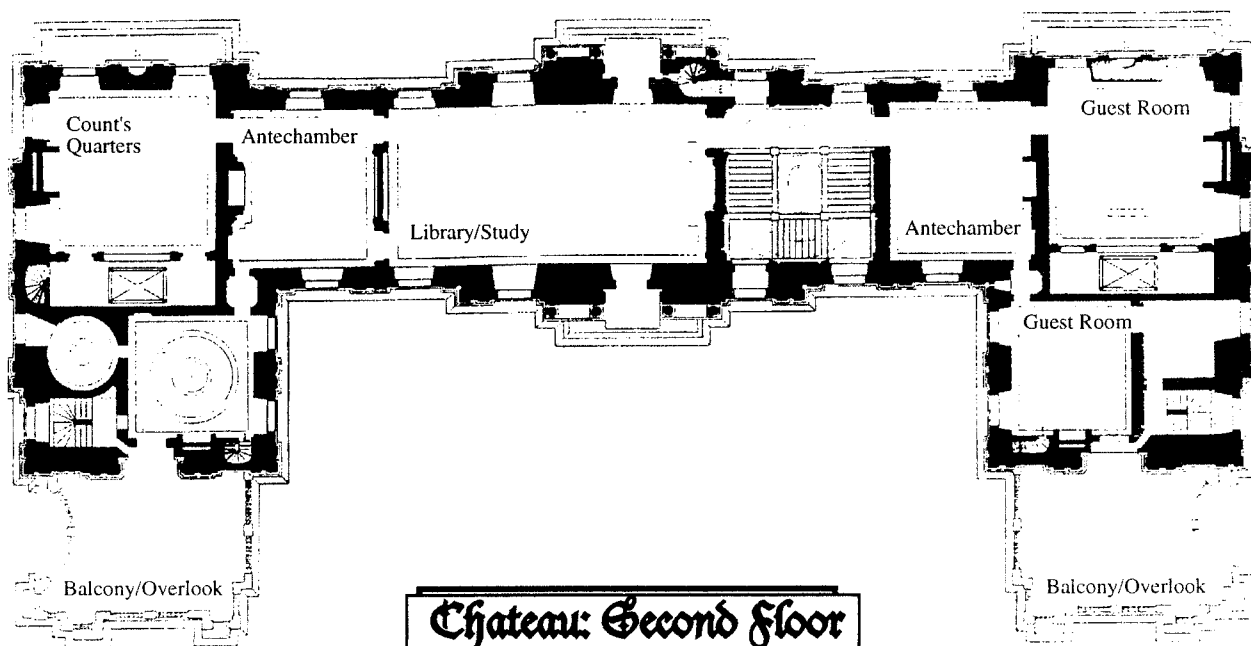
There are subtle indicators that Margueritte is a prisoner in her own home. Olga follows her everywhere, may become threatening if male PCs attempt to converse with her, and leaves her only when the girl is in her own room. Players who check will discover that the door is locked from the outside.





Chateau: First floor

0' 15' 30'



Chateau: Second floor



Xavier, posing as one of the gardeners, will be unable to fully control his emotions. PCs may catch him staring malevolently at the King or themselves. The Count will order him back to work or have a couple of other servants accompany him to assist him with unnamed chores.

While snooping about the chateau, PCs might run across a tete-a-tete between the Count and Henriette, the Count passionately entreating her to marry him. If they are true ladies and gentlemen, the PCs will withdraw. If they eavesdrop, Henriette will gently disentangle herself from the Count's arms and coyly suggest that they discuss marriage when there are fewer people about. This isn't necessarily suspicious in itself (Henriette may have met the Count elsewhere or maybe he's a real fast mover) but may seem strange if she or the Count have recently tried to seduce the PCs.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE HUNT

At dinner, the Count will announce that the meal will be followed by music and dancing in the ballroom and that the first hunt will take place early tomorrow morning. Margueritte will act ill, then faint into the nearest player character's arms, passing him a note. It reads, "Meet me by the fountain in the garden at midnight." Olga will assist her to her room. If the player allows the note to be seen or read it or gives it to the Count, Henriette will use Margot's "sickness" as an excuse to keep everyone away from the girl, even the King. She'll then attempt to romance one of the PCs to find out what they know. In any event, Olga will see to it that the players aren't able to speak to Margueritte until the appointed time. This might be a time for the PCs to discover that Margot is locked in her room if they haven't learned it already.

If a player character allows himself to be drawn apart from the ball by Henriette (by the Count if the PC is a female), he had best be on his toes. He will be invited to a secluded lounge for after dinner drinks and light conversation, during which Henriette will attempt to discover if the adventurers are suspicious, what if anything they have learned, and what security measures are for the King. If the PC makes his Perception roll, he'll notice Henriette slip something into his glass before she hands it to him. A player who drinks the doctored wine will awake in the dungeon of the Count's workshop. If the character notices the wine being drugged but plays along with Henriette without taking a drink, she will give up in disgust and leave, complaining that the PC just doesn't know how to treat a lady. (A particularly sneaky and dexterous PC could try to switch glasses. If tricked into drinking her own potion, Henriette will become giggly and sensuous, then suddenly lapse into a most unladylike snoring.) If the PC confronts her about the drugged wine, armed men will appear from behind a tapestry and drag him to the dungeon.

Sneaking outside at night unseen could be difficult for an individual, impossible for a group. The guards are on duty, servants will be completing end of the day tasks, and some guests (such as Henry) may be making their ways to their own rendezvous. Things might be simplified if the party consists of male and female adventurers; observers would assume the PCs were merely another couple taking a romantic walk in the garden. (A bribe and a wink for the guards wouldn't hurt either.) If her note was successfully and secretly passed, Margueritte will manage to climb out her window and meet the PCs. She will be somewhat taken aback if the PC she has a crush on is accompanied by a female but with some prompting will confess her uneasiness about the King's attentions and the changes she's seen in the Count lately. She will tell the PCs she overheard Henriette telling the Count how much she despised them, adding that Henriette visited several



weeks ago with a strange man who is now on the gardening staff. The PCs will have to help her get back to her room.

If the note was seen or lost and the PCs still try to meet in the garden, or if they fail to sneak Margot back upstairs, the characters will suddenly find themselves surrounded by armed "servants." The garden is a good place for swashbuckling action: low branches to swing from, hedges to leap over, a fountain to push opponents into, lanterns to smash and torches to thrust in the faces of the enemy. If the PCs win, a furious Henry will come upon the scene accompanied by the Count and Olga. PCs who stayed in the chateau will probably be able to persuade the King not to have their friends arrested on the spot but he will assign them to guard his room for the duration of the trip, effectively confining them to quarters. If the PCs lose, they will be bound and Margot will be hustled away by Olga. One of the servants will twist an ornament on the fountain, causing a stairway to open in the pavement. The players will be led into the tunnel to the Count's dungeon.

PCs who don't go to the garden, who are confined to quarters, or who successfully help Margueritte back to her room will be rounded up by a pouting Marie de Medicis for a late night card game in the King's chamber (he's not there and has left orders for the PCs not to go looking for him). She will soon doze off. Fortunately for the PCs, there is a cabinet for refreshments at the foot of the King's bed, a large floor-to-ceiling canopy affair. Perceptive characters may notice something out of ordinary about the bed: the canopy may seem slightly lower than it was, the fringe of the bedspread or curtains may be caught in a seam in the floor or ceiling they didn't know was there, or the dustcover may be soiled although the floor is clean. A careful search of the bed will



reveal a stud set among the carvings on the headboard. If it is pressed, the lower part of bed will slowly sink into the floor like an elevator. The bed will stop in an underground passage and will rise to its former position as soon as the PCs get off of it. The passage leads to the garden and to the dungeon. Depending on how the adventure is progressing, the PCs could arrive in time to assist their captured companions, become captives themselves, or overhear the Count going over the final plans with Henriette and Xavier, or all of the above.

