

# FLASHING BLADES™

The Cardinal's Peril

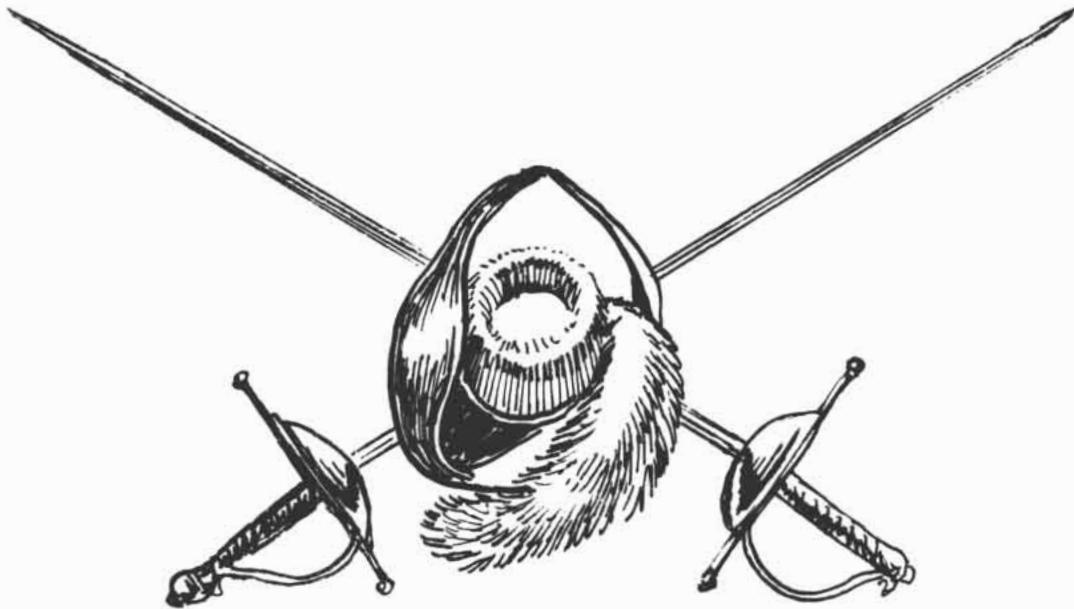


Design: MARK PETTIGREW  
& J. ANDREW KEITH



FLASHING  
BLADES

*The Cardinal's Peril*  
*and other tales*



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# A Brief History of the Musketeers

This brief history and background to the Musketeers of the Guard under Louis XIII and Louis XIV should not be seen as a section of rules or be used to radically change the way the King's Musketeers and the Cardinal's Guard are used in *Flashing Blades*. As will be seen, there were a number of changes in these companies during the Seventeenth Century, so that, for ease of play, the general rules regarding these elite companies should remain unchanged throughout the period rather than attempting to simulate the actual changes that took place.

The King's Musketeers were formed in 1622 when a company of fifty men of the Carabiniers du Roi were issued muskets to replace the carbines previously carried by this light cavalry unit of the Household Guard (*Maison du Roi*). This formed the first company of the King's Musketeers, commanded by a Lieutenant and armed with musket, sword, and two pistols each. This was a mounted unit, though it often fought on foot in the battles of the period.

The commander of the first company of the King's Musketeers was made a Captain in 1634 by Louis XIII. Until that date, no rank higher than that of Lieutenant could be found in the unit.

The King's Musketeers wore a blue (similar to Bavarian blue; a deep sky blue) cloak which varied through the years from something like a poncho to something like a medieval tabard. This garment is familiar to all from constant exposure to films about the Three Musketeers of Dumas. The cloak had a large white cross centered on its front and back. At the end of each arm of the cross was a white fleur-de-lys and between the arms were red 'flames' to complete their device. It should be noted that all of these were motifs common to the French royal family as the cross demonstrated the Catholic nature of the family, the fleur-de-lys was symbolic of France and the red flames formed an 'x' or Burgundian cross. High buff leather boots were worn half way up the thigh and these had red heels, an honor normally reserved for the French nobility. A black, plumed hat was also worn.

A similar guard of fifty men was created for Cardinal Richelieu at the urging of Marie de Medicis. This unit, the Cardinal's Guard, was dressed in plain red poncho/tabard style cloaks, without the cross and flames decoration found on the King's Musketeers. Other elements of the uniform were identical. Upon the death of Cardinal Richelieu, this guard company came into the service of Cardinal Mazarin.

In 1660 the guards of Cardinal Mazarin were placed in the service of young Louis XIV. It is apparent that the original King's Musketeers were transferred to other units during the young King's childhood, while the Cardinal's Guard remained active in service of Mazarin.

Louis XIV uniformed his new Guard in the style of the King's Musketeers of Louis XIII. In 1665 he ordered the formation of an additional, second company of King's Musketeers. The second company was identical in size and uniform to the first company, except that the 'flames' between the arms of the white cross on the tabard were yellow rather than the red of the first company. (Some sources place the date of the formation of the second company as early as 1661.)

It was at this time that the two companies became known as the Black Musketeers and the Gray Musketeers. Though there appears to be some controversy over whether the names related to the color of the horses they rode or to the color of their saddle covers, this writer believes the theory related to horse colors is more probable. It is somewhat difficult to imagine a pair of Household Guards companies that would be relegated to dull black and gray saddle covers. This was a time when uniforms were only first being introduced for the regular French army, but the Guards had been uniformed throughout the Seventeenth Century. While the line troops were issued dull off-white and gray to cream uniforms, the Guards retained their more colorful

fashions. Similarly, it was common for cavalry units to be named for the colors of the horses they rode as evidenced by the famous Scots Greys, who rode gray horses and had nothing gray about their uniform or saddle furniture.

As a final note on the uniforms of the Musketeers (and of the Cardinal's Guard), what little shows of the trousers in any of the plates found seems to indicate that they were of a color similar to the cloak (blue for the Musketeers or red for the Cardinal's Guard). Hats were cocked at the whim of the wearer as such things were not standardized within the French army until the Eighteenth Century.

A Captain was created as commander of the Second Company in 1665. It is assumed that previous to this the company had been commanded by a Lieutenant, as had been the First Company at the time of its inception.

Through the Seventeenth Century the Musketeers fought in many of the major battles of France. Many of these were sieges and the Musketeers fought on foot, unlike the other units of the cavalry of the *Maison du Roi*. At major field battles, like Steinkirk in 1692, the two companies of Musketeers formed a part of the cavalry of the *Maison du Roi* and charged on horseback.

The King's Musketeers were officially dissolved as a unit in the *Maison du Roi* in 1775, well after the period of *Flashing Blades*.



It is worthy of note that most characters and events found in the novels of Dumas are accurate and true. The names of some of the major characters have been changed from their historical models, but the accuracy of the picture of France and the Musketeers is quite surprising in 'mere historical romances.'

The character of D'Artagnan is based on a real commander of the King's Musketeers, one Charles de Batz. The real D'Artagnan (de Batz) died at the age of fifty while leading an assault by his Musketeers on the city of Maastricht in June of 1673. It seems that Louis XIV had announced that he wished an immediate and successful conclusion to the siege of that city as he piously hoped to attend mass within the city or its ruins that very day. The loyal de Batz took his master at his word and bravely led the successful assault that took the city for the French monarch.

# The Haunted Villa

## INTRODUCTION

*Haunted Villa* is a *Flashing Blades* adventure with a 'treasure hunt' theme. It revolves around a mysterious parchment, found hidden in the pommel of a sword by one of the player-characters, which leads to an old deserted villa near Paris. There is indeed a treasure hidden in the villa, but it is guarded by a series of deadly traps and puzzles, and (at the Gamemaster's option) a diabolical descendant of the original owner. The traps have given the villa a reputation for being haunted, and although it was abandoned near the end of the 16th Century and left fully furnished in high style, no thief has ever ventured there. . . and returned.

*Haunted Villa* is a departure from other types of *Flashing Blades* adventures. It is a good adventure for introducing players to *Flashing Blades*, as the goal (finding treasure and staying alive) is fairly simple, but not much fighting is required. A Gamemaster who wishes to run this adventure for its atmosphere should make the most of its 'haunting' qualities — he may even try to convince the players that the villa really is haunted. The plot of this adventure could be changed by a creative Gamemaster from a treasure hunt to a romp around a spooky 'haunted house,' or even to an exorcism scenario.

If *Haunted Villa* is used as part of a Campaign, the Gamemaster may wish to have some old enemies of the player-characters make an appearance. This may be easily achieved by assuming that a group of old enemies of the party will find a hidden parchment identical to the one reserved for the player-characters. Both groups (the party and a bunch of its enemies) may turn up at the villa at the same time, never expecting each other.

## THE HIDDEN PARCHMENT

The adventure will start in a marketplace in Paris. One of the Player-Characters (the one with the highest Expertise with Longswords) will notice a beautifully decorated longsword hanging in an armorer's stall. Upon closer inspection, the weapon will be found to be of extremely high quality (+1 to hit and parry). The Armorer asks 100 L for it (a fair price), but he will reduce this to 90 L if a character with Bargaining helps out and makes a successful roll against Wit or Charm (player's choice). The party should recognize that this is a good opportunity to purchase a really fine weapon. If no character in the party prefers longsword, the Gamemaster may choose to make the sword a rapier instead, to get a Player-Character to buy it.

Once the sword is bought, the player-characters may inspect it more minutely. It is an old but sturdy weapon, and a small engraving on the hilt reads '*Anno Domini 1594*'. The blade is long and well-crafted. In the center of the blade, and near the guard, an engraved name, '*De Gabriel*', has all but worn away.

It is in many ways a superb weapon. It is, however, tarnished in some places on the hilt. While polishing this portion of the sword, the Player-Character who owns it will discover, by accident, that the pommel unscrews, revealing a hollow chamber in the grip. Within this secret chamber is a rolled up piece of parchment which reads:

*Notes addressed to my successors regarding the recovery of my wealth from my villa near Ile du Cartelier. Whosoever shall find my trove shall be clever and cautious.*

1. *The Gods hold many secrets*
2. *Follow the advice of angels*
3. *Search high and low*
4. *Avoid the fate which befall me*
5. *Beware the Devil's Organ*

*By my own hand, in the year of our Lord 1597,*

*Viscount Bernard de Gabriel*

When attempting to decipher this cryptic note, any character with either Heraldry or History skill may make a roll against Wit (with a -2

modifier) to remember some basic information about the Viscount de Gabriel. The Viscount was a powerful nobleman who served King Henry IV until he was discovered to be a spy working for England in 1596. He was imprisoned for two years, and finally executed (by decapitation). All of his lands were seized by the Crown, except for his villa at Ile du Cartelier, which was left for his widow. He was rumored to have been quite rich, but very little of his wealth was recovered by the King.

Characters wishing to do further research on Viscount de Gabriel may consult the following sources:

- Any Nobleman character, or any character with a title, may hire a professional herald to research and recount the history of the Viscount. This will provide the information given above, as well as some details about the Viscount's personality. The Viscount de Gabriel was a cruel man who enjoyed games of cat and mouse. He was an excellent strategist in battle (he rose to the rank of Brigadier in Henry IV's army) and in chess. After his execution, his family line's hereditary title was revoked. For this information the herald will charge three times the Social Rank (in Livres) of the character who hired him.
- Any Player-Character who is in the Bureaucracy, or any other character who has Bureaucratics skill and can make a successful Wit roll, may inspect state records (including those within the Ministries of State and Justice) on the subject of the Viscount and his descendants. Careful inspection of the records (and a successful roll against Luck) will reveal the following information: The Viscount was arrested and imprisoned after attempting to sell French military secrets to an English agent at his villa near Ile du Cartelier. The hereditary title of his family was revoked by the King after his death, and his family abandoned the villa (their home after the Viscount's other property was confiscated), after the death of his widow, in 1602. It has remained abandoned (and unclaimed by anyone, even the Crown) ever since.
- Any Player-Character who is in the Clergy, or any other character who has either Theology or History skills and can make a successful Wit roll, may inspect Church records. Careful inspection of Church records (and a successful roll against Luck) will reveal the following information: The only living descendant of the Viscount de Gabriel is his grand-nephew, Victor de Gabriel, who was baptized twenty-four years before the adventure (i.e. his present age is approximately twenty-four). Four years before the start of the adventure, he was imprisoned at a Sanitarium run by Dominican monks, near Paris, after (apparently) going mad. He escaped two years after his incarceration, and has not been seen since.
- Any player-character who is a Rogue, or who has underworld contacts, may get the word on the villa from the thieves' grapevine. The villa was abandoned intact, fully furnished. Several thieves (who knew nothing of the secret message in the sword hilt) have tried to rob it for its furnishings, silver, art, etc. None of them has ever returned (they were all killed, either by traps, or by Victor, see below). The Villa is now considered haunted, and no one will go near it.
- Any Player-Character may return to the market to find the armorer who sold the sword with the message in it, and question him. The armorer will (for the nominal fee of 10 L) tell the character how he came by the sword: It was sold to him by a peddler who found it buried with two other identical weapons. The peddler kept one sword, and sold the other two to the armorer. The armorer, later fearing that the swords might have been stolen, decided to sell them for only 100 L each, to get them off his hands quickly. The first was sold to a gentleman (here the Gamemaster may include a description of some old enemy of the Player-Characters). The second sword was sold to the Player-Character who got it.

With information gathered by the means shown above, the player-characters should be ready to organize an expedition to the Villa. Even

if they do not recognize the necessity of haste (because someone else may have a copy of the same message).