THE DUNGEON

The dungeon is part of the Count's workshop and houses some of his larger, less pleasant inventions. If the characters are brought there by force the Count will apologize for the necessity of disposing of them and cheerfully describe the principles behind the device to which his henchmen will strap them. The players will be on a grill gradually being raised to the ceiling by the movements of a huge metronome-like gadget mounted on the wall (the machine works something like a 20th Century automobile jack). The ceiling above them, the Count will note pleasantly, is bristling with rows of swords and daggers which will impale them, passing through the grill, when they reach the proper elevation. The Count will then yawn, comment that he has to get an early start in the morning, and bid the players a good evening.

Ways to escape: the grill has several rough edges that the characters could rub their straps against to free themselves. There is a lever at the bottom of the platform which reverses the direction the mechanism is driven. Objects dropped from the grill could jam the works or knock the lever in the opposite position. Or the PCs wriggling around could shift the grill out of adjustment; the longer swords will catch on the cross pieces and prevent them from being pressed against the daggers. Of course, they'll still have to get loose enough to roll out of the way of the swords. If worst comes to worst, the Queen could awake and blunder onto the secret passage in time to rescue them (how embarrassing!). If they don't escape, treat the deathtrap as 1-6 +100 broadsword or dagger attacks, with the victim getting no Defensive Bonus (except for magic, if they have any).

THE HUNT

If the PCs were captured, they'll get loose just after the hunting party has set out. The King was not alarmed at their absence; a number of the guests are sleeping late after last night's ball. If the characters were confined to guard duty, an early morning spat with the Queen will have caused him to storm out without doing anything about their desertion. If PCs weren't captured or confined, they'll learn during breakfast that the King has slipped off without them "for a breath of fresh air." By now, the characters should suspect something is up and should scramble to find the King.

Henry IV, the Count, and a small party of retainers are out on horseback on the Count's lands. In addition to their rapiers (a gentleman is never without one), they are armed with muskets and hunting knives. They'll have to dismount to actively stalk deer or game birds. Xavier has been stationed in the woods since before dawn. He is armed with a smallsword, a knife, a brace of pistols, and a double-barreled rifle.

This phase of the adventure should be a desperate race against time as the PCs try to reach either the King or Xavier before they encounter each other. Characters with tracking and outdoor skills will have an advantage here. If they encounter Xavier first, he will try to elude them and locate Henry before they do. If he is unable to do this, Xavier will seek cover then double back in an attempt

to pick them off one at a time. Gunfire will alert the King's party; Henry will insist on investigating the shots despite the Count's pleas to the contrary.

If the adventurers find Henry first and blurt out their tale, he will immediately order the Count's arrest. The Count will submit with dignity. Xavier will attempt to ambush the party on their way back to the chateau; the Count may use this as an opportunity to escape and warn Henriette. Xavier will persist in his attacks, and will flee only when getting a good shot at the King becomes impossible. If he escapes, he will bide his time and seek another opportunity to kill Henry IV.

If the PCs don't get there in time, the King will be wounded but quite alive. If the characters don't get Xavier, the Count will shoot him to keep him from talking. He will then attempt to "assist" Henry with the intent of finishing him off. If the PCs aren't in a position to intervene, Henry has enough fight left in him to hold off the Count until they can.

RESOLUTIONS

If the Count is still alive, he will take full responsibility for the conspiracy, denying any involvement by Henriette. He will ask to speak to her alone. If he is allowed to, eavesdropping PCs will overhear her calling him a fool, and his dignified, unrepentant bearing will be replaced with an air of grief. The Count has a small vial of poison on his person. If the PCs don't find it, he will ask for a glass of wine and attempt to take his life rather than face the humiliation of a trial and rejection by d'Entrauges.

Henriette has plenty of alibis. She says that her meeting with the PC was a legitimate flirtation; her questions were light conversation, the wine must have been predrugged, she didn't know the Count had men hiding behind the tapestry. If the adventurer caught her drugging the wine, she'll say the Count's men arrived in the room before she did and forced her to. In addition, Margueritte must have been mistaken; it was coincidence that she visited the chateau on business the same day Xavier arrived, and they certainly didn't arrive together. And her isolation of the girl was typical, if overzealous, mothering. Yes, she lied about not having been to Angers before, but it was the only way to get the Queen off her back. However suspicious all this may sound to the PCs, Henry will be inclined to believe her. If the adventurers persist in accusing her, the King will be displeased with them but will temporarily banish Henriette from Paris. She's sure to have unpleasant plans for the PCs when she's allowed to return to court.

The PCs will be able to vouch for Margueritte's innocence, telling the King that she tried to warn them of her suspicions with a note. The conspiracy may have cooled his ardor and persuaded him to leave her alone. On the other hand, if Margot's PC favorite is an aristocrat, Henry may try to get him to marry her and bring her to Paris, with the understanding that the King can continue to pursue her. In either case, Margueritte will persuade the King to have mercy on Olga.

If Henry returns to the chateau wounded, the Queen will fuss over him with smothering concern, to his utter embarrassment. If he is unharmed, Marie will sniff haughtily and declare that he nearly got what he deserved. She will be delighted if Henriette gets in trouble; the PCs will find favor in the Queen's eyes and will be called to a clandestine audience, where she will give them one of her jeweled necklaces.

Henry will be grateful to be alive. How the characters are rewarded depends on whether they are guards or guests and on how successful they were. If the King escaped injury and the PCs captured or killed the bad guys, soldier PCs will be made a



permanent part of Henry's bodyguard or will be promoted if they're already part of it. Guest PCs may receive titles of nobility (if they already have one, bump them up a notch on the social ladder) or the King may grant them lucrative royal offices. If Henry was wounded and one or more of the villains escaped, the King will still thank the PCs. Soldiers may be sent in pursuit of the bad guys and will get a scolding from Sully. Guests will be invited to court if they haven't been there already, and the King will be pleased to have them stay with him while he is convalescing. If the PCs utterly fail, the King is dead and they'll have to act fast to get Marie de Medici to Paris to confirm her authority as regent. Otherwise, they'll have a coup or a civil war on their hands.

MARGUERITTE D'ANGERS

Hits	Melee	Fire	AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession
28	10 dagger	-	1(0)	2	No Prof.

St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
40	59	50	51	56	53	78	52	65	61

Skills

Climbing 55; Perception 60; Stalk/Hide 60; Subduing 40

COUNT DE ANJOU

Hits	Melee	Fire	AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession
83	50 w/Ssword	50 w/Musket	5(5)	7	No Prof.

St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
81	70	79	55	59	90	70	54	90	96

Skills

Adrenal Moves (speed) 45; Diplomacy 60; Mathematics 60; Riding 60; Seduction 60; Trap-Building 55

OLGA

Hits	Melee	Fire	AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession
91	40 w/ Club, Knife	-	1(0)	6	No Prof.

St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
100	68	70	34	43	93	60	57	51	50

Skills

Diplomacy 60; French spoken lvl 4; Interrogation 60; Martial Arts lvl 1; Stalk/Hide 55; Subduing 40; Surveillance 55

BROTHER XAVIER

Hits	Melee	Fire	AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession
47	50 w/Knife,Saber	50 w/Pist,Rif	1(10)	5	Assassin

St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
74	90	65	52	57	68	70	91	82	65

Skills

Adrenal Moves (speed) 45; Ambush 60; Frenzy 35; Sniping 60; Stalk/Hide 60; Tracking 60

13.5 MINISCENARIOS

The following mini-scenarios can be used as one-shot adventures or as part of a longer campaign. They are set in either France or England in various years, but feel free to adapt and use them in any setting you wish.

THE RECRUITER (13.5.1)

The Colonel, a handsome, immaculately uniformed officer, arrives at the inn the PCs are staying at, accompanied by a bugler and a drummer. He's enthusiastically touting the glories and benefits of service in the King's army. After their stirring musical performance, his companions will buy drinks in generous quantities for any able-bodied man or boy willing to listen to the Colonel's tales of military heroics and gallantry. He's a fascinating conversationalist; the tales are entertaining and may even be true.