## THE VILLA AND THE HAUNTINGS

The 'haunted villa' formerly belonging to the Viscount de Gabriel is located along a minor tributary of the Seine, about two hour's carriage or horse ride outside of Paris. It is isolated, and there are no nearby towns or villages. The villa grounds wander away from the main building into a tree-lined boulevard, ending in a topiary (hedge) maze. A quay and boathouse jut out into the Seine from the central complex, and another quay is visible on the other bank (the Ile de Cartelier). The Villa itself is a fanciful two story building with a western tower that rises another story above the rest. Its design is something between a castle and an early chateau. Due to abandonment and disuse, the grounds are uniformly unkempt, crumbling and overgrown with weeds. The whole has an unpleasant lonely atmosphere about it.

Around the grounds, and within the villa itself, are a series of clues, leading to the Viscount's treasure in the tower, and a number of deadly traps, set to kill unwary intruders. These were all set up by the Viscount's widow and family, according to explicit directions smuggled out of the Viscount's prison. The 'haunted villa' is the cruel Viscount's last game of cat and mouse — one designed to be played for a long time.

If the Gamemaster is not satisfied that the traps around the villa (and, possibly, enemies of the party searching around as well) are deadly enough, he may also include the mad descendant of the Viscount, Victor de Gabriel. Victor is a throw-back to his Great Uncle, he is cruel and intelligent. He has the added feature of being crazy. His madness takes the form of paranoid delusions, and he may believe that anyone who enters the haunted villa has come to finally end his family line. He is thus also homicidal.

Victor de Gabriel was imprisoned in a sanitarium run by Dominican Monks when he was twenty years old, after publicly calling for the King's blood. He escaped when he was twenty-two, and has lived the two years since in hiding at the villa. He 'guards' the villa, resets the traps, and dumps the bodies of those killed into the Seine. He lives in the woods on Ile du Cartelier, preferring the wild to the luxuries inside the villa. His appearance is unkempt, with long, wild dark hair and an unshaven face. In Summer he wears only a pair of dirty pantaloons; in Winter he wears an outfit of furs and pelts, and heavy wheellock pistols, taken from the Hall of Arms in the villa. He prefers sneaking around and slowly picking off intruders, rather than fighting it out. He is very quiet and agile, but he moves with a strange loping gait, due to a musket ball which lodged in his spine a year ago. Victor knows about all of the traps and secret passages of the villa. He has never tried to find the treasure in the tower, and has overlooked the clues leading to it.

Victor's exact statistics are listed below:

### Victor de Gabriel

Strength	16	Hit Points	18
Dexterity	17	Armor:	
Endurance	14		None (during the Summer)
Wit	15		or
Charm	2		Furs (during the Winter)
Luck	13		(1 pt. on all locations but Head)

### Attacks:

Dagger (Expertise 15)	Chance to hit: 12 or less
Wheellock Pistols (Expertise 15)	Chance to hit: 13 or less

### Skills:

Stealth, Tracking, Fine Manipulation, Horsemanship, and Strategy.

## KEY TO THE VILLA GROUNDS

Each of the areas shown on the Gamemaster's map of the villa grounds is detailed in the descriptions below:

(A) This dirt road leads northeast, and gradually turns east and southeast, towards Paris. It is about a two hour ride to Paris from here.

(B) The Main Gate is closed and locked. The lock is too rusted to be picked, but it could probably be broken easily (it has 10 Hit Points, and may be hit automatically). Within the gate, approaching characters may see a Carriage Driveway, and some gardens behind.

(C) The dirt road becomes a gravel Carriage Driveway within the Main Gate. A little round-a-bout allows carriages to be turned to exit through the gate, or to enter the Carriage House.

(D) The Stables and Carriage House reside in this building, just off the Driveway. The Stables have not been used for a long time, but an old dilapidated carriage (unusable after so many years of sitting

under a leaky roof) occupies one corner. Markings on the side display the de Gabriel coat-of-arms (recognizable to any character with Heraldry skill).

(E) This is the main Villa. It is an old-style manorhouse that resembles a castle. In front, a large set of marble steps lead under an ornate balcony, and to the entrance. If Victor is around, he may attempt to topple one of the two large gargoyles from the balcony bannister down upon a character on the steps. Any character who is unaware of the gargoyle, and is not looking up, must make a Luck roll to avoid being hit. Any character who is looking up may make a Luck roll and a Dexterity roll. If either roll is successful, the gargoyle misses. The heavy stone gargoyles are deadly, and will cause 8 + 1d6 points of general damage, and possibly knock out (Endurance roll to avoid) any character they hit. Even if a character is not knocked out, he will be stunned for 2d6 minutes.

For a full description of the inside of the Villa, see the Key to the Villa Interior, below.

(E1) A Secret Underground Passageway leading to the Secret Grate within the Topiary Maze starts here. It is entered through a hidden door in a wine cask in the cellars of the Villa (see 26 in the Key to the Villa Interior, below).

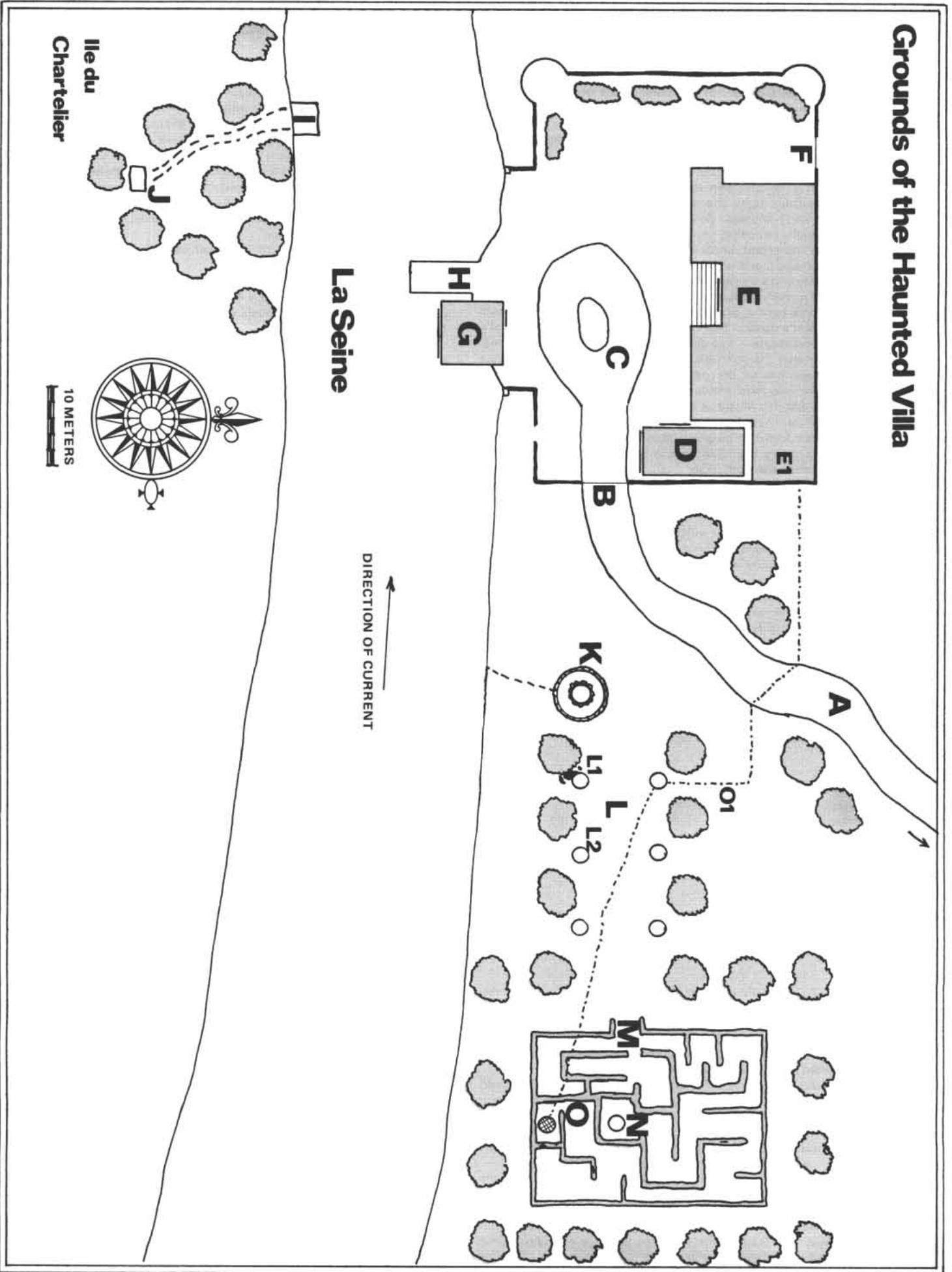
(F) The Lesser Gate provides another entrance to the Villa complex. Like the Main Gate, it is locked and rusted shut. The lock here, however, is very fragile (it has only 4 Hit Points). The gate may be climbed (requires a successful Dexterity roll at +3; +3 more for Acrobatics skill). The gardens and shrubs near the Lesser Gate are overgrown and jungle-like, and offer an excellent place to hide (especially for Victor).

(G) The old Boathouse protects two old river barges from the elements. The door to the boathouse is locked, but may be opened with the proper key (found elsewhere) or picked by a character with Fine Manipulation skill (a successful Dexterity roll is required to do this). One of the barges inside is obviously rotted on the bottom, but the other appears safe. It will hold up to four people, and may be used to reach Ile du Cartelier, on the other side of the river. Both barges are black, and they bear an unpleasant resemblance to funeral boats.

(H) The Villa Quay extends nearly ten meters into the Seine, towards Ile du Cartelier. On the other bank, another quay is visible, with a path leading from it, into a forest. At the end of the Villa Quay is a trapdoor, designed to open when weight is placed on it. If any



# Grounds of the Haunted Villa



character walks to the end of the quay, he will spring the trap, and he must make a successful roll against either ½ of his Luck, or ½ Dexterity (player's choice) to avoid falling in (roll at -2 for Stocky characters, +3 for Thin characters, +3 more for characters with Acrobatics skill). Any character who falls in will plummet down a chute, leading into the Seine. He must make a successful Luck roll, or be caught by the current. Those characters who are not caught by the current may be fished out by their friends, or drag themselves to shore. Characters caught by the current will be taken further down the river, before being deposited on the shore, and must make rolls against both Luck and Endurance. If both rolls are missed, the character drowns. A character who is deposited on a shore may be dropped on either the Villa or the Ile du Cartelier side (Gamemaster's option). Characters who fall into the Seine will be thoroughly soaked, and all of their primed gunpowder weapons must be reloaded. Soaked equipment may rust (in the case of metal) or rot (leather goods, clothing, etc.) if not dried and cared for properly. In Winter, a soaked character may catch a cold (Endurance roll to avoid) in which case he will probably sneeze a great deal.

(I) The Ile du Cartelier Quay is similar to the one at the Villa (but it is not trapped). It is simple to get here from the Villa in a barge (going with the current) but it is more difficult to return. When three or more characters attempt to return to the Boathouse or Villa Quay, the Gamemaster should roll a d6; on a six, the boat is caught in the current. A barge caught in the current will go further down the river, and all on board must make Dexterity rolls or fall into the water (with the possible effects listed in (H) above). A small path leads from the Ile du Cartelier Quay into the woods.

(J) At the end of the path from the quay, and in a clearing of the woods on Ile du Cartelier, stands a small, square stone monument, bearing the following inscription:

*'In remembrance of the noble Viscount Bernard de Gabriel, taken from his wife and children in 1596, and executed by the wishes of the King of France in 1598.'*

At the base of the monument, someone has placed some fresh flowers (Victor put them there). Victor also lives in the woods around the monument, and often lurks nearby.

(K) Near the road, and at the start of the tree-lined Boulevard, stands a beautiful marble Fountain. The central piece is designed in the form of many cherubs and winged fish. Normally, the Fountain remains deactivated, and the water level is very low.

(K1) By the shore, and leading underground to the Fountain is the Fountain Water Source. Victor knows of this, and may hide behind a tree and activate the Fountain to surprise the party. Victor may also choose to emphasize the haunted theme of this adventure. He has a number of lumps of reddish clay, which he can introduce into the Fountain Water Source. When this is done, the Fountain will run red, as if with blood. When the clay has dissolved in the Water Source (after two or three minutes) there will be little evidence left as to how it was done.

(L) Just past the Fountain is a long and pretty Tree-Lined Boulevard. The trees are large oaks and maples, and between them stand a total of six marble statues, depicting ancient Roman gods. The ground is covered with gravel (making quiet movement difficult). At the end of the Boulevard, the entrance to a large Topiary Maze is visible.

(L1) The first marble statue on the right (a depiction of the goddess Minerva) has been toppled from its conical base, revealing a hollow area inside. There is nothing inside the base, but the secret space there should suggest to the party that there might be something within the bases of the other statues.

(L2) The second statue on the right side of the Boulevard is one depicting Hercules, complete with club and lion-skin. The base beneath the statue is hollow, and if the statue is toppled, the player-characters will find what is inside. The hollow base houses a small gold ring with the insignia of the Viscount de Gabriel on the stud (the ring is worth 25 L if sold).

(M) At the end of the Boulevard is the entrance to a large Topiary (hedge) Maze. It has not been tended for a while (although Victor sometimes clips it) but it is in fairly good condition. A sword may sometimes be needed to cut through the brambles grown up in some of the more narrow passages. There are two 'tiger-traps' (pits hidden with leaves and branches) in the maze (marked on the map by '\*' symbols). Any character with Espionage or Tracking skill may attempt to spot them (on a successful Wit roll) as he approaches. If spotted, character may edge around the traps and avoid them. Otherwise, the character going first will fall in unless he makes a successful roll on ½ of his Luck. Any character who falls into a trap will take 1d6 points of damage to each of his legs. It is difficult to climb out of the pits (they are four

meters deep) and fallen characters will have to be helped out by their friends.