If the PCs are soldiers or veterans, the Colonel will invite them to a secluded corner and attempt to sound them out. If the adventurers are positive about the military, he will ask them to testify. If their response is negative, he'll avoid them for the rest of his stay. If they've never served, he'll do his best to get them to enlist.

Alert characters may notice the following goings-on:

The Colonel and the innkeeper are on familiar terms, and the officer will quietly give their host a larger sum of money than is required for his room. Of course, he does have all those drinks to pay for.

Once his listeners get tipsy, the Colonel will press them to sign up. If his audience nods off in a drunken stupor, he may slip his hands into their garments or purses. Only he's not robbing them; he's inserting gold and/or papers.

The bugler and drummer assist the innkeeper in carting drunken guests off to bed, locking their rooms from the outside. Non-guest drunks will be deposited on the floor of a small common room; that door is also locked.

Later that night, particularly if they've gone to bed a little sloshed themselves, the PCs may awake to hear someone gingerly tampering with the latch of their door. If they call out, the unseen visitor will scurry away. If they're foolish enough to throw open the door, heavily cloaked men armed with clubs will attempt to force their way in. There should be two to four of them per PC, depending on how tough the characters are.

The adventurers may have reason to leave their room during the night: they hear odd noises in the inn, they want a late-night snack or drink, they need to relieve themselves, they want to check on the horses, etc. As they skulk about the halls, they'll stumble upon the aforementioned cloaked men carrying out the drunks. If the PCs intervene or are discovered, the cloaked men will fight.

This scenario isn't intended to force the adventurers into the military. The Colonel and his press gang are depending on surprise, trickery and booze to gather recruits. They aren't prepared to subdue a party of suspicious, clear-witted heroes, especially if the latter is armed with steel or guns and puts up a spirited resistance. Once the PCs begin to get the upper hand, the cloaked men will pile onto a wagon waiting outside the inn's back door and flee with the dupes they've already collected.

However, the Colonel isn't averse to knocking an unwary lone PC over the head and spiriting him away. If this happens to one of the characters, give the other adventurers a chance to notice he's missing in time to mount an effective pursuit. The press gang will dump the PC off the wagon rather than risk getting caught and being forced to give up all its captives.



If the PCs manage to ignore the clues and/or sleep through the night's activities, they'll wake in the morning to find the Colonel and many of the inn's guests gone. The innkeeper has a fresh bruise on one cheek and is unusually quiet.

THE COLONEL

Hits		Melee		Fire		AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession	
71	50	w/Bjack, Ssword		50	w/Musket	1(10)	6	Fighter	
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
66	90	75	61	53	58	83	49	65	72

Skills

Adrenal Move (speed) 40; Diplomacy 60; Driving (wagons) 60; Duping 60; Gambling 55; Public Speaking 60; Riding 60; Stalk/Hide 60; Trickery 60

THE BEASTLY BEARERS (13.5.2)

While traversing the crowded streets of Paris (1654 or after), the PCs are roughly shoved aside by lackeys preceding a luxurious sedan chair borne by two more servants. If the adventurers shove back, they'll have a fistfight on their hands. In any case, the chair will lurch to a halt. Its occupant, a baby-faced but wiry young gentleman, will berate both the lackeys and the PCs in several languages. If the adventurers respond with anything but a gracious apology, the gentleman, identifying himself as Monsieur Adolphus, will demand satisfaction, asking the PCs to pick the time and place. His surprised attendants will try to talk him out of it, but Adolphus is adamant.



The "gentleman" is no man, but Sweden's itinerant tomboy queen, Christina. She's fully capable of defending her own honor and actually looks forward to a bit of rough exercise. Christina will take pains not to reveal her gender or identity. Possible clues include: the lackeys have thick foreign accents, they may slip and refer to her as "your Highness," well-travelled PCs may actually have met her before or may have heard stories about her eccentric habits.

The duel should take place normally. "M. Adolphus" is willing to fight either a champion chosen by the party or each of the PCs individually. The GM should determine whether she's merely trying to humiliate them or is out for blood, depending on how rude the characters were (Christina has a vindictive streak).

If the PCs are winning, the GM might allow Christina's masculine wig to get knocked off, releasing her beautiful golden tresses. Or rumors of the duel might have reached the court in time for a palace guard to intervene before the characters can give M. Adolphus the coup de grace. If the adventurers severely injure or kill the Queen, they'll have a major international scandal on their hands. The King will take the position that ignorance is no excuse; they shouldn't have been dueling in the first place.

If Christina incapacitates or kills a PC, there will also be a scandal, one the government will attempt to hush up. Paris officials will suggest that both the surviving heroes and the Queen leave town immediately. Of course, they'll be much more polite about it to Christina.

If the duel is inconclusive—gets interrupted, is a draw, one party is vanquished without being grievously hurt—the PCs will have won Christina's admiration with their fighting skill. She will announce her identity, declare that honor is satisfied, and invite them to supper. She enjoys lively, intelligent conversation, and if the characters favorably impress her during the meal, the Queen will ask them to travel with her.

QUEEN CHRISTINA

Hits		Melee		Fire		AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession	
111		60 w/ Saber		60 w/ Musket		60		10	Duelist	
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re	
65	90	75	65	65	58	90	65	90	90	

Skills

Administration 60; Adrenal Defense 50; Diplomacy 60; Disguise 55; Philosophy 55; Public Speaking 60; Riding 65; Swedish spoken and literacy lvl 10; Special Status: Multilingual; Languages spoken and literacy lvl 8: Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Latin, Polish, Russian; Tactics 65

THE PURLOINED PRINCESS (13.5.3)

In 1644, when Parliamentary troops march on Oxford, the Royalist capital, Queen Henrietta Maria flees to Exeter, pursued by Roundhead agents. There she gives birth to a daughter, Henriette, but is chased to the coast by enemy agents and catches a Dutch ship to her native France. The infant princess is left in the care of an English noblewoman for two years until Royalists can manage to smuggle her out of the country.

This situation offers characters several roleplaying opportunities. As Royalist Englishmen or members of the Queen's French retinue, the PCs could escort an extremely pregnant Henrietta Maria across southern England with all the logical complications.



Once she's safely out of the country, the adventurers might stay on as the English noblewoman's servants, acting as incognito bodyguards for the baby.

If the PCs support the rebels, they could be assigned to chase down the Queen or locate the princess. Parliament believes that if it can seize the King's wife and daughter as hostages, it can force Charles I to come to terms. No matter how republican their politics, PCs with any sense of honor might chafe under such orders once they succeed in cornering the terrified mother and her defenseless baby.

THE HOT ROCK (13.5.4)

Shortly after Cromwell's installation as Lord Protector (1653), the PCs are approached by a slightly scruffy artisan identifying himself as Ian Bagglesby. He claims to be the goldsmith hired to clean up and repair the Coronation Chair for the recent ceremony (his brother-in-law has a clerical job with the government). Bagglesby says he took the opportunity to steal back the Stone of Destiny for Scotland, replacing the ancient relic clamped to the chair's underside with an ordinary rock. He's willing to pay the characters to help him smuggle the talisman north to the border, where it will be turned over to a group of Royalists/nationalists for safekeeping.

Bagglesby seems to believe what he's saying and develops a noticeable Scottish accent when he becomes excited. As far as he knows, the authorities aren't yet aware of the switch. If the adventurers agree to help him, he'll give them directions to a rendezvous outside the city, where he will pay them half their fee; the other half is to be paid when they reach Scotland.

At the meeting place, Bagglesby unearths a grain sack lined with wool. It contains a squarish, ordinary-looking, medium-sized stone. It's not overly bulky but too heavy for most men to carry far without assistance. A character with it in his possession won't be able to run or fight effectively. The stone has scars on the "corners" where Bagglesby claims it was clamped onto the famous chair in Westminster Abbey. He'll outline a suggested route to the border town of Kelso but says he's not yet ready to disclose his Edinburgh contacts.