(N) At the heart of the Topiary Maze is a large statue of the god Pan — an oddly fitting relic in the center of such an overgrown garden. The statue has no base, and no secret compartments, but around its waist is tied a ring of keys. The keys are slightly rusted, but are still quite usable. They may be used to open any locked doors around the Villa and its grounds, except for the gates (which have rusted shut).

(O) A side Passage of the Topiary Maze leads to a small clearing. On the ground is a rusted grate, leading down to a flight of steps. The grate is locked, but may be opened with the keys found on the statue of Pan. The steps lead down to a Secret Underground Passage.

(O1) A Secret Underground Passageway leads from the wine cask in the cellars of the Villa (numbered (E1) on the Grounds map, or 26 on the Villa Interior map) to the Secret Grate (at (O)) in the Topiary Maze. This tunnel is low and small, and requires that the party proceed in single file and on hands and knees. In the middle (under a tree and the road) the passageway descends slightly, and where water has seeped in from the river, it is very muddy. The Secret Underground Passageway would be a particularly amusing place to have the player-characters meet Victor de Gabriel or the enemy party for the first time.

## KEY TO THE VILLA INTERIOR

When the party leaves the Grounds of the Haunted Villa, and enters the Villa itself (either through the front door, or through the Secret Underground Passage) refer to the key below for descriptions of each room and location:

(1) The front doors (which are unlocked) open into an elaborate and ornate Entrance Hall. The walls are trimmed in (now peeling gold leaf. On the west wall, across from a wide staircase leading up, the names of the battles which the Viscounts de Gabriel fought in are listed. On the small east wall is a dramatic portrait of the Viscount Bernard de Gabriel in full armor. Sensitive characters (those with a high Wit) may feel almost as if the eyes from the picture are looking at them (which indeed they may be). The picture is designed so that the pupils of the eyes may be removed from behind (see 9, the Hall of Arms, below) and Victor may watch the party from them. He will switch the eyes when no one is looking. Characters who look closely at the painting again, however, may notice a difference — the Viscount's eyes were blue, whereas Victor's are grey-green.

(2) The Sun Salon is a long room designed to capture the heat and light of the mid-afternoon sun. It is furnished in a dazzling, if slightly antiquated style. The chief attraction of the room is a chess table with two chairs, set up in the middle of the room. The chess pieces are set up for a game — the 'white' pieces are silver, while the 'black' are gold. All are well polished. If a character makes an opening move for one side and leaves the room, Victor may attempt to sneak in and make a counter-move. Victor (like his Great-Uncle) is a very good player. If sold, the chess set would be worth about 250 Livres.

(3) The Library Chamber is a room decorated chiefly with cherry-wood paneling and a wide assortment of old volumes. Most of the books are on 16th Century strategy and warfare, and accounts of famous battles. The books would be worth 100 to 200 Livres to a collector (for the whole set). Any character who studies the books for several weeks at his leisure, will receive experience checks on Strategy, Captains and History skills (if he has none of these skills, he may acquire one by reading the books).

(4) The large Dining Chamber of the Villa is practically filled by a huge dining table and the ten seats around it. A number of ale steins lie haphazardly on the table-top (left there by Victor).

(5) The Kitchen is a chamber filled with old utensils, a small fireplace, a stove, a bread oven, and other cooking accessories. A number of pieces of fine silverware, and a gold inlaid tea service are strewn on the floor (total value: about 75 Livres). The Kitchen appears unused (Victor does not cook what he catches in the forest) and nothing appears to be missing except for a number of kitchen knives (taken by Victor).

(6) This is a Pantry, leading to the steps to the cellars.

(7) The Mosaic Salon is an antechamber to the Evening Salon. It is undecorated except for a large round mosaic of glass tiles depicting a red figure cloaked as Death. The swirls of red around the edges are almost hypnotic. Around the perimeter a legend reads: 'fire is my medium'.

(8) The Evening Salon is a fancy chamber with an immense fireplace, originally used to spend cozy evenings on Winter nights. A number of old armchairs are arranged in a rough semicircle around the hearth. Behind them are some small tables and cabinets, housing a collection of crystal goblets (worth a total of about 150 Livres) and

some wine which is no longer healthy to drink. Any character who inspects the fireplace closely will discover a number of iron handholds imbedded in the brick, and ascending the chimney (to 22). Any character may ascend easily except for one who is both tall and stocky (such characters must make a successful Luck roll, or get stuck for 2d6 combat turns).

(9) The Hall of Arms is a long gallery, in which the old arms of the Viscounts de Gabriel are displayed. Characters wishing to re-stock their own armories will find six longswords, two cuirasses, four matchlock arquebuses, and two pikes. All of these weapons are from the 16th Century, however, and are thus a little unwieldy by 17th Century standards (add ½ Weight Point to each item). Behind one cuirass (on the west wall) are the peep holes which allow Victor de Gabriel to see through the eyes of the portrait in the Entrance Hall (1). Anyone moving or inspecting the cuirass will notice the peep holes. Any character who makes a successful Wit roll (+2 for Espionage skill) will notice an empty space on one wall where two pistols hung at one time (these were the pistols taken by Victor).

(10) The Grand Salon is a large room worthy of the old Viscounts in its ostentatious decoration. The floor is tiled with white, pink and green marbles from Florence. The chandelier which hangs from the ceiling is made of the finest Venecian glass (worth about 500 Livres, but weighing 25 Weight Points). The north and east walls are decorated by medieval tapestries depicting the ancient Viscounts de Gabriel riding into battle and jousts in full armor (these are worth 100 Livres each, and weigh 12 Weight Points a piece).

(11) At the top of the wide steps from the Entrance Hall is a spacious Upper Hall leading to all of the second story chambers. Flanking the stairway and resting on the bannister are two gilt wooden statues of angels pointing upwards and to the East (towards the top of the tower, and to the treasure). Most of the doors leading from the Upper Hall are locked. These may be opened with the keys found on the statue of Pan in the Topiary Maze outside (see (N) in the Key to the Grounds) or they may be picked by any character with Fine Manipulation who can make a successful roll against Dexterity (at -2).

(12) A large Balcony leads out from the Upper Hall, and commands an excellent view of the Villa grounds to the south. Two large stone gargoyles sit on either side of the balcony. When the party enters the Villa from the stairs below, Victor de Gabriel may topple one of these in an attempt to crush a player-character (see the description under (E) in the Key to the Grounds for the possible effects). Windows lead from the Balcony to a Private Toilet (19) and the Guest Boudoir (14). Either of these windows may be broken to permit entry into those rooms.

(13) This room is a large Guest Bed Chamber, used to accommodate visitors in olden times. It is now rather dingy, and the canopy of the bed has collapsed. Two rosewood cabinets stand on the north side of the room. They are probably fairly valuable (worth from 75 to 100 Livres each) but are very delicate, and would be damaged by being moved out quickly.

(14) The Guest Boudoir is a small sitting room which serves as an ante-chamber for the second Guest Bed Chamber (15). It is tastefully but sparsely furnished. On a central table, an old draughts (backgammon) board sits with pieces set up for a game (undoubtedly left at one time to amuse guests).

(15) The second Guest Bed Chamber is smaller and simpler than the first (13). The canopy has not collapsed here, but the fabric of the sheets and curtains of the bed has rotted in places. Everything is covered with dust.

(16) The Master Bed Chamber is an impressive room dominated by a large canopy bed. Moths have gotten in here, however, and the sheets and covers are ruined. A careful inspection of the room will discover a silver chamberpot with the de Gabriel coat-of-arms emblazoned on it, hidden beneath the bed (it is worth 25 Livres).

(17) This Private Toilet is intended for guest use. It contains the usual (crude) 17th Century accommodations.

(18) The Wig Parlor contains the numerous wigs of the Viscount de Gabriel and his wife, most of which are still in very good condition (due to large doses of wig powder and pommade). Although slightly outdated, many of the wigs are extremely elegant, and might be worn by player-characters on special occasions. A character with Disguise skill could improve his stock of costumes with a few good pieces from the Wig Parlor.

(19) This Private Toilet, more elegant than the other but equally uncomfortable, was once intended for the use of the Viscount and his wife.

(20) The Grand Bath houses a large copper tub once used by the Viscounts for bathing. Next to the tub is a basin, with a tiny stove beneath it, used for heating bathwater. The room is decorated with Delft tiles depicting pastoral scenes.

(21) This room is where the Tower Stairwell starts upward. By the side of the door (to the north) stands an ancient suit of armor with a poleaxe. This axe has been carefully weighted to fall with deadly accuracy on anyone who enters the room. The trap is sprung by a large flagstone at the doorway of the chamber: when the weight of a human being depresses the stone, the axe flashes down. Any character who is totally unaware will automatically be hit by the axe when entering the room. Any character who is wary, is watching the suit of armor, or who is attempting to disarm the trap somehow, gets to attempt a Luck roll to dodge (+3 for Acrobatics or Stealth skill). The suit of armor will normally hit on a d20 roll of 22 or less. If a dodge is made, subtract the character's Dexterity from the axe's chance to hit. If the axe hits, it does 6 points of damage on a minor wound, and 6 + 1d6 on a serious wound. Roll a d6 on the table below to determine where it hits:

Roll	Location
1-3	Head
4-5	Left Arm
6	Chest

There is nothing inside the suit of armor, and once the trap is sprung, it is harmless.

(22) The handholds in the Chimney from the hearth in the Evening Salon (8) end here midway up. A tiny crawlway is visible where several bricks have been pulled out, and it leads up and to the southwest (towards the Tower Chamber, (27)). It is too thin for any stocky character to fit through. It leads to a secret door to the Tower Chamber, which may be pushed open from the crawlway, but is not normally openable from the other side.

(23) The steps from the Pantry (6) lead down to the cellars. It is musty and dark in the cellars, and there is a thick scent of wine. By the bottom of the steps are five torches on a rack. It is not advisable to use them as they are partially filled with gunpowder (by the Viscount's instructions). After burning for about two minutes the flame will reach the powder. The resulting explosion will do 3d6 points of general damage to the person carrying the torch, and an additional 1d6 + 2 points to all others within four meters. All nearby will be burnt and singed, and any character failing to make a Luck roll will go temporarily blind or deaf (Gamemaster's choice, lasts 1d6 days). All will be stunned for 1d6 minutes.

Also near the base of the stairs is an old Well used by the Villa household. The stones on the deges are loose, and any character leaning over to look down it risks falling in (Stones will give way on a roll of 5 or 6 on a d6). The bottom of the Well is a long way down, and any character who fell would die.

(24) Most of the floor of the cellars is covered by slippery cobblestones, but a section in the passage leading to the wine casks appears to simply be packed earth. If the Player-Characters inspect it, they will find that it is loose in some places. With a minimal amount of digging (five to ten minutes) they will unearth three small casks of gunpowder (carefully sealed, and still fresh) and a tiny silver case. Inside the case are a pair of simple spectacles constructed of red glass. These were specially made to the Viscount's specifications, to leave an added clue. If worn while viewing the mosaic in the Mosaic Salon (7) these spectacles will make the red appear as background, and the other colors will appear dark and more distinct; the legend '*fire is my medium*' will change to '*ascend with fire*', a hint to the secret crawlway in the Chimney (8 and 22). A character who inspects the spectacles may think of the Mosaic Salon (if his player does not) on a roll of his Wit/4 (+2 for Chemistry skill). The spectacles are worth about 30 Livres as a novelty item.

(25) The Wine Casks in the cellars were long ago drained, but the smell of the wine still permeates everything here. From the second cask to the wall (at the dotted line on the map) a thin trip wire is set to activate a crossbow trap enclosed inside the cask. Any character with Espionage or Fine Manipulation skill will notice it if he can roll his Wit/2 or less on a d20. Otherwise, the first character passing by the cask will set it off. The crossbow bolt hits on a 15 or less on a d20, and does 3 + 1d6 damage. Roll 1d6 to determine hit location:

Roll	Location
1-3	Right Arm
4-5	Chest
6	Flank

Once the crossbow trap is sprung, it is harmless (unless Victor reset it).

# The Villa

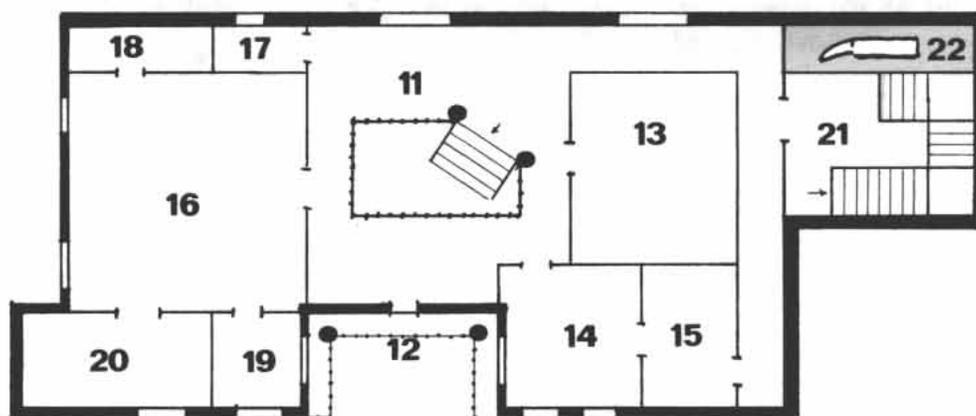
→ Open Door  
↔ Locked Door

TEN METERS

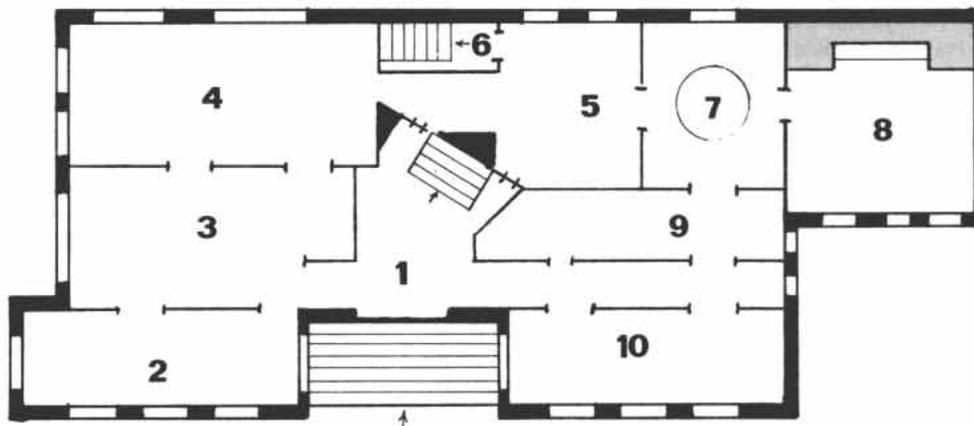
## THE TOWER



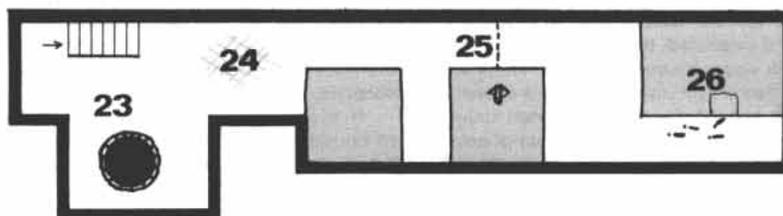
## UPPER FLOOR



## GROUND FLOOR



## THE CELLARS



1. Entrance Hall
2. The Sun Salon
3. Library Chamber
4. Dining Chamber
5. Kitchen
6. Pantry
7. Mosaic Salon
8. Evening Salon
9. Hall of Arms
10. The Grand Salon
11. Upper Hall
12. Balcony
13. Guest Bed Chamber
14. Guest Boudoir

15. Guest Bed Chamber
16. Master Bed Chamber
17. Private Toilet
18. Wig Parlor
19. Private Toilet
20. The Grand Bath
21. Tower Stairwell
22. Chimney
23. Well
24. Packed Earth
25. Wine Casks
26. Entrance to Secret Tunnel
27. The Tower Chamber



(26) At the third and final cask in the cellars are a number of large footprints tracked in mud (these are Victor's, leading to the side of the cask. Characters who search thoroughly will discover a secret door leading to an Entrance to the Secret Tunnel, inside the cask. This tunnel (marked as (O1) on the Grounds map) leads to the Secret Grate in the Topiary Maze (marked as (O) on the Grounds map).

(27) The Tower Chamber is at the very top of the Villa, and is the place where the last Viscount de Gabriel hid his treasure. It is difficult to get into the Tower Chamber as the stairwell leading to it has been bricked off from it by a make-shift wall (by one of the last orders of the doomed Viscount). Characters may get in without using the stairs by climbing through the crawlway from the Chimney (22). Otherwise, they must destroy the wall. It would take  $2 + 1d6/2$  hours to dig through the wall with picks and spades. A quicker but more dangerous way to break it down would be to leave a charge of gunpowder in front of it, on a fuse (if the party has dug in the cellars, the gunpowder stored there could be used). A Grenadier may choose the correct charge easily (about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  small kegs of powder), and will know to evacuate the Villa before lighting the fuse. If a character without Grenadier skill sets the charge, roll a d6 to determine how well he chose:

Roll	Result
1-2	Not enough powder; try again.
3-4	Perfect Choice; a clean hole is made in the wall, allowing entry to the Tower Chamber.
5	Too much powder; the wall is destroyed, and so is the trap (the Devil's Organ) inside! The party may enter and pick up the treasure off the floor without risk.
6	Way too much powder; the top of the tower is blown off and bricks and treasure are strewn everywhere. The party may recover some treasure off the ground (10 to 60% of it, roll a d6). Anyone near the tower at the time of the explosion is in trouble.

If the player-characters get past the wall without destroying the whole tower, they will find themselves in a small chamber. In the of the room is a small table with a wooden box atop it. The box is a trap called 'the Devil's Organ'. If it is inspected, the party will find that it has eight small holes, two on each side, pointing outwards. These are actually the ends of gunbarrels. A mechanism inside the box is opened, or tipped to one side. On the very top of the box is an small round depression, which has a reverse image of the de Gabriel coat-of-arms inside it. If the party has the ring with the Gabriel seal on it (found beneath the statue at (L2) on the Grounds) it may be pressed into this

depression to deactivate the trap (any character with Fine Manipulation skill will think of this on a successful roll against his Wit/2). If the Devil's Organ goes off, anyone nearby will be hit by it, and take 2d6 points of damage to either the Chest or Flank (determine randomly).

Inside the box guarded by the Devil's Organ is the Viscount's treasure, including:

- 200 Louis d'Or (gold coins worth 2400 Livres)
- Thirteen Jewelled Crucifixes (worth 200 Livres each)
- 50,000 English Pounds in Elizabethan Banknotes (now completely worthless). Before the Viscount was imprisoned, he planned to run to England, so he converted his wealth as best as he could. These notes were good only as long as the monarchy they were issued under remained in power. When the Stuarts ascended the throne, these notes lost their value.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The *Haunted Villa* may end in a number of ways. A wise and cautious party may make several trips to the Villa, leaving quickly whenever they suffer casualties. They may not depart for long, however, due to the party of their enemies (possibly) looking for the treasure as well.

Some parties may wish to depart after finding a few minor salable items inside the Villa. Greed and curiosity, however, will usually lead them back after a while to find the 'real' treasure.

Cautious parties may be hard to hit with traps. In this case, the Gamemaster should have Victor de Gabriel and the party of enemies play a more active role.

Because no one has claimed the haunted villa, taking items out is not really stealing. Nonetheless, the party may wish to 'fence' the items to avoid direct association. Most fences will only give player-characters 50% of the estimated value of an item.

Murders and deaths at the haunted villa may be easily hidden (just as Victor has hidden deaths there for years — in the Seine). No one goes there, because of its reputation. If the player-characters figure out the secret of the 'haunting' (that is, Victor and the traps) they may gain notoriety by publicizing their discovery.

If Victor escapes death, but the treasure is found, he may continue to hound the player-characters by following them into later adventures. Who knows when a madman with two loaded pistols might strike in a later game?

# The Cardinal's Peril

## INTRODUCTION

*The Cardinal's Peril* is an adventure for *Flashing Blades* which catches the player-characters up in a web of danger, intrigue and high politics. It is designed for a group of three or more beginning *Flashing Blades* characters. The adventure can lead to many other situations and opportunities for achievement, opening up a number of different paths for characters to follow as they may. The friends and enemies the adventurers will meet here — and particularly one potential friend of surpassing importance — will remain important to the characters for many adventures to come.

The basic plot of *The Cardinal's Peril* revolves around a plot to assassinate Cardinal Richelieu, the highest Minister of the King's government. A powerful, shadowy nobleman, the Duke of Montauban, has set a scheme in motion to have the Cardinal killed as he rides from Paris to open the campaign against the Protestants in La Rochelle. A member of Richelieu's personal escort of Cardinal's Guards is to be killed and replaced by an exact double, in the pay of the Duke.

The adventurers, however, stumble into the middle of the plot when they accidentally witness the attack on this Guards officer, and the Duke's henchmen mark them for death as well, to prevent them from alerting the authorities. By the time they realize their peril, the Cardinal's party has already set forth, and only the adventurers can save him from a treacherous ambush.

## BEHIND THE LUXEMBOURG

The adventurers begin the scenario separately (unless it is established that some or all of them already know one another). Each is out on business of his own late one evening in the eastern part of Paris, most of them seeking enjoyment at taverns, clubs, or other places of

relaxation and entertainment. As the action starts, though, all the adventurers are out of doors, taking in the summer night air, when cries for help break the stillness.

'Treachery! Treachery! Soldiers of the Cardinal, help! Come quickly!' It is a man's voice, and mingled with the shouts are other, less distinct calls and the clash of steel against steel. The sound comes from behind the Palais du Luxembourg, a favored place for private duels. But the call of treachery suggests that this is no mere dispute between gentlemen, but rather an ambush of some kind.

The various adventurers may respond or not, as they please. Few gentlemen of honor would ignore a call for help like this one, and the sounds of combat, which suggest one man fighting off many, may alone be enough to draw the characters in to help. Any character in the Cardinal's Guard would, upon hearing the cry, be almost certain to respond. The same is true of characters in the King's Musketeers, who may suspect a combat between the two companies to be the heart of the problem. Other characters may respond as they please.

Those who do respond to the cries will round the corner of the palace in time to see a single man in the uniform of the Cardinal's Guard struggling valiantly against six armed assailants — common ruffians by the look of them, armed with a mixed assortment of swords, knives, and clubs — while another man, swathed in a heavy black cloak, looks on. Even as the adventurers approach, the lone guardsman slips and falls, and two of his attackers are on him before he can recover. The cloaked man notices the adventurers as they arrive, and with a shout, orders the rest of his henchmen to hold them off.



A fight ensues, which should be resolved by the Gamemaster in accordance with the usual combat rules. In the course of the battle, the cloaked man is heard calling 'The ring! Get the ring, or it is all for nothing!' A few moments later he and the two men who finished off the Guardsman break and run, and within moments the other ruffians disperse as well, fleeing.

The ruffians are armed half with swords and half with clubs, all of them also have daggers. Expertise with all weapons is 12 and all wear boots and leather jerkins, but no 'regular' armor of any kind.

Any adventurers who did not go to help in the fight may still be drawn into the action. Each such character should roll a D6 and consult the table below. The character will have the encounter described there. Duplicate results should be ignored and rerolled until there are no duplicates left (unless there are more characters rolling than results available, which is unlikely — if this does happen, it means that the two characters involved happened to be together when the encounter took place).

#### Initial Encounters

- 1 The character is suddenly bowled over by a fleeing ruffian, who knocks the adventurer down and keeps right on going. The adventurer may, if he so desires, attempt to catch the man and fight him. In any event, the man drops a bag of ten gold Louis coins as he runs or fights, and does not notice before he is killed or flees.
- 2 The character catches sight of a fancy carriage with four horses standing quietly in the street. It bears a coat of arms on the side which is not immediately recognizable in the dark. As cries go up from behind the Palace (after the adventurers arrive and begin to fight there), a man opens the carriage door, leans out for a few seconds, and then closes the door again. A moment later, the carriage rolls directly past the adventurer(s), who see both the coat of arms and the face of a thin, saturnine aristocrat peering at them through the window.
- 3-5 A patrol of Old City Guards arrives, attracted by the disturbance behind the palace. The adventurer is rounded up by the patrol and forced to accompany them to the site of the encounter, until his claims of innocence can be proven.
- 6 The character rounds a corner and collides with a black-cloaked man wearing a sword and carrying a lantern. This man steps back and raises the lamp in surprise, briefly illuminating his features, then impatiently orders the character to stand aside. He is willing to fight in order to win free, but will not linger long. If the fight goes against him, or there is a sign of pursuit closing in, he will break off by using some dirty fighting trick, and make good his escape.

#### THE LIEUTENANT

In the wake of the fight, there is much confusion; this will ultimately enable the various ruffians to get away. Even when the adventurers show an eagerness to pursue their opponents, the Old City Guard patrol (encounter 3-5 above) shows up and detains everyone they find. Adventurers who have not previously met will probably get the opportunity now.

The original cause of the crisis is the Cardinalist Guardsman, who now lies, only barely alive, where his attackers left him. Before he dies, he recovers consciousness long enough to say (loudly enough for at least a few of the adventurers to hear) 'It was . . . I . . .' Then he dies. If an adventurer who had encounter number 6 above sees the dead man, roll against Wit to notice a resemblance between the men's features, and roll against Luck (with a +10 modifier) to realize that they are, in fact, identical. Otherwise, there will be no immediate clue to the meaning of the dead man's words.

The man on the ground is a Lieutenant of the Cardinal's Guard (and thus one of the top officers of that elite company). He is tall and thin, with long, dark blonde hair and a curling mustache over an elegant, tapered goatee. His uniform is of the best quality, and there is something about him, even in death, that suggests good birth and great wealth. Any characters in any company of the Guards Regiment will know him immediately as the young noble Lieutenant Laurent du Grenniers et de Lamoye, a rising star in the service of the Cardinal marked out for the highest favor and honor.

The patrol of the Old City Guards is also led by an aristocrat, the Viscomte de Remoilles. His uncle, the Duke of Montauban, is a very powerful and independent nobleman currently out of favor with the King and the Cardinal. Both Duke and Viscount are known as ruthless men, but the Viscount's character will only be known to character's in the army. De Remoilles is accompanied by ten of his men. They investigate the scene of the crime, question each of the adventurers in turn, and then allow the party to go free, saying that their story seems to be the truth, but carefully noting addresses and names for later verification. They also take the body of the Guardsman away for



return to his family.

If a character who went through encounter number 2 knows the Viscount, or is told who he is, or has Heraldry skill and makes a Wit throw successfully, that character will realize that the coat of arms on the carriage in the street belonged to the Duke of Montauban, and may thus be inclined to remark upon the coincidence of meeting the Duke's nephew.