The Stone of Destiny, stolen by the English from Scotland in the Middle Ages, is of great historical and political importance to both nations. However, its status as a magic item is somewhat disappointing. Its sole power is to groan when a true king sits upon it. Because Charles II, rightful king of both England and Scotland, is currently hiding out in France, the PCs will have a difficult time determining whether Bagglesby's rock is the real thing.

OPTIONS

1) Bagglesby isn't at the rendezvous point. Characters poking around the site will discover the stone hidden beneath a pile of twigs and leaves. With it is a purse containing a rough itinerary and enough cash to buy passage on a trader's wagon. The stone is genuine, the government is aware of the theft, and Bagglesby is being interrogated even as the PCs examine the rock. They have six to eight hours before the authorities are on their trail. The adventurers may be tempted to dump the stone in the nearest stream or ditch and run for it. If they go ahead with the delivery, Scottish Royalists will reward them handsomely.

As long as the stone is in their possession, all sorts of bizarre little incidents should accompany the PCs' expedition. The mouth of the sack, or any other container the stone is carried in, will not stay shut. A character carrying the stone will feel it shifting or squirming, like a cat trying to get comfortable. If the

party is stopped or searched by Parliamentary soldiers, the stone will let out a Bronx cheer (razzberry) as soon as the soldiers turn their backs. If a character hides the talisman in a wagon bed, ship's cabin or inn room, the stone will never be the same place he left it. The GM may want these occurrences to happen only in the presence of a particular PC; the character will have an interesting time trying to persuade his comrades that something unusual is going on.

2) The stone is a forgery. Bagglesby is the person he says he is; while working on the royal chair, he carefully examined the real Stone of Destiny. He figures this is a good opportunity to make a profit off some gullible Royalists and leave the PCs literally holding the bag. Before he apprenticed as a goldsmith, Bagglesby was an actor. He intends to use his ventriloquism and conjuring skills to persuade his contacts that he's delivered the goods. Then he plans to take the money and run. The odd incidents described above will occur, but sharp-eyed PCs may eventually deduce that their patron is using sleight of hand to fool them so that they'll serve as witnesses to the stone's authenticity.

3) Bagglesby is a Parliamentary agent set on flushing out Royalist sympathizers in Scotland and has spies stationed along his route, ready to pounce. If bandits attack the party, PCs may note that he seems more skilled with a musket and sword than is usual for a simple artisan. Sometime during the journey they may also stumble across a document in his luggage providing for the arrest of anyone who purchases the stone. The adventurers can overpower him, but can they elude the net he's set for his prospective victims?

The Scots will pay the PCs a considerable sum for the Stone of Destiny and will help them escape republican troops. Whether they'll return the Stone to England once Charles II returns is a matter of debate. If the adventurers are duped by Bagglesby, the GM should give them a shot at evening the score. Perhaps they can pull off their own shell game, replacing his money-laden purse with one filled with sand or metal odds and ends. If he's a secret agent, maybe they can dig up some embarrassing information that will compromise his standing with the government.

THE WEREWOLF OF LA AVEYRON (13.5.5)

While the PCs are traveling through the mountains, hysterical screams draw them to a sobbing, badly wounded peasant woman. She's nearly incoherent, moaning over and over that a loup garou has slain her family and carried off her son. She'll wave wildly in the direction of her hut but will fight the adventurers rather than return there.

If the characters take the woman to the nearest village, the inhabitants will be thrown into an uproar. This is the third attack this year and the woman, Mother Grogard, is the first survivor. With pitchforks waving, a mob will head out to the Grogard home to recover the bodies and comb the woods for the monster. Peasants are usually leery of outsiders, but the villagers are terrified and will beg the PCs to join them.

If the adventurers go to the hut first, or have a chance to examine the site before the locals stampede through it, they will find the mangled, still-warm corpses of a middle-aged man and a teen-age girl. Combat veterans with the stomach to study the bodies will, with a successful *Diagnostics* or *First Aid* roll, be able to determine that the wounds seem wrong for an animal attack. The man's head is crushed, as if with a blunt instrument. The bite-bruises on the bodies match those of a human rather than an animal mouth. The



woodcutter's hut has been ransacked and food supplies are missing. PCs who make their Tracking rolls will discover a carefully hidden trail heading off into the woods. It will lead them to an abandoned, overgrown, farm on the edge of densely forested hollow.

PCs who miss these clues will eventually overhear village children teasing each other about going to the old Tournay place, which they believe is haunted. If the adventurers can get someone to take them there, they'll be led to the gloomy place described above.

The farm obviously hasn't been lived in for some time; locals can tell the PCs that the young man who owned it moved away after his mother died in a smallpox epidemic. Discerning PCs may notice that the hut hasn't been cleaned out as if someone had moved. The contents have been disturbed by children and small animals but there are enough rotting tools and personal possessions to make it look as if the owner simply walked off rather than packing up.

Characters who go crashing into the hollow with swords waving and guns blazing will find nothing and probably injure themselves. The terrain is rough, thick with undergrowth, and there are occasional animal snares. At the bottom, an underground stream emerges from a rocky outcrop and flows down the mountain. With a cautious, quiet approach, however, PCs will hear a child's whimpering, answered by a rough, inarticulate voice. Underbrush at the source of the stream conceals a cavern. The Grogard boy is alive, held captive by the loup garou! A direct assault will goad the murderer to kill the child and retreat into the depths of the cavern. The characters must exercise patience, stealth and cleverness to lure the werewolf away from young Grogard.

THE WEREWOLF

Perrin Tournay was always a silent, moody lad and withdrew even further when his father was killed in a farming accident. After his mother's death, the village pastor visited the Tournay farm and found it unoccupied: vegetables rotting in the garden, livestock starving in their pens. Unable to find his body, people assumed Perrin had gone somewhere else. In actuality, Tournay's grief and brooding were slowly driving him mad, and he retreated to the hidden cave where he now leads an animalistic existence. He catches small game with snares or his bare hands and eats them raw. When game is scarce, he sneaks around the village outskirts to steal food. His first victims were killed when they caught Tournay pilfering. This spree of violence completed his descent into madness; he truly believes he is wild beast.

Tournay is a filthy, starvation-thin being with long, matted hair and expressionless, staring eyes. He is usually naked but wears a rude cloak of half-cured rabbit and squirrel pelts when it is rainy or cold. He is an expert woodman and is thoroughly familiar with the mountains surrounding the village. His usual tactic is to carefully stalk his victim, get as close as possible, then rush forward for a savage attack with club, hands and teeth. He's quite clever in staging these hit-and-run attacks. Tournay will rarely attack in the open, using terrain and vegetation to screen himself so the PCs can't get a clear look or shot at him. Once he's drawn out of the cave, he'll attempt to lead the characters through a virtual minefield of his snares, returning to slay those he's injured or trapped. He'll also try to trick them into plunging off cliffs, tumbling down ravines or entering gorges where he can roll boulders on top of them. Although he's an unusually swift and vicious combatant, Tournay is not invulnerable and can be killed like any ordinary man. (The characters don't know this; the GM should allow them

to make whatever superstitious preparations they desire, none of which will do them any good.) He won't stand and fight in the face of overwhelming or uneven odds, preferring to go underground until pursuit cools off. Then he'll creep out of his hiding place and begin stalking the characters again.

One thing the PCs have in their favor is Tournay's limited attention span. He can concentrate on a single person or problem with diabolical patience but has difficulty handling two threats at once. He will tend to ignore the Grogard child until he's hungry again unless the boy makes a sudden dash for freedom. Once he knows the PCs are after him, Tournay will forget about the boy entirely.

If the PCs manage to rescue the boy, and especially if they capture or kill Tournay, the village will hail them as heroes and reward them as much as its meager resources will allow. Villagers will want to burn Tournay at the stake if they haven't already beaten him to death; adventurers will have a difficult time persuading them to turn him over to provincial officials for trial. If the boy is killed, villagers will express attitudes ranging from "Thanks for trying" to "It's all your fault" and will send the characters on their way. If Tournay is driven off or hurt, he will hide and lick his wounds. Without medical treatment, he'll probably die from any serious injuries, though the PCs and the villagers have no way of knowing this. Eventually, if he recovers, Tournay will grow hungry again and will resume his raids on isolated barns and henhouses, adding to his reputation as an invulnerable supernatural foe.