By the time the adventurers are released to go about their business, they will have had the opportunity to become well acquainted. Some form of meeting, preferably over drinks at a friendly local tavern, may be in order; this will be the first real chance for any of the players to share special information or experiences with the others, and for the group as a whole to ponder the events of the evening. It is up to the players, however, to decide on such a meeting; if they do not, but choose instead to go their respective ways, the Gamemaster need not interfere. Events will bring them together again soon enough.

#### DIVIDED THEY FALL

Even if the adventurers do meet after their evening's entertainment, they must sooner or later disperse to go about their own individual routines. The Gamemaster should ascertain just what each character will be doing the next day, and should work in an encounter of importance to the adventure within the framework of the character's actions. An attempt will be made on each character's life the day after de Lamoye's death.

Resolution of these murderous attacks should be made individually. A table is provided suggesting various ways the attempts might be made, but the Gamemaster need not roll dice at all. If characters are indicated as being together during the day, they may face the attack together, but by and large, each will have to be handled as a separate incident, and without the knowledge of any of the other players. Each attempt is resolved in turn, using the ordinary rules.

#### ASSASSIN ENCOUNTERS

1. The character's lodgings are set on fire, with doors blocked from the outside. A series of die rolls is made. Once each turn, the character must throw Luck or less to detect the fire (and until then, can take no action), while the Gamemaster rolls 1D10 and notes the number. The Gamemaster's die rolls are accumulated; when 50 points are accumulated, the fire becomes dangerous. At this point it is noticed automatically, and the character may begin to take action, but every turn thereafter 1D6 points of damage is taken by the character, without saves or reductions. The doors are blocked, so it is up to the character to find a way out before being overcome.
2. The character is attacked by armed footpads. There are four of them (more, if there is more than one player-character); one may be recognized as one of the ruffians from the night before, if applicable. This attack occurs in a city street in the evening, and should be resolved according to the standard rules procedures.
3. The character receives a perfumed letter, written in a feminine hand, requesting that the character render assistance to an anonymous lady in desperate need of a gentleman's championship. This invitation, however, turns out to be a set-up for an ambush by footpads, as in number 2 above.
4. The character is quite deliberately and publicly insulted by Captain Junote, an officer of the Gascon Regiment of rather low birth, but renowned as one of the most dangerous duelists in the

Realm. The character may, on a roll of Luck or less, notice the carriage described in Initial Encounter No. 2 near the site of the duel, and see one of the Captain's seconds conferring with the occupant of the coach. If the character wins the duel, he, too, will be set upon by ruffians, as in 2 above.

(The Captain will be armed with a rapier for the duel and is trained in Italian Style with an Expertise of 16.)

5. An assailant wielding both pistol and sword attacks the adventurer in the street at night.
6. A beautiful young woman and a squad of the Old City Guards, accompanied by the Viscount, bursts in upon the character at rest. The woman's clothes are torn, and she immediately begins to denounce the character for attacking her. Resolution of this encounter is in the hands of the player and the Gamemaster, but it should be noted that the troops are under orders to kill, rather than merely to capture, the 'wretched fiend' who assaulted the woman (though such orders would be vigorously denied to higher authorities).

Once each assassination attempt has been resolved, the opportunity should arise for the characters to be reunited (perhaps by previous arrangement or perhaps by a sudden desire to compare notes).



## STRANGE NEWS

It will be fairly clear to all of the players by this time that something dangerous is definitely going on. A series of murderous ambushes (all of them hopefully bungled, but still attempted) occurring the night after the Guardsman's death is no mere coincidence, particularly if any direct connection (a particular ruffian, or the carriage) between the incidents has been established. The adventurers know by this time that something is wrong, and that it relates to the dead Lieutenant of the Cardinal's Guard.

It is possible that certain other facts will have come to light, either as rumors, or as the results of direct character inquiries.

- **The Lieutenant's Death:** Strangely enough, there is no news of the death of the Lieutenant from any source. A direct inquiry yields astonished looks: but of course the Lieutenant de Lamoye is not reported dead. His body found at the Luxembourg? Impossible; it did not happen.

A character in the Cardinal's Guard will know even more, for the Lieutenant was definitely seen by other guardsmen the day after his supposed death.

The Gamemaster may allow any character who rolls Luck or less (+5 to the die roll) to have heard of the Lieutenant's being seen (just as a casual mention somewhere) even if no inquiries were made.

- **The Viscount:** Again, inquiries are most likely to produce this information; the Viscount de Remoilles was not on duty the night before. Naturally, he filed no reports, for he had no reason to; he was probably keeping company with his beautiful young mistress.
- **The Duke:** Any character who rolls Luck or less will come into possession of a rumor concerning the Duke of Montauban, as will any character who makes direct inquiries into the carriage or the coat of arms. The Duke is said to be visiting Paris this month, a rare enough thing since the Cardinal's rise to power. The two men detest one another both personally and politically, and the Duke was once heard to denounce the Cardinal as a 'bloody-minded tyrant determined to play the puppet-master to our Sovereign.'

Montauban was stripped of all government posts, and rumor has it that the Cardinal is set on seizing his estates, titles, and other possessions as well, given half a chance. But the Cardinal's position is not yet firm enough to do this, especially with the flare-up of Huguenot unrest and the threat of war with England. But a successful military campaign will put Richelieu in undisputed control of France, so time is rapidly running out for men like Montauban who oppose him.

- **The Final Blow:** As the adventurers meet to discuss the events

of the past day, a final piece of news arrives. It comes in the form of a Subaltern of the King's Musketeers, an old friend of one of the characters, who drops by with exciting news. War has been set in motion against the rebels of La Rochelle, and their English allies, if the Buckingham's minions dare to support the Huguenots in their resistance. The army is in motion already, or parts of it, at least; and though the King has fallen ill, he plans to send his First Minister, the Cardinal himself, to command the siege until his own arrival.

The Musketeer then makes a surprising statement. 'Much as I dislike to admit it, today I am sorry not to be in the Red Duke's Guards. We must linger here until His Majesty is fit to travel, while the Cardinal's men accompany him. Lucky de Lamoye, to command the Cardinal's personal escort!'

It seems that the Cardinal and his personal escort, commanded by Lieutenant de Lamoye, left Paris at noon. There was no doubt about Lamoye's identity, surely, for everyone knows his regular features, his golden hair, and that magnificent signet ring he wears on his left hand!

## THE PLOT

The actual plot which is unfolding throughout the adventure is a dangerous one. Eager for revenge, and worried about the possibility of further persecution, the Duke of Montauban has decided to have Cardinal Richelieu killed. This is no easy task, for the Cardinal is an intelligent and wary opponent, and well-guarded. But the Duke, by a lucky coincidence, discovered the way to do it.

The coincidence was the Duke's meeting with a young peasant whose father is one of Montauban's tenants. This young man, feature for feature, proved to be an almost exact double for one of the Lieutenants of the Cardinal's Guard, de Lamoye. The Duke took the peasant in, trained him, and had him grow hair and beard to match the Guardsman's. He then bided his time, waiting for a chance to strike.

The Cardinal's decision to take the field at La Rochelle proved to be the perfect opportunity for the attempt. The impostor, whose name is Guy Morand, was taken to Paris by the Duke, there to recruit some 'muscle' for the plot. The Duke's nephew was also enlisted, together with members of the Old City Guard and other useful conspirators. Morand and his ruffians lured de Lamoye into an ambush behind the Luxembourg.

Here, as the adventurers saw, the Guardsman was killed. His distinctive signet ring was taken to provide the finishing touch to Morand's impersonation. Although there was an unforeseen complication — the arrival of the adventurers — the plan still proceeded smoothly. The Viscount de Remoilles and his cronies showed up to 'investigate' the death, and so were able to buy time for Morand and his people to escape. They also took possession of the body and disposed of it, and gained the names and addresses of the witnesses who might stand in their way later.

Morand took de Lamoye's place in the Guard, and so carried on as the commander of the Cardinal's picked escort. Other members of the conspiracy moved to eliminate the witnesses, while the Cardinal rode out of the city in the company of the man who planned to murder him.

The stage is set, then, for a final climactic showdown. Cardinal Richelieu (whatever individuals may think of his goals or methods) is a man France cannot do without; now he is in deadly danger, and only the adventurers are in a position to save him.



## THE CLIMAX

Once they have realized the broad outlines, at least, of the plot, the adventurers must take action. (They could, of course, leave the Cardinal to his fate, but there is neither honor, glory, nor reward to such a course of inaction). Their obvious moves would be to warn the authorities, or to warn the Cardinal himself.



But the authorities can do little. Richelieu is already on the road, and could be attacked at any time. A warning to the Paris bureaucrats would be of little value; the Cardinal could be dead before the ponderous wheels of government could be set in motion to save him. A far better course would be to find horses and ride after the escort, hoping thereby to overtake the slow-moving column and rescue the Cardinal before it is too late.

The Gamemaster should stage this final confrontation as dramatically as possible. The Cardinal is accompanied by twenty troopers and sergeants, plus the imposter Lieutenant. But when the adventurers ride to the rescue, 'de Lamoye' will claim that they are ambushing Richelieu, and the adventurers will have to cut through the escort to get to the fake Lieutenant and save the Cardinal. Actual resolution of the fight should follow the usual rules procedures; for obvious reasons, the Cardinal should survive the fight somehow (though he might well receive a wound from the traitor's sword).

#### Duke of Montauban

Strength	9	Hit Points: 10
Dexterity	16	Armor:
Endurance	10	Padded Doublet (1 on Chest and Flank).
Wit	16	Gauntlets and Sleeves (2 on Arms).
Charm	17	Boots and Breeches (2 on Legs)
Luck	17	

#### Attacks:

Longsword (Expertise 15)	Chance to Hit: 13
	Chance to Parry: 13
Rapier (Expertise 14)	Chance to Hit: 13
	Chance to Parry: 12

#### Skills:

Bribery, Captainty, Etiquette, Gambling, Heraldry, Horsemanship, Magistracy, Oratory.



#### Viscomte de Remoilles

Strength	14	Hit Points: 13
Dexterity	13	Armor:
Endurance	12	Leather Jerkin (2 on Chest and Flanks).
Wit	13	Gauntlets and Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Charm	16	Boots and Breeches (2 on Legs)

#### Attacks:

Two-Handed Sword (Expertise 10)	Chance to Hit: 7
	Chance to Parry: 8
Polearms (Expertise 10)	Chance to Hit: 6
Firearms (Expertise 10)	Chance to Hit: 8

#### Skills:

Acrobatics, Captainty, Carousing, Espionage, Horsemanship, Stealth and Strategy.



#### Guy Morand

Strength	15	Hit Points: 14
Dexterity	18	Armor:
Endurance	15	Cuirass (3 on Chest and Flank)
Wit	12	Gauntlets and Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Charm	16	Boots and Breeches (2 on Legs)
Luck	13	Helmet (2 on Head)

#### Attacks:

Longsword (Expertise 15)	Chance to Hit: 13
	Chance to Parry: 13
Rapier (Expertise 16)	Chance to Hit: 14
	Chance to Parry: 13
Foil (Expertise 15)	Chance to Hit: 14
	Chance to Parry: 14
Unarmed Attacks (Expertise 13)	Chance to Hit: 9

#### Skills:

Acrobatics, Disguise, Fine Manipulation, Horsemanship, Literacy, Stealth.



**Ruffians**

Strength	15	Hit Points: 16
Dexterity	14	Armor:
Endurance	18	Leather Jerkin (2 on Chest and Flanks)
Wit	10	Sleeves (1 on Arms)
Charm	6	Boots and Breeches (2 on Legs)
Luck	15	

**Attacks:**

Roll 1 D6 to choose weapon used and Expertise:	
1: Longsword (Expertise 12)	Chance to Hit: 11 Chance to Parry: 11
2: Dagger (Expertise 12)	Chance to Hit: 10 Chance to Parry: 10
3: Brawling Weapons (Expertise 10)	Chance to Hit: 9
4: Cutlass (Expertise 12)	Chance to Hit: 11 Chance to Parry: 10
5: 2-Handed Sword (Expertise 10)	Chance to Hit: 7 Chance to Parry: 8
6: Wheellock Pistol (Expertise 9) and Rapier (Expertise 9)	Chance to Hit: 12 Chance to Parry: 11

**Skills:**

Acrobatics, Carousing, Cut Purse, Disguise, Fine Manipulation, Gambling, Stealth.

**Cardinal's Guards**

Strength	14	Hit Points: 14
Dexterity	15	Armor:
Endurance	15	Cuirass (3 on Chest and Flank)
Wit	12	Gauntlets and Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Charm	11	Boots and Breeches (2 on Legs)
Luck	10	Helmet (2 on Head)

**Attacks:**

Foil (Expertise 14)	Chance to Hit: 14 Chance to Parry: 13
Rapier (Expertise 14)	Chance to Hit: 13 Chance to Parry: 12
Longsword (Expertise 13)	Chance to Hit: 11 Chance to Parry: 11
Firearms (Expertise 11)	Chance to Hit: 9
Unarmed Attacks (Expertise 11)	Chance to Hit: 8

**Skills:**

Acrobatics, Captaincy, Carousing, Horsemanship, Stealth, Strategy.

**ADVENTURE OUTCOMES**

The successful rescue of Richelieu from the traitors' schemes will have many important effects. First, the Cardinal returns immediately to Paris, postponing his journey to La Rochelle so that he can deal with the Montauban conspiracy in person (and to recover from his wounds, if any). Most members of the plot will be quickly rounded up and dealt with, but both the Duke and his nephew manage to escape. These two will certainly vow vengeance against the people who caused their defeat.