PERRIN TOURNAY

Hits		Melee		Fire		AT(DB)		Lvl	Profession	
135		75 w/ Clubs		-		3(25)		10	Barbarian	
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re	
94	100	100	56	57	87	100	51	76	75	

Skills

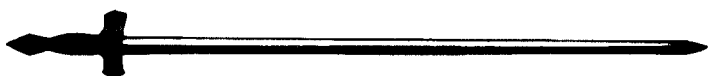
Acrobatics 65; Ambush 60; Foraging 60; Frenzy 60; Perception 70; Stalk/Hide 65; Survival 60; Tracking 60; Trap-Building 65; Tumbling 65

THE CRIMSON CAVALIER (13.5.6)

Captain James Hind (1618-1652) has been robbing travelers in the region of Coventry and is rumored to have assisted the escape of Charles II to France. The republican government hasn't been able to catch him; the military governor has tried patrols, inn searches, bounties, bribes, and decoy coaches filled with soldiers. Officials believe he really is working with the Royalists and suspect the complicity of at least one area innkeeper. The PCs are Roundhead agents assigned to capture Hind and identify his accomplices. The governor is sure that if an example is made of the traitorous highwayman, Royalist resistance in central England will collapse.

To the public and the press, Hind is a glamorous figure swathed in his trademark wine-colored cloak: a modern Robin Hood who is charming toward female passengers and merciless toward Parliamentary soldiers, a master horseman riding a powerful steed which matches his distinctive garb, a crack shot with carbine or pistol, possessing an uncanny ability to anticipate his enemies' moves.

The PCs will need to use smarts, stealth and secrecy to outmaneuver the wily bandit. This will require them to work largely alone; troop movements seem to invariably tip off Hind. They



might try posing as passengers aboard regularly scheduled carriages or merchant wagons, staking out inns for suspicious persons or activities, or staging false crimes by a bogus Crimson Cavalier to discredit or flush out the real highwayman. They might also grow their hair out, profess the Catholic faith, and attempt to infiltrate the Royalist network in Coventry. The latter route will require patience and time as the PCs establish themselves as Royalist sympathizers, gain the network's trust, and actually help plan and carry out rebel schemes while they figure out who is heading up the ring.

THE SITUATION

Those outside Coventry may view Hind as a romantic figure, but locals remember his crimes only too well; popular support is ambivalent. The captain has indeed carried messages and escorted agents for the Royalists but he's in it for pay, not because he has an abiding loyalty to the exiled king. The Royalists use him because he's got the muscle and moxie they need. Hind would double-cross them if doing so would enable him to retire in comfort. How far the rebels trust him and what information he is privy to is up to the GM. Hind has a winning manner but his gallant facade quickly crumbles when circumstances don't go the way he wants them to. Under pressure he is quite heartless and brutal.

Hind operates out of the Languid Lamb inn. He's bribed the innkeeper, Wharton, to overlook his activities and is courting Wharton's daughter, Jenny. It was during one of his clandestine visits to his sweetheart that Hind discovered that the men's club meeting periodically in the private room is a Royalist clique. He hasn't told Wharton this. Hind has also bribed the inn's coal vendor, Pogue, to watch at area inns for government agents and potential targets. The highwayman truly loves Jenny and will risk his life to keep her out of the PC's hands; she's the one person he won't sell out.

The true leader of the resistance is Sir Jerald Pemberton, respected landowner, closet Catholic, and personal friend of the governor. He's the Royalists' "in" with the authorities, keeping his identity known to only a few. He channels some of the information he learns at official meetings and informal dinner parties to Hind, providing the bandit's uncanny foreknowledge. Hind has encountered him at the Languid Lamb but hasn't yet linked him with the Royalists. They dislike each other. Pemberton recognizes Hind for the cad that he is. Hind resents Pemberton's gallant behavior toward Jenny, viewing his gentlemanly conduct with a jealous eye.

On occasion, Pemberton dons a costume similar to Hind's, allowing the bandit to act as a decoy while he rescues prisoners or intimidates bullying officers. It is these exploits that have earned the "Crimson Cavalier" his do-gooder reputation and have created Hind's seeming ability to be everywhere at once. The two men don't look alike, but they are about the same height. In the dark, wearing similar clothes, who can tell the difference? (Jenny can. She knows Hind's voice, mannerisms and walk.) So far, the two Cavaliers haven't run into each other.

PLOT IDEAS

The Rip-Off. Royalists want to move their treasury north, hoping to use it to buy French materiel for a Stuart comeback. Hind is only too happy to provide an escort. He hopes to steal it for himself, buy some land and settle down with Jenny. If the PCs are getting close to tracking him down, Hind will cheerfully gallop off with the money, leaving his patrons holding the bag. The PCs could find themselves in the ironic position of helping the rebels recover the funds.

Battle of the Masked Men! If the PCs corner or capture one Cavalier, have the other one show up. This could be particularly interesting if one of the PCs is impersonating the Cavalier as well. Hind's main goal will be personal escape, though he'll attempt to get off a shot at the guy who's been mimicking him if he can. Pemberton will try to rescue Hind or distract the PCs long enough for him to get away on his own. He'll interfere if Hind ambushes the PCs; he doesn't mind killing the PCs in a good, clean fight but he abhors such "dirty" tactics. Pemberton will also interfere if he catches Hind robbing or bullying the common people, especially women and children. He doesn't mind if Hind does such things to Parliamentary officials or ardent Republican partisans as long as it doesn't compromise the rebels.

The Double-Cross. Hind uncovers Pemberton's connection to the Royalists and decides to expose him in order to keep him away from Jenny. How he does this is up to the GM, but keep in mind that he'll try to do it without threatening his own safety and sources of information. He might corner one of the PCs at gunpoint and hand over incriminating documents. He might lead pursuers to a Royalist meeting place other than the inn (it's his own base). If he learns Pemberton has been imitating him, he might try to frame the baronet for his own crimes or lure him into a trap the PCs have set. On the other hand, Pemberton might decide that the captain has grown too cocky and greedy for the group's safety and arrange for him to be captured by the PCs. First, however, he'll send Hind's contacts into hiding and change the rebels' rendezvous locations.

Jenny is the weak link for both men. She knows too much about Hind and is in a position to discover Pemberton's activities. She's infatuated with Hind, dazzled by his charm, physical courage, and outlaw mystique. Jenny thinks she loves him and will risk her own safety to warn him of danger or care for him when he's wounded. Her concern might inadvertently cause her to give his hiding places away. Eventually, however, Hind's true nature will come out. When it does, she may either turn to the PCs or to Pemberton who, incidentally, has no romantic intentions toward her. If one of the Cavaliers is captured, Jenny will be in a quandary. She won't want to testify against or expose her lover, Hind. On the other hand, she likes Pemberton, knows he's not the real bandit, and is loath to watch an "innocent" man hang.

Wharton is a greedy old fool who is unaware both of the political meetings going on in his inn and of the romance between his daughter and the highwayman (he thinks she's sweet on Pemberton and approves, hence Hind's jealousy). He'll be furious if he learns of Hind's liaison with Jenny. They'll argue, he'll threaten, Hind will do some effective bullying of his own. This confrontation may be what leads to Jenny's break with Hind; she's unlikely to accept kisses from a man who has struck or beaten her father. Wharton will be able to tell the PCs little about Hind's activities, although he does have a rough schedule of when the highwayman is likely to show up and how he usually enters the building. Once he learns of the romance, he'll be willing to talk to the PCs if he can do so without implicating himself.

Pogue is a disreputable low-life who will disappear at the first sign of trouble and will sing like a canary to keep his own neck out of a noose. His usual rendezvous place with Hind is the abandoned church by the crossroads southwest of town. It is there that he gives his report and receives instructions and his share of the loot.



JAMES HIND

Hits	Melee			Fire		AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession	
94	90 w/ Saber			80w/Musk,Pist.		1(40)	10	Thief	
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
93	94	90	51	66	73	95	54	65	61

Skills

Acting 65; Adrenal Defense 40; Disguise 55; Driving (wagons) 60; Interrogation 65; Perception 75; Pick Locks 60; Riding 60; Seduction 65; Stalk/Hide 60; Tumbling 60

JERALD PEMBERTON

Hits	Melee			Fire		AT(DB)	Lvl	Profession	
99	70 w/Ssword			70 w/Musk,Pist		1(25)	10	Dissident	
St	Qu	Pr	In	Em	Co	Ag	SD	Me	Re
79	100	75	52	59	90	100	89	75	91

Skills

Acrobatics 65; Acting 55; Diplomacy 60; Quick Draw 65; Riding 65; Stalk/Hide 65; Tracking 60; Tumbling 65

13.6 ADVENTURE IDEAS

There are lots of things to do in the 17th Century (or similar setting) in addition to the possibilities mentioned elsewhere.

EXPLORATION/TRADE

Europe's hardy seamen are opening up new markets in Asia, India and Africa. Trade is vital to build and maintain the wealth of the characters and their nation. Can they outdeal or outgun their Dutch and Portuguese rivals? Adventures might involve avoiding Moslem armies and corsairs blocking the way to the Indies, contacting and impressing heathen monarches, or even overthrowing the local ruler to install a puppet willing to trade with the PCs' country.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Great advances are being made in many areas of knowledge. However, authorities sometimes feel threatened by new ideas. Adventures of this sort could involve funding and promoting one's discoveries, or hiding them from furious officials. Maybe the characters' new invention can foil the Spanish invaders. Perhaps the new medicine or technique can halt the plague or save the dauphin's life. Failure means a vacation in the Tower or worse. Alternatively, scientific adventures can center around some misguided genius who has built a weapon or vehicle several centuries ahead of its time as in Jules Verne's *Robur the Conqueror*. The PCs will have to overcome local superstitions, unravel what is going on and prevent the mastermind from misusing his discovery. This isn't a high-tech age, but Leonardo da Vinci designed an armored fighting vehicle and a helicopter a century ago, a prototype submarine has been tested, and researchers are experimenting with steam power. All sorts of mechanical gadgets, very bulky ones, are possible.

TREASURE HUNTING

The heyday of Caribbean pirates is yet to come but Europeans have been treasure-happy ever since the Spanish discovered and plundered the Aztec and Inca empires. Sir Walter Raleigh was executed in 1618 after failing to discover the fabled land of El

Dorado in Venezuela with the help of a Spanish map (the actual site was Lake Guatavita, near Bogota in modern Columbia). Even though the conquistadors found Lake Guatavita and the Seven Cities of Cibola (Zuni villages near modern Gallup, New Mexico) to be disappointments, legends of golden cities and mysterious civilizations persisted and took on a life of their own.

There are also treasure troves closer to home. Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin and finance minister Nicolas Fouquet amassed huge fortunes which were discovered and appropriated by the King. After Basing House, a Tudor fortress defended by the Marquis of Winchester, was destroyed by the Puritan army in 1644 rumors soon spread that gold worth 3 million pounds remained hidden somewhere on the grounds. Hidden Roman hoards and Dark Ages grave sites stuffed with valuables also wait to be discovered by Mammon-mad adventurers. Keeping found treasure a secret from the tax collector could be an adventure in itself.

13.7 SAMPLE CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS AND CAMPAIGN

This campaign is set in France, 1603, during the middle of Henry IV's reign. The King has defeated opposing armies and unified the nation but still has many enemies at home and abroad. Because of his limited finances, uncertain popular support, and the unreliability of 17th Century communications, the King's actual control of the country is tenuous indeed. This situation is made even more unstable by the intrigues of Henry's wife, Marie de Medici, and his mistress, Henriette d'Entragues, neither one of which is inclined to play housewife and let Henry run the country.

The characters below are all gentlemen of fortune, traveling north from Gascony in search of adventure.

CHARACTERS (13.7.1)

M. ARMAND DE CAUTERETS

M. de Cauterets would seem to be the typical Gascon adventurer, an ambitious youth of genteel breeding headed for Paris to make his fortune with his sword. Apparently in no hurry, he stops at nearly every inn for a glass of wine and conversation with the locals. It was in this way that he met Father Jean Paul. Because their routes, ages, and literary tastes are similar, they've been traveling together.

"Armand" is really Anne de Cauterets, daughter of a minor nobleman, who was heartbroken when her beloved brother was killed in a duel on his way to Paris. Donning Armand's clothes to disguise herself as a man, Anne set out to retrace his steps and wreak vengeance on his murderer. The innkeeper at the crossroads where Armand was slain told her that his assailant was a haughty nobleman dressed in purple velvet. Anne is careful to conceal her gender and is anxious to prove she's as capable as any man. For this reason she's somewhat jealous of M. Ventrille and would love to take him down a notch or two. She's dangerous with a sword (as Armand taught her to be) but is otherwise pretty naive.

FATHER JEAN PAUL

An itinerant priest, popular with female parishioners and children despite (or perhaps because of) the rakish patch over his right eye. Father Jean Paul can strike up an interesting conversation with anyone, whether it is a theological discussion with fellow priests



or an analysis of current growing conditions with local farmers. A careful observer would note that he rarely says anything about himself.

The bookish clergyman is actually a Jesuit spy whose mission is to monitor Huguenot activity in southern France. Recently, he's been informed that a dangerous troublemaker, the Viscompte du Villon, may attempt to re-enter the country. Jean Paul's orders are to intercept the viscount and eliminate him if necessary before he can reach Paris. Unfortunately, his intelligence is sketchy, and Father Jean Paul has no idea what the viscount looks like.

Jean Paul is, above all, ambitious. He's determined to advance his clerical career by any means necessary, although this hasn't yet required him to betray his friends. He doesn't relish his assignment as assassin but sees it as a necessary duty. Killing in defense of the church is not murder, and his superior has absolved him of the deed beforehand.

PIETRO

Forced to flee his village in the Pyrenees after he accidentally killed the local bully in a brawl, Pietro has supported himself variously as a thief, juggler, mountain guide, bare-knuckle prize-fighter and actor. The adaptable Basque nearly met his end recently when he and his faithful donkey, Maria, stumbled upon a circle of hooded men in the forest. They were about to hang him from a tree when Philippe Ventrille intervened and scattered them. Pietro has sworn to serve the "great lord" who rescued him even though the idea made Ventrille uncomfortable. He really has no choice; Pietro refuses to leave him alone. Pietro is almost as devoted to Maria as he is to Ventrille, even though the ornery donkey frequently brings her owner to grief. The manservant is the only member of the party who dislikes talkative Father Jean Paul. To Pietro, a priest who is left-handed and views the world only through his left eye is too sinister to be trusted.

M. PHILIPPE VENTRILLE

The Viscompte du Villon, a Huguenot nobleman, served Henry IV with distinction during the religious wars even after the King turned Catholic. He discovered and exposed a plot by the Holy League to oust Henry, but League agents succeeded in falsely implicating him in the conspiracy. Du Villon fled to Spain, assumed a new identity, and spent several years fighting the infidel in the Mediterranean. He has returned to France with evidence, Spanish court records and pay vouchers, he hopes will clear his name. Unsure of his reception, he's trying to reach Paris as quietly as possible.

He attempts to pass as a jaded veteran, zealously guarding his identity, but Ventrille's noble bearing and adherence to the Code of Honor threaten to give him away. He's afraid that having Pietro as a servant could make him appear to upper-class, but efforts to leave the Basque behind have failed, and he's learned that Pietro is a good man to have in a fight. Ventrille met de Cauterets and Father Jean Paul at an inn when he helped thwart a press gang's attempt to kidnap the Gascon adventurer. He's called Armand and "arrogant puppy" but tolerates him because the boy reminds him of his own youth. Ventrille is pleasant but cautious toward the priest; his experiences have made him suspicious of all Catholic clergymen.