As to the adventurers, they will be well rewarded. The Cardinal should be considered to owe each of them a Favor for their efforts in his behalf. The nature of these Favors, and what comes of each, can be the subjects of later adventures, as well.

Player-characters in the military might well follow this adventure with a transfer to the front lines in the campaign against La Rochelle. Another adventure in this booklet, *The Lady of La Rochelle*, deals with one of the incidents the characters might face there.



# The Lady of La Rochelle

*The Lady of La Rochelle* is an adventure involving espionage and intrigue set against the French military campaign against the Huguenots of La Rochelle in 1627-1628. It is designed for a group of four or more *Flashing Blades* characters who are engrossed in military or quasi-military careers. The adventure can be an interesting way to enliven a period of active military campaigning by such characters, and with only a little adaptation can be worked into almost any game including military characters.

Basically, the plot of *The Lady of La Rochelle* puts the adventurers into the midst of a complicated web of espionage. The group, who are members of a special escort which is to accompany an emissary into the Huguenot city of La Rochelle to try to negotiate terms of surrender (and to spy out the defenses at the same time), is contacted by a dying man a few days before their mission begins and asked to secretly convey a letter to his sister, a Protestant who lives there. They are bound to an oath of secrecy regarding this delivery, to protect the man's family from the shame of this Protestant association, which was hitherto unknown.

But various clues hint that there is more to this than a simple last message from brother to sister, and the adventurers are caught between suspicion and their pledged honor. The man was, in fact, a spy who has stolen plans for a secret night assault against La Rochelle, and is using the group as unknowing dupes to deliver these plans into the hands of their enemies. Discovering the plot, the group must brave many dangers to escape the traps set by the Huguenot spies and get word to their own leaders to cancel the planned attack before it is too late.

If the Gamemaster and the players adopt the proper approach to play of this adventure, and use good techniques of role-play in the portrayal of the people involved, *The Lady of La Rochelle* should take on much of the flavor and atmosphere of the swashbuckling novels that convey the air of this era. Players should be reminded constantly of the codes by which their characters conduct themselves, and good role-play should be rewarded with all the excitement, action, and flair of an Alexandre Dumas novel or a period adventure film.

## GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Religious Wars of Sixteenth Century France decided little in the bitter struggle of Catholic versus Protestant, and though the Edict of Nantes in 1598 granted tolerance to the Protestant Huguenots, both sides knew that the issue of religion had not been solved, but only postponed. The Crown, and the majority of the people, remained steadfastly Catholic, with little interest in accepting the new faith, while Calvinism gained a firmer grip on certain regions and classes of French society.

The heart of the Huguenot movement remained at La Rochelle, one of France's major ports in the Bay of Biscay. The city, secure behind powerful defenses that had withstood an army of 20,000 men during the Religious Wars, maintained an independent stance that could not be curbed. The Kings of France were forced to treat with La Rochelle almost as if it were an independent nation, and from Henry IV obtained permission to pursue their Protestant faith — even as far as destroying Catholic churches and turning away missionaries of the Roman Church — without hindrance from the Crown.

In the second decade of the new century, La Rochelle's arrogance and power grew. It became both port and bastion of the Huguenot movement, a rallying point for Protestant rebels and a base for pirates who preyed upon shipping from many nations, including France itself. From 1620 until 1622, the city became actively rebellious, attacking the Royal Fleets and resisting a short and largely inconclusive blockade by land.

Efforts to end the city's truculence politically met with little success, for although a truce — 'the Peace of 1622,' which sounded more like a treaty between rival sovereignties than an attempt to settle a domestic problem — was declared, neither side adhered to its terms.

The King refused to destroy the fortifications of Fort Louis, erected to guard the seaward approaches to La Rochelle during the recent blockade, while the Huguenots did little to halt the depredations of pirates working out of the port. Matters came to a head again in 1625, with a daring stroke by the Seigneur de Soubise, who sailed with a small fleet and captured a squadron of the King's ships in the harbor of Le Blavet. Thereafter, war was inevitable, and Cardinal Richelieu and the King alike knew that only a quick victory could avert a new round of blood conflicts that would sap French strength anew.

The Huguenots of La Rochelle were backed in their rising by England, led by the Duke of Buckingham. The dashing English minister who was said to cherish an infatuation for the Queen, was determined to humble Richelieu and Louis XIII; it was sometimes hinted that he did so largely for the chance it gave him to stage a lengthy visit to Paris to conduct peace negotiations afterwards.

In the summer of 1627, the opposing forces drew their battle lines. A French army watched La Rochelle by land, but could do little against the city. As long as the sea lanes remained open, the port could resist a siege, and the Royal Navy was weak and scattered. The important campaign of this war was not, as yet, the city itself, but the Ile de Ré. Here the French Royalists held the fortresses of St. Martin and La Preé, but the English landing on the island in July, had moved to besiege these. If the Ile de Ré fell to England, La Rochelle could hold out indefinitely. Its swamps and pestilence would wear down the besiegers, while the besieged would be secure with the sea at their backs. So the focus of strategy through the summer and fall of that year was the island, not the mainland, and the fighting between the English and the French occupied center stage for most of those concerned with the conduct of the war. By the end of September, the balance was fast shifting to favor France, for the two forts on the island had twice been resupplied and reinforced by daring thrusts past the English attackers, and an assault by Buckingham had failed. Though the English remained a threat, the French position was becoming more secure, and King and Cardinal were on their way to take charge of the army in the field before La Rochelle to tighten the siege and begin the reduction of this troublesome center of Calvinism.

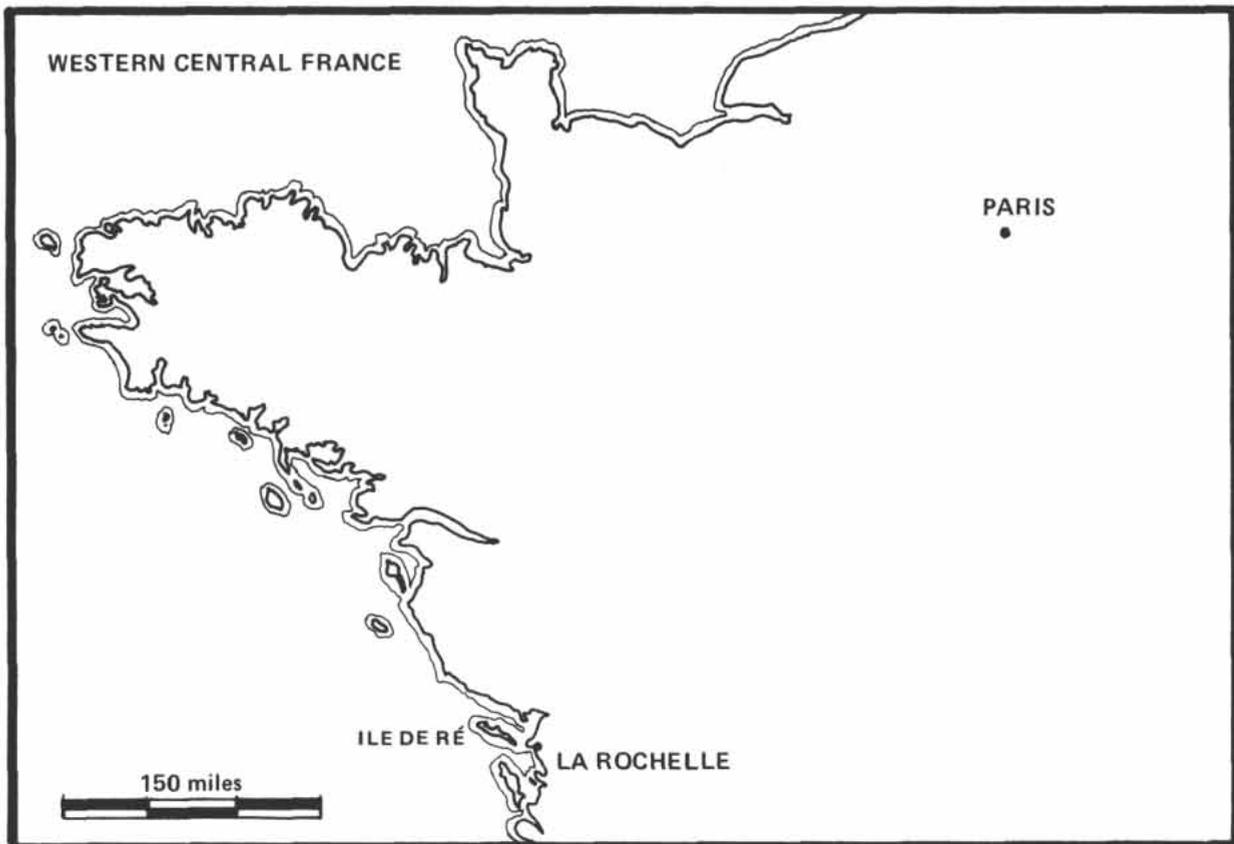
The adventurers should begin the game aware of these facts, then. La Rochelle is surrounded by land, and the seaward approaches may soon be secured, but despite this, a lengthy siege lies ahead. Against this backdrop, the characters have been called to serve, hopefully to earn glory, booty, promotion, and a chance of adventure and distinction.

## THE CAMPAIGN

For the purposes of this adventure, the year is 1627, the month September. The year's Campaign is organized below, rather than being rolled randomly. It is fully possible, however, for the Gamemaster to integrate this adventure into an ongoing series of interwoven adventures by changing various details as needed; it need not take place at La Rochelle in 1627, but could instead occur at any time that a Campaign is mounted to besiege some hostile city. The Gamemaster must see to specific alterations to the background and course of the adventure as seems necessary to make it fit best.

## CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

The 1627 Campaign takes place from June to November. It is actually two Campaigns at once, Internal and Coastal. Forces automatically committed to the two fronts include the Guards Regiment, the Musketeers du Marechal, the Arquebusiers of Vincennes, the Old Guards Regiment, the Queen's Fusiliers, the Swiss Guards, the Fusiliers de Ste. Gervaise, the Royal Grenadiers, the Gascon Regiment, the Old City Guards, the Fusiliers des Pyrenees, and the Italian Regiment. In addition, if characters are serving in other units, they should be per-



mitted to volunteer (or be 'volunteered' by NPCs above them) with their company, battalion, or regiment, to join the campaign.

The Gamemaster may allocate forces between the Coastal Campaign and the Internal Campaign. If possible, all player-characters should belong to units committed to the Internal Campaign, but if this is not possible, there will still be occasional shifts of individual companies from the Ile de Ré (Coastal) to the units watching La Rochelle, making it possible to involve all the military player-characters in the adventure no matter how diversified their regimental service may be.

The Coastal Campaign places units Under Siege, while the Internal Campaign is a Siege. Each may be resolved as usual, with the Gamemaster utilizing the rules in Section 5.34 and 5.35 normally to determine the overall and personal results of the Campaigns. The enemy strength in the Ile de Ré is 5 Regiments of Infantry, 3 Companies of Artillery, and 1 Company of Grenadiers, while the force inside La Rochelle numbers 6 Regiments of Infantry and 4 Companies of Artillery. The Gamemaster should (secretly) manipulate events to ensure an overall French victory on the Ile de Ré; the fighting on the mainland is inconclusive, and can be a narrow win either way and still remain historically sound.

Though the events of the Campaign may be calculated prior to the start of this adventure, the order in which those events and the adventure itself are implemented, should be adhered to carefully by the Gamemaster. All campaign information should be rolled up in secret and noted. Then the first two Ile de Ré encounters, and the first (only) La Rochelle (Internal) encounter may be resolved. Any other adventures which the Gamemaster wishes to stage in these earlier parts of the campaign may be worked into this sequence as desired. The results of those adventures and encounters are implemented, including wounds and booty, and so forth, and the players are brought up to date on their fortunes (and those of France) to that time. Then, on 20 September 1627, the adventure contained herein is run. After it is concluded, the Gamemaster may continue resolving the campaigns, with any further adventures that seem worthwhile incorporated as desired.

Although this adventure is meant primarily for characters who are on Campaign in the Army, it is possible that some other characters may also be involved. In late September the King and the Cardinal were on their way to the front, and with them were their courtiers and followers. Thus, individuals of many careers might still have an excuse to be present in the Theater of War, and, as the section on Adventure Background shows, many would have an excuse to become involved in the adventure situation.

Specific careers aside from the military which might be represented include Gentlemen or Nobles who are members of an Order (volun-

teered to serve in the Campaign), low-level members of the Clergy (serving with the army, which, under Richelieu, received a great deal of religious 'support'), and low-level members of the Royal Bureaucracy. Bankers, and persons of no particular career, are the only people who are really barred from this adventure entirely; even the general run of Rogues and cut-throats might be involved if they were servants of soldiers on the campaign. In general, characters should be of fairly low rank within their chosen career, as well.

### ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The background which directly affects this adventure falls into two categories: that which is known to the characters, and that which the Gamemaster keeps secret, but which affects the overall course of the adventure. These are revealed or concealed accordingly.

### KNOWN BACKGROUND

The characters have been before La Rochelle for some time now, but those involved in the besieging forces have seen little action. There is a rumor going around, though, that things are changing. The English have been knocked about badly enough to make the prospects for ultimate victory seem bright, and it is known that the King and the Cardinal are on their way to assume direct control over the operation. In addition, the military grapevine suggests that some major new stroke to end the campaign right away is in the making, though details are scant.