Recent events have also made him uneasy. At least one of the mysterious men he delivered Pietro from was wearing a Holy League signet ring. Ventrille recognized it from his court days.

THE VILLAIN (13.7.2)

COUNT COSIMO MANCINI

Cosimo Mancini was one of the many hangers-on who accompanied Marie de Medici from Tuscany to Paris upon her marriage to Henry IV in 1600. His wit, confident manner and musical accomplishments soon made him a favorite of the Queen, but Mancini was too ambitious to remain content as a mere sycophant. He began dabbling in pro-Spanish intrigues initiated by the Queen and royal mistress but was discovered by one of Henry's Huguenot stalwarts, the Viscompte du Villon. Mancini outmaneuvered du Villon, exposing the intrigue himself and implicating the viscompte. This forced du Villon to flee, saved Mancini's neck, but also put him out of favor with the Queen.

Mancini was exiled to Brittany, where he stumbled upon a Breton nationalist underground calling itself the Order of the Great Huntsman. Patience, charm and bribery enabled the Italian to worm his way into the network, where he acted as a double agent. He suggested clever schemes to the nationalists which he then betrayed to the governor, "rescuing" the group's members from death and arrest at the last moment. In this way, Mancini eliminated his rivals, rose to leadership of the Order, and gained undeserved renown as a hero with both the rebels and the authorities. When the governor's troops finally raided the Order's secret lair, Mancini led away a corps of professional terrorists and assassins ardently loyal to himself.

Back in Paris, Mancini resumed his career as a successful courtier, if not fully trusted by the King then at least enjoying a reputation as a daring patriot and as a peacemaker with dissenting nobles and Catholic hardliners. Marie de Medici, mollified, made him a count. Meanwhile, he quietly added diehards from the defunct Holy League to his network and made tentative contacts with Huguenot rebels and Spanish spies.

The Count currently oversees a shadowy organization comprised of several branches, largely ignorant of each other, all reporting to himself. What these disparate (and mutually antagonistic) tentacle groups have in common is their dissatisfaction with Henry's reign and their desire to replace him with a candidate more amenable to their views. Mancini intends to be that candidate. He uses his influence among France's various ethnic and religious groups to stir up trouble, hoping to discredit Henry by making him appear weak and ineffective. Ultimately, he plans to overthrow the King and step to the forefront as the nation's peacemaker and unifier.

Cultured and gregarious, Mancini loves to be the center of attention and can generally be spotted in a crowd by his trademark purple velvet suits. He's most dangerous when he's being amiable. He entertains a variety of wealthy, influential people, most of whom don't know what he's up to. The Count flirts frequently, often has a lady on his arm, but rarely lets it go beyond that. He despises Henry's bed-hopping, and a mistress would create too great a risk to his plans. A skilled musician, both vocally and instrumentally, the Count is an opera addict who requires his henchman to have at least a passing familiarity with the genre. He commonly serenades his victims with lute or virginal, composing an aria or libretto while chatting about their fate. Although he's a master swordsman, Mancini prefers to outwit his opponents, or let his minions dispatch them. It's not that he's a coward; the Count feels that bloodletting outside a battlefield or duel is somehow beneath him.



14.0 SUGGESTED READING/VIEWING

Not all of these entries are set in the 17th Century but they all convey the essential flavor of a swashbuckling campaign.

14.1 BOOKS

Miguel Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

Buy the *Cliffs Notes*, skim *Classics Illustrated*, rent the movie. Whatever you do, don't try to wade through this monster unless you've got hip boots that reach to your chin. *Don Quixote* may have been a knee-slapper in 1604 but today its stilted language and rambling story-within-a-story plot make it hard to stomach.

Alexandre Dumas, Senior, *The Three Musketeers*; *Twenty Years After*; *The Man in the Iron Mask*

These three titles are the easiest of Dumas' Musketeer novels to find at your local library or bookstore. They are part of a larger series that includes *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, *Ten Years Later*, and *Louise de la Valliere*. Dumas also wrote the Valois Romances trilogy, which covers the political and romantic adventures of Henry IV and his first queen, Marguerite de Valois. Titles in that series are *Marguerite de Valois*, *Chicot the Jester* and *The 45 Guardsmen*.

C.S. Forester, Horatio Hornblower series

Set during the Napoleonic Wars, Forester's maritime adventures chronicle the rise of a daring young British seaman from midshipman to admiral. Heroic Hornblower was Gene Roddenberry's inspiration for Captain Kirk of *Star Trek*. If you want to run a seagoing campaign, the Hornblower saga provides a lot of exciting material.

Anthony Hope, *The Prisoner of Zenda*

Dastardly plots and derring-do in Central Europe of the 1890s. How do you run a swashbuckling campaign in an era where swords are supposedly passe? In this novel and its sequel, *Rupert of Hentzau*, Hope shows you.

Baroness Emmuska Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*

There are no duels but lots of suspense in this French Revolution romance. If you want to run a spy vs. spy swashbuckling campaign, this one should give you ideas.

Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*

Rostand's easy to read play manages to be hilarious, romantic and tragic all at the same time. He creates a likeable hero who out musketeers the Three Musketeers!

Rafael Sabatini, almost anything, but in particular:

Captain Blood; *The Sea Hawk*; *Scaramouche*

The Sea Hawk, set during Elizabeth I's reign, paints a vivid picture of Europe's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. *Captain Blood* is set in the 1680s and is the quintessential good-guy pirate novel. *Scaramouche* takes place during the French Revolution and depicts the cavalier's concept of honor and French intrigue.

Mark Twain, *The Prince and the Pauper*

Set in 16th Century England, Twain's tale of mistaken identities and daring do gives the reader a feel for class distinctions and a good look at the seamy underside of society.

Stanley J. Weyman, *Under the Red Robe*; *Memoirs of a Minister of France*

Weyman is a master of romance and suspense. In *Under the Red Robe*, a French agent sent by Cardinal Richelieu to arrest a Huguenot rebel leader makes the mistake of falling in love with his quarry's sister. In *Memoirs*, the Duke of Sully uses his wits rather than his rapier to defend Henry IV, baffling scheming courtiers and exposing Spanish assassins. Weyman wrote several other swashbucklers including *A Gentleman of France*, to which *Memoirs* is a sequel, and *My Lady Rotha*, set during the Thirty Years' War.

14.2 VIEWING

Most movies listed here are out on videocassette. This is not a complete list of swashbuckling films. It's intended to highlight the better and more unusual movies. An effort has been made to steer away from pirate movies because *At Rapier's Point* is a land-oriented game. Almost any movie starring Douglas Fairbanks (Sr. or Jr.), Errol Flynn, Maureen O'Hara or Tyrone Power is good but in particular:

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen, Columbia Pictures, 1988. Directed by Terry Gilliam. Starring John Neville, Robin Williams, Eric Idle, Oliver Reed, Uma Thurman, Sarah Polley. — Set in 18th Century Eastern Europe, this fantasy film has nothing to do with Musketeers but gets much of its flavor from Cyrano de Bergerac's novels. Robin Williams is not to be missed as the King of the Moon.

The Adventures of Don Juan, Warner Brothers, 1949. Directed by Vincent Sherman. Stars Errol Flynn, Veveca Lindfors, Robert Douglas, Alan Hale, Romney Brent, Ann Rutherford, Robert Warwick, Jerry Austin, Douglas Kennedy, Una O'Connor. — The famous 16th Century libertine protects the Queen of Spain from a scheming duke.

At Sword's Point, RKO Pictures, 1952. Directed by Lewis Allen. Starring Cornel Wilde, Maureen O'Hara, Alan Hale, Dan O'Herlihy, Glanche Yurka, Robert Douglas. — This is fun even if any resemblance to history or Dumas is purely coincidental. The sons and daughter of the Three Musketeers join forces to save France. Best lines: When a villainous guard declares, "I will not fight a lady," O'Hara snarls, "I am no lady when I fight!" and skewers him.