Certainly, though, there is much activity in the French camp. In every company serving before the walls of La Rochelle (including reinforcements recently transferred from the Ile de Ré), officers of the Cardinal's Guard have been soliciting volunteers for a special mission of great danger and difficulty. From among those volunteers, a number of men of particular ability have been picked out and given an immediate special appointment. Among these are all of the player-characters serving in military capacities (or in an Order). The other volunteers have been segregated from their units and given lighter duties, apparently in readiness for some later enterprise.

The picked men from the military ranks, and any non-military characters as well, have been informed of the nature of the first, special appointment for which they have been chosen. Cardinal Richelieu has sent instructions to the front ordering a last attempt at a negotiated peace with the Huguenots now that their English allies have ceased to pose an immediate threat. To this end, the Cardinal's Master of the Horse, the Comte de Rochefort, has been placed at the head of a delegation. The non-military player-characters (if any) are members of this delegation, while the picked volunteers from the various reg-

iments form an escort for de Rochefort and his people.

Military characters holding the rank of Lieutenant or higher have received instructions to pay special attention to the layout of the city and the terrain of the approaches, in case the negotiations do not result in peace and a later assault on the city must be launched. There has been much speculation that this is actually more of a spy mission than an embassy to the beleaguered town, and that the mixed force of volunteers is to play some special part in an attack after the return of de Rochefort's emissaries, but these rumors have neither been admitted nor denied.

The delegation and its escort are large (player-characters make up only a fraction of the total number), and are expected to be gone for several days. Prior to the day set for their departure into La Rochelle, military discipline for the escort is relaxed, and the soldiers are permitted to take leave from the camp. This allows them to visit a nearby village well behind the lines of the siege for entertainment and for diversion.

#### GAMEMASTER'S BACKGROUND

Although the embassy is genuine, Richelieu is sure that La Rochelle will not surrender without a fight. He feels that a quick victory is needed to keep the English, and other Huguenot sympathizers, from continuing to harass France, and so is planning an assault. But the victory that is won must not be costly in men and materiel, as any normal attack on a fortified city would be.

There is a persecuted Catholic minority within the besieged city, and among these are agents of the Cardinal. His assault plan relies on treachery by these agents, who are to seize a city gate and admit a special attack force — the volunteers already selected from among the besieging regiments. While negotiating with the Senate in La Rochelle, de Rochefort is also planning to pass on the final plan of action to those agents, including signals to begin the rising, timetables, and other essential instructions. Members of the escort are to learn as much as they can about La Rochelle so they can move about effectively on the night of the assault. It is a bold and daring stroke which, if successful, could put an end to the Huguenot rising once and for all, and discourage all future resistance to the Crown. But, if it fails, the assault could be a costly and shameful debacle, risky in the extreme.

#### THE BLACK SWAN INN

The Black Swan is a small inn lying near the edge of the village of Dompierre to the north of La Rochelle. Two nights before the scheduled departure of the delegation into the city, many off-duty soldiers are gathered for an evening of drinking and gaming at the inn.

As a small village inn, the Black Swan is a cheerful, relaxed establishment; its ordinary patrons are simple villagers, and it has nothing in the way of a bad reputation. However, as a gathering place for soldiers letting off steam, it has lately been the scene of more than one brawl, and there are some who eagerly anticipate the fights which do break out there, mostly among members of rival regiments.

As the adventure begins, all of the player-characters have come to this establishment for some recreation. They probably all know one another by sight, and may have already formed friendships; that is for the Gamemaster, and the players themselves, to decide. The adventure should start with an ordinary evening's entertainment; only gradually should anything deeper be introduced.

Carousing and gambling at the Black Swan can be handled as discussed in the short adventure *Tavern Brevage Noir* in the adventure pack included in *Flashing Blades*. In addition, for every hour that the characters spend in the Inn, one roll should be made on the Encounter Table below by each character.

#### Encounters at the Black Swan Inn

##### Roll Encounter

- 1-2 A barmaid. Roll 1D6; on a 1-2, she is alone and aloof. On a 3, she is very flirtatious and alone. On a 4, she is flirtatious, but has an admirer eager to start a fight with anyone who pays attention to her. On a 5, she is struggling against a drunken soldier who is making advances. On a 6, she is alone, flirtatious, and working with a thief who will waylay a character taken in by her request that he 'walk her home when she is through for the night.'
- 3-5 1D6 soldiers from a hostile regiment.
- 6-8 1D6 soldiers from a randomly determined regiment.
- 9-10 A military officer from a random regiment.
- 11-13 1D6 rowdies. They will abuse the player-characters on a roll of 1-3; on a 4-5 they will be friendly, trying to buy drinks for the character, but turning abusive if their friendship is rebuffed; on a 6, they will pick a fight with 1D6 members of a hostile regiment nearby, leading to a general brawl.
- 14-15 A thief. On a 1-4, he will attempt to steal from the character;

on a 5-6 he will be seen stealing from someone else. (Roll again to see who he is stealing from; on another 14-15 it is another player-character.)

16-17 Louis Armand. See description below.

18-19 The Innkeeper. See description below.

20 Patrol. See description below.



**Louis Armand:** Any character who encounters Louis Armand will meet a thin, pale, middle-aged man dressed as a gentleman's servant. He has an old scar on his forehead, and his left hand and arm are heavily bandaged; the sleeve of that arm is torn and bloodstained. Armand sits alone at a table in a corner, drinking quietly and seeming interested in everything going on around him. Now and again he has been seen talking to different patrons at the bar. If this encounter occurs, he will invite the character to visit the back room of the inn a little later on in the evening; his employer, a wealthy gentleman, is in need of some help that he thinks the character might be able to provide.

**The Innkeeper:** A big, burly man with a full beard and a booming voice, Jean Legros is the owner of the Black Swan. When encountered, he will approach the character and talk about the delegation going into La Rochelle, showing a surprising knowledge of the people and plans involved. (If questioned, he smiles broadly and shrugs: 'The innkeeper learns many things from his patrons, no?') He confirms that the character himself is a part of the delegation or escort, and invites him to meet a gentleman who is staying at the inn who could use the character's help.

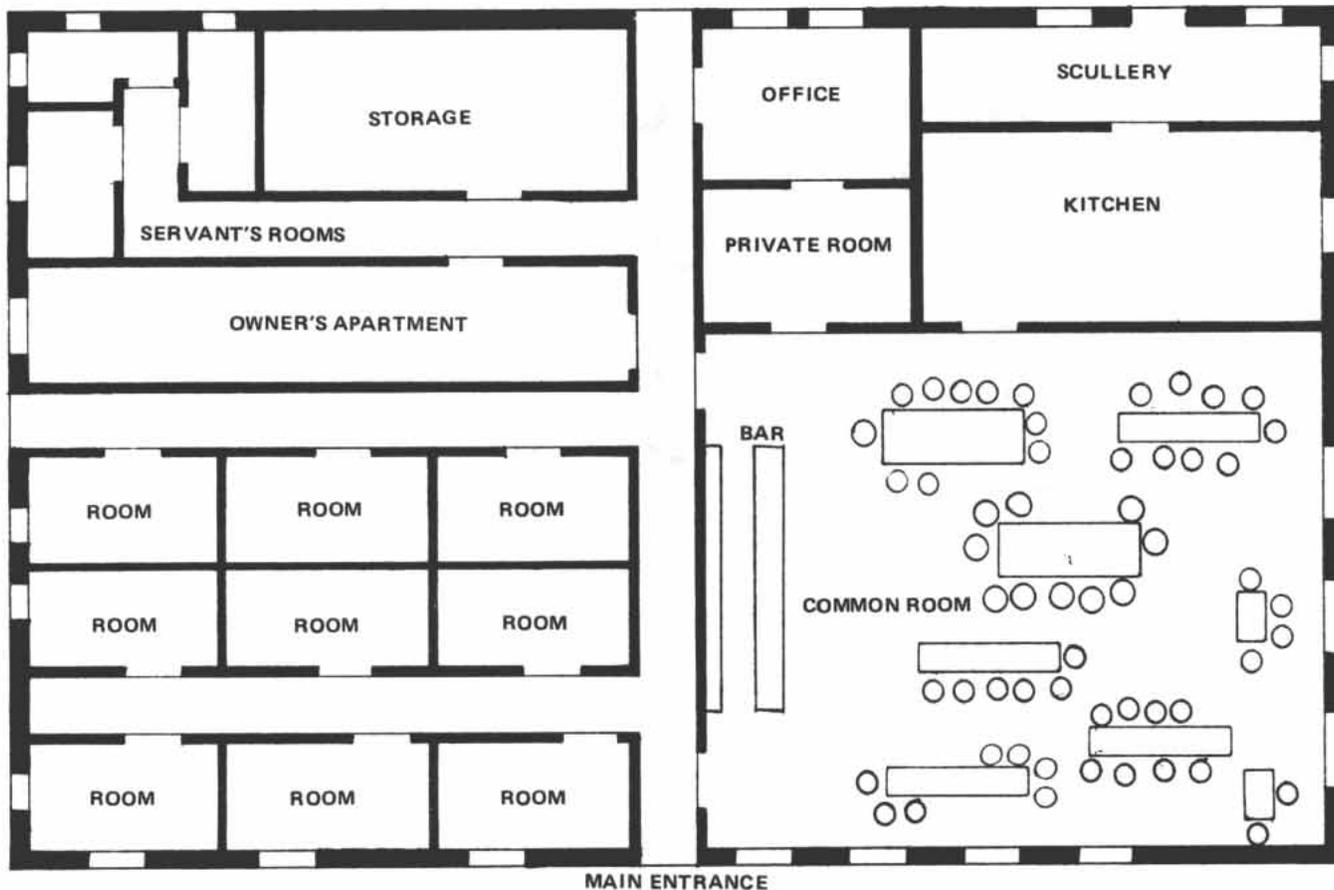
Any character who makes a successful roll against his Wit while talking with the innkeeper will notice that he wears a heavy signet ring, rather out of character with his social class and manner, bearing an engraved symbol of a stylized sailing vessel. If it is remarked upon, Legros will flush, glance down at it as if startled or embarrassed, and hastily explain that it was given to him by a patron who had been unable to settle up his bill any other way.

**The Patrol:** If this event occurs, a patrol of 1D6 soldiers of the Swiss Guards Regiment, led by a Subaltern, enters the Inn. They look around, notice Louis Armand, and approach him in a threatening manner. The innkeeper hastens up and a conversation ensues.

Any character who expresses an interest in trying to listen to or get involved in the conversation, or any character who rolls against his Luck successfully, will hear the discussion. This patrol is looking for three suspicious characters who tried to slip past the front lines earlier in the day, about ten miles from here. They have picked out Armand because he appears freshly wounded, and they know that at

# BLACK SWAN INN

10 feet



MAIN ENTRANCE

least one of the three they fired upon was hit in the exchange.

The innkeeper, however, hastens to assure them that Armand has been at the inn all day, along with his master, a gentleman named du Maurier. Both were injured, the gentleman quite seriously, when footpads attacked them early in the morning. Their horses were taken, but the gentleman and his servant escaped to take refuge here, and have remained all day recuperating. The village apothecary will bear out this story, when he returns from an emergency call at a distant farm, perhaps sometime late tomorrow.

The Subaltern seems satisfied with the innkeeper's intercession, and leaves with his patrol to look elsewhere for the three fugitives.

## THE DYING GENTLEMAN

Encounters with Armand or Legros will lead the characters to a meeting with Armand's patron, Alexandre Touchard-Lemoines. The Gamemaster should see to it that one or more of the characters have such encounters, and may wish to manipulate events so that each of the characters is either directly invited to meet the man, or is a friend and comrade of someone who is so invited.

Touchard-Lemoines occupies a room which opens off the Common Room. Like Armand, he was injured in an encounter earlier in the day, but his wounds are much more serious. A bullet has lodged near his heart, and he is dying.

Weak and pale, swathed in bandages and lying on a narrow bed, the injured gentleman is a pitiful sight. But he is awake and alert as the characters are led into the room by the faithful Armand, and his voice is clear and penetrating when he speaks, though labored.