Beauty and the Beast, Lopert Films, Inc., 1946. Directed by Jean Cocteau. Stars Jean Marais, Josette Day, Mile Parely, Nane Germon, Michel Auclair, Marcel Andre. Eerie French version of the classic fairy tale, with subtitles. — Authentic 17th Century settings and costumes and lots of spooky ideas for GMs wanting to inject the supernatural into their swashbuckling campaign.

Captain Blood, Warner Brothers, 1935. Directed by Michael Curtiz. Stars Errol Flynn, Olivia De Havilland, Basil Rathbone, Lionel Atwill, Ross Alexander, Guy Kibbee, Henry Stephenson. — Great pirate film, and it even sticks fairly close to Sabatini's novel.

The Conqueror Worm, 1968. Directed by Michael Reeves. Stars Vincent Price, Ian Ogilvy, Hilary Dwyer. — Price is a witch hunter in Cromwellian England, but who's hunting whom?

Cromwell, 1970. Directed by Ken Hughs. — Historical drama filmed on location. *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Republic Pictures Corp., 1950. Directed by Michael Gordon. Starring Jose Ferrer, Marla Powers, William Prince. — A somewhat dry version of Rostand's play. So far it's the only one out on video.

Dr. Syn, Alias The Scarecrow, Walt Disney, 1962. Directed by James Neilson. Stars Patrick McGoohan, George Cole, Tony Britton, Geoffrey Keen, Kay Walsh. — Anglican vicar Dr. Syn dons an eerie disguise to become a smuggler and freedom fighter by night. Good adventure in the tradition of the *Scarlet Pimpernel* and *Zorro*.

The Duellists, 1977. Directed by Ridley Scott. Stars Keith Carradine, Harvey Keitel, Albert Finney, Edward Fox, Cristina Raines, Robert Stephens, Tom Conti. — The meaning of honor and heroism is studied in this story of a long feud between two Napoleonic era soldiers.

The Exile, 1946. Directed by Max Ophulus. Stars Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Paule Croset, Maria Montez, Henry Daniell. — Charles II returns to claim his throne despite the efforts of Roundhead assassins.

The Fighting Prince of Donegal, Walt Disney, 1966. Directed by Michael O'Herlihy. Stars Peter McEnery, Susan Hampshire, Tom Adams, Gordon Jackson. — The Irish fight England for freedom in the 16th Century.

The Four Musketeers, Film Trust, 1974. Directed by Richard Lester. Stars Oliver Reed, Raquel Welch, Richard Chamberlain, Frank Finlay, Michael York, Christopher Lee, Faye Dunaway, Charlton Heston. — Not so much a sequel as a continuation of *The Three Musketeers* (1973). Because Lester stuck fairly close to Dumas' novel, it took a second movie to finish the story. Effectively mixes slapstick humor with Dumas' rather grim denouement.

The King's Thief, Robert Z. Leonard, 1955. Stars Edmund Purdom, David Niven, Alan Mowbray, Paul Cavanagh, Melville Cooper, Roger Moore, George Sanders. — A patriotic highwayman exposes a plot to depose Charles II.

The Man in the Iron Mask, 1939. Directed by James Whale. Stars Louis Hayward, Joan Bennett, Warren William, Joseph Schildkraut, Alan Hale, Negel de Brulier. — This solid Hollywood swashbuckler wreaks havoc with Dumas' plotline.



- The Man in the Iron Mask*, ITC Entertainment, 1976. Directed by Mike Newell. Stars Richard Chamberlain, Patrick McGeehan, Louis Jourdan, Jenny Agutter, Ralph Richardson. — This 1976 made-for-TV version is one of the best recent retellings of the Musketeer saga finale. There are also 1929 and 1977 movies covering the same story.
- Man of La Mancha*, United Artists, 1972. Starring Peter O'Toole, Sophia Loren, James Coco, Harry Andrews. — A movie version of the Broadway musical, this film portrays Quixote as a bumbling, tragic hero and tries to draw Freudian parallels between Miguel Cervantes and his fictional character. It isn't very much like Cervantes' novel but it's a lot more enjoyable.
- The Mark of Zorro*, 20th Century Fox, 1940. Directed by Rouben Mamoulian. Stars Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, Basil Rathbone, Montagu Love, Eugene Pallette. — One of the best versions of Johnston McCulley's 1919 comic strip hero. Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., starred in the 1920 silent original.
- The Mission*, Warner Brothers, 1986. Directed by Roland Joffe. Stars Jeremy Irons, Robert De Niro, Philip Bosco, Aidan Quinn. — Spanish Jesuit missionaries attempt to defend their converts from the Portuguese in this beautiful but grim film.
- The Pirates of Penzance*, 1983. Directed by Wilford Leach. Stars Angela Lansbury, Kevin Kline, Linda Ronstadt, Rex Smith, George Ross. — A truly funny slapstick adaptation of the stage musical, and Ronstadt's solos are terrific.
- The Princess Bride*, 1987. Directed by Rob Reiner. Stars Cary Elwes, Robin Wright, Mandy Patinkin, Andre the Giant, Chris Sarandon, Wallace Shawn, Billy Crystal, Carol Kane, Peter Falk. — Patinkin is great as Inigo Montoya, the Spanish swordmaster bent on revenge. He and Elwes engage in one of the most exciting and funniest movie duels in years.
- The Prisoner of Zenda*, David O. Selznick, 1937. Directed by John Cromwell. Stars Ronald Coleman, Madeleine Carroll, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Raymond Massey, Mary Astor, Michael C. Aubrey, David Niven. — This 1937 version is the classic, an exciting story told in a straightforward manner.
- The Prisoner of Zenda*, Loew's Inc., 1952. Directed by Richard Thorpe. Stars Stewart Granger, Deborah Kerr, Jane Greer, Louis Calhern, James Mason, Lewis Stone. — This 1952 movie is a Technicolor remake that consciously tries to copy the earlier film.
- The Prisoner of Zenda*, 1979. Directed by Richard Quine. Stars Peter Sellers, Lionel Jeffries, Elke Sommer, Lynne Frederick. — Peter Sellers' version is an outrageous spoof of Hope's adventure. Sellers, as usual, heaps on the slapstick and double entendres.
- The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel*, 1938. Directed by Hans Schwartz. Stars Barry K. Barnes, Sophie Stewart, Francis Lister, James Mason. — The aristocratic master of disguise continues his battle against the injustices of the French Revolution.
- The Scarlet Pimpernel*, London Films, 1934. Directed by Harold Young. Stars Lelie Howard, Merle Oberon, and Raymond Massey, Nigel Bruce. — An English nobleman rescues aristocrats during the French Revolution and is hunted by a wily French diplomat. The tale contains the classic example of romantic misunderstanding, in this case between Lord Blakeney (the Pimpernel) and his French wife. There's also a good 1982 made-for-TV version out on video.
- The Swordsman*, Columbia Pictures, 1947. Directed by Joseph H. Lewis. Stars Larry Parks, Ellen Drew, George Macready. — Scottish lovers end a clan feud despite the schemes of a jealous rival.
- The Three Musketeers* (aka *The Singing Musketeers*), 20th Century Fox, 1939. Directed by Allan Dwan. Stars Don Ameche, the Ritz brothers. — This 1939 musical has good action scenes; whether you like it or not depends on whether you enjoy the antics of the Ritz Brothers.
- The Three Musketeers*, MGM, 1948. Directed by George Sidney. Stars Gene Kelly, Lana Turner, June Allyson, Van Heflin, Vincent Price, Gig Young, Angela Lansbury, Keenan Wynn. — Gene Kelly struts his stuff with lots of fancy acrobatics in this 1948 version, and in the love scenes he's almost as seductive as Lana Turner.
- The Three Musketeers*, Film Trust, 1973. Directed by Richard Lester. Stars Michael York, Oliver Reed, Raquel Welch, Richard Chamberlain, Faye Dunaway, Charlton Heston. — At least a dozen versions of *The Three Musketeers* have been made. Those listed above are among the most readily available. The more recent film with Michael York places the accent on humor. However, Charlton Heston is suave and chilling as the evil cardinal, and by breaking the story up into two movies Lester is able to follow Dumas much more closely than earlier versions.
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