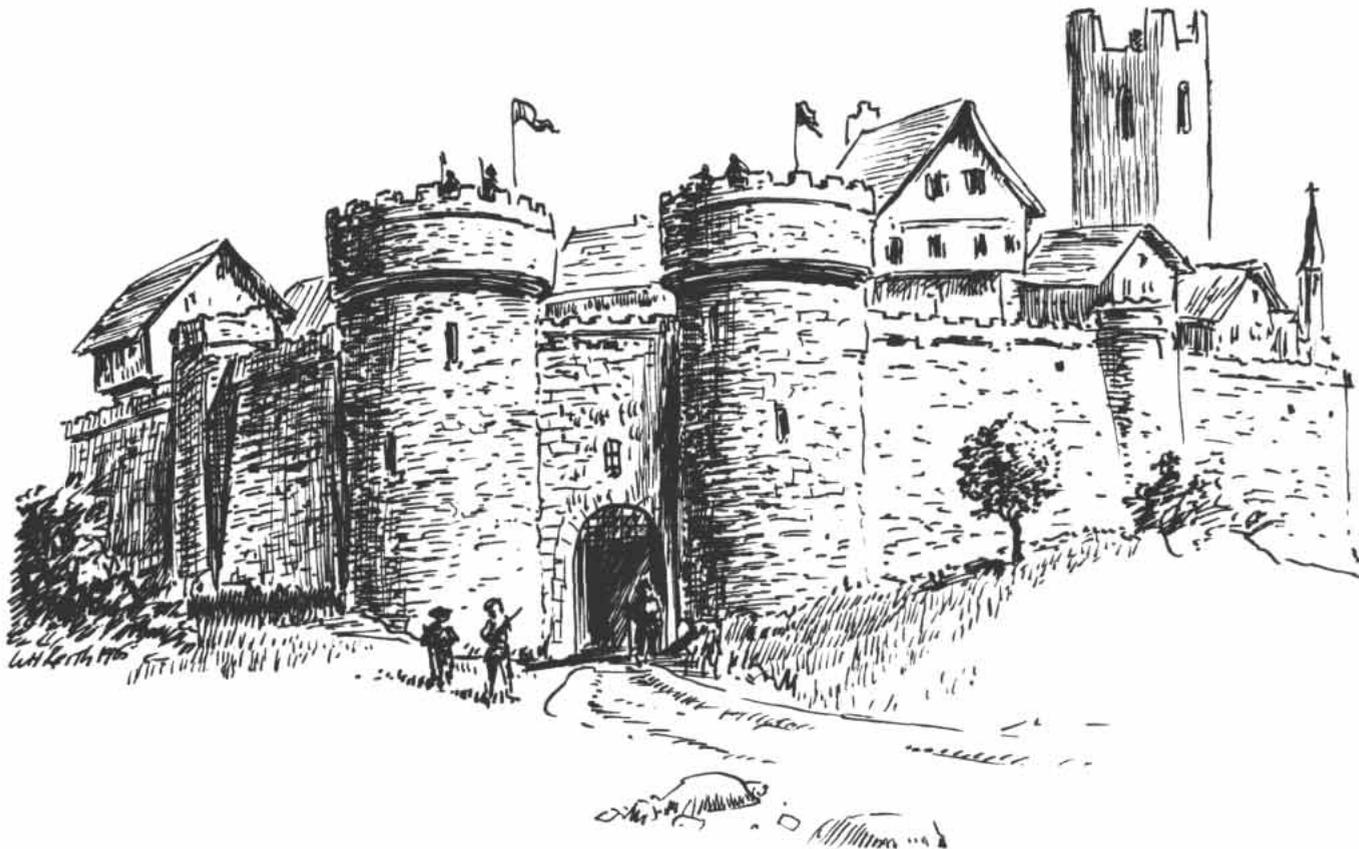
Touchard-Lemoines explains that he was set upon by footpads that morning, shot, and left for dead; his horse and purse were stolen. The apothecary could do nothing for him, and he is dying. But before he dies, there is one thing, one very urgent thing, that he wishes to have done. His sister lives in La Rochelle; years ago she embraced the Calvinist faith, and was disowned by family and friends. None have spoken to her for years, but she has never been far from her brother's thoughts, as they were close once.

Now that he is on his deathbed, Touchard-Lemoines wishes to send a last letter to his sister, begging her forgiveness for these years of

neglect and mistreatment. But she is inside La Rochelle, and no ordinary messenger, not even Armand, can reach her. The innkeeper, a good friend, has told him of the delegation, and suggested that the message might be sent by someone going with it. Touchard-Lemoines asks if any of the characters will carry his letter to his sister, and offers a handsome payment, in advance, for this undertaking — 50 pistoles (just over 36 Livres).

The wounded man turns over a sealed letter to the characters upon their acceptance of the task, and gives them instructions as to how to find his sister, Madame Camille Suchet, in the city. He further impresses upon the characters his desire for discretion in their mission. His family, he claims, holds several important positions in the Church and in government, and would be much embarrassed if the secret of this wayward sibling's Protestantism should come out. His stress on this desire for secrecy on the part of the characters may lead some to believe that the woman is not his sister, but rather his mistress, and that Touchard-Lemoines seeks to protect either her reputation, or his, rather than the rest of the family. Players who question the man's story may surmise this possibility on a successful roll against Wit. Touchard-Lemoines will demand that they give their words of honor that they will deliver the message, and that they will tell no one of the nature of their errand. Then he turns over the money, and sinks back in his bed as if relieved or a great burden, and Louis Armand shows them out of the room.





During this meeting, any character who successfully rolls against his Wit will notice that Touchard-Lemoines wears a signet ring bearing a stylized sailing ship emblem (the same as the innkeeper's, if the character saw both). Anyone who indicates a desire to closely inspect the envelope holding the man's letter (which is bulky, apparently more than a mere missive), will note that it is sealed by wax bearing an impression of the same symbol.

#### THE SECRET OF TOUCHARD-LEMOINES

The dying man has not told the truth to the characters. Though his name is indeed Touchard-Lemoines, his story is a complete fabrication, and his purpose a sinister one.

Touchard-Lemoines, Armand, and a third man, Henri Bonaventure, were the three men encountered by the Swiss Guards a few miles from the village. They are spies in the service of the Huguenots within La Rochelle, and were attempting to slip back to the city after the successful completion of an important mission. In the skirmish with the Guards, Touchard-Lemoines and Armand were both wounded, and separated from their comrade. Armand helped Touchard-Lemoines reach the Black Swan, whose proprietor, Legros, is another member of the secret Huguenot brotherhood, the Order of the Dark Seas, to which Touchard-Lemoines belongs.

Unsure of Bonaventure's fortunes, and unable to be certain of reaching La Rochelle with the vital information they had learned, the conspirators have decided to use dupes to deliver their message to their comrades in the city. Camille Suchet is not a relative to the dying Touchard-Lemoines, but rather, an important agent of their spy network. The letter contains a complete description of the secret attack plan Richelieu intends to implement against La Rochelle. If the city's leaders learn of this plan, they could easily set up an ambush which would not only smoke out Richelieu's agents in La Rochelle, but also could draw the assault force into a trap which would easily decimate it and deal the French cause a grievous blow, both in casualties and in morale. Such a setback could even encourage additional Huguenot risings.

Naturally the adventurers know nothing of the web in which they have become entangled, though some clues may lead them to suspect trouble. The most important is the signet ring, the badge of membership in the Order, which they may notice several people wearing over the course of the adventure. No one, not even a student of Heraldry, will recognize the symbol (unless a character is secretly a Huguenot religious fanatic, or has chosen a Secret Identity as a member of the Order — see the Gamemaster's Notes at the end of this adventure),

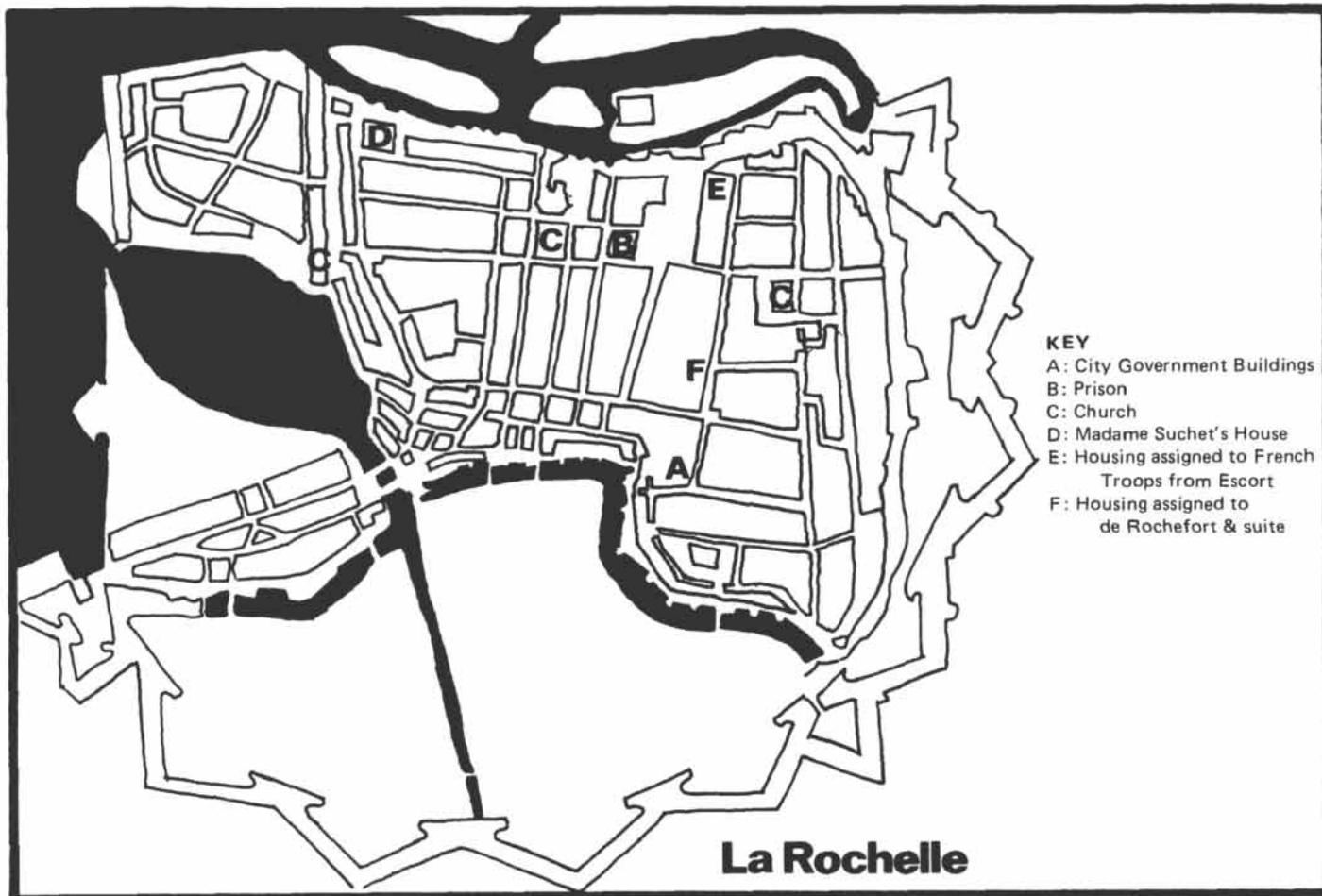
but if it attracts attention under suspicious circumstances, someone may realize that all is not as it seems to be.

The Gamemaster must be careful, however, to impress upon the players the dictates of proper behavior in the society of 17th Century France. Even if they suspect some kind of wrong-doing, they have given their words of honor to make the delivery and to keep Touchard-Lemoines' secret. Only if they receive some proof of treachery can they put aside their pledged words (and there would be some who could not do so even then). There is nothing to stop them from taking steps to check up on Touchard-Lemoines and his story, but a mere suspicion would not be grounds for ignoring their obligation, reporting the affair to higher authorities, or opening the letter. By doing something like this, the characters would quickly learn of the treachery and espionage carried out by the Huguenot agents, but would be heavily penalized for violating the standards of their society. A drop of several levels in Social Rank, and an adverse reaction from friends and associates who learn of the indiscretion should be the minimum penalties assessed for such actions.

#### TO LA ROCHELLE

After their evening at the Black Swan, nothing else of great interest takes place prior to the assembly and departure of the embassy to La Rochelle. If the group did not encounter the patrol at the inn, they may hear rumors of it the next morning: a party of Swiss Guards turned away five or six heavily armed intruders (in the best traditions of exaggerated soldiers' accounts) in an encounter the previous afternoon, but could not locate them after they fled and scattered. If anyone brings up the story of Touchard-Lemoines and the footpads, investigations will lead back to the alibi provided by the innkeeper. By this time the gentleman has died, and the faithful Armand has left the inn on an unknown errand. The village apothecary, a man named Bonaventure, is still gone on an emergency call somewhere, but Legros maintains that he will vouch for the time when he tended the wounded gentleman, well before the afternoon skirmish.

Aside from these rumors, most of the next day is spent in preparation for the departure of de Rochefort's delegation. No further leave time is allowed, and the morning of the second day after the visit to the Black Swan, the characters, and the rest of the delegation and escort, set out for La Rochelle. It is an impressive party, headed by de Rochefort and several aides, plus minor functionaries of the bureaucracy and a small clerical contingent. The escort numbers fifty in all, and is made up of picked officers, sergeants, and troopers from several different regiments. All are armed, but travel under a flag of truce.



Outside La Rochelle, they are challenged by soldiers of the city's army. A number of representatives of the senate venture out to confer with de Rochefort, who asks the opportunity to submit proposals for peace drawn up by the King and the Cardinal. Eventually the city leaders agree, and the delegation and escort are admitted to the city. Quarters are provided for them near the Senate's meeting hall, and many courtesies are exchanged between de Rochefort and various city fathers as they enter the city and settle in to this temporary home.

That afternoon, the escort is ordered to muster for a special inspection. A very important city leader, Monsieur Jean Guïton\*, wishes to inspect these picked troops. He is a broad-shouldered, tough-looking but charismatic man. Each military character should roll against Luck to see if Guïton singles him out for a closer inspection, or stops and speaks to him; such characters will notice, on a roll of Wit or less, that Guïton, a famous Huguenot leader, wears a signet ring with the symbol of a ship. All characters will also take note of, and can recognize on future meetings, Guïton and his two aides, Dupres and LeBeau.

After the inspection is completed, Guïton extends permission for members of the delegation and its escort to move around La Rochelle as desired, save only that they may not pass into areas guarded by city troops who turn them back. But, he warns them, and de Rochefort himself later reiterates, that any breach of good conduct while visiting the city will be grounds for expulsion from the city, not just for the offenders, but for the entire embassy.

### ON THE RUE FEROU

If the adventurers choose to deliver the letter to Camille Suchet, the instructions given by M. Touchard-Lemoines lead them to a small house on the Rue Ferou, a fairly wealthy area of residences overlooking the harbor. Here they are admitted by Anne, the lady's maid. Camille herself arrives a few minutes later, a beautiful young woman with dark hair and eyes, dressed fashionably in expensive clothing.

As the adventurers begin their explanation of their errand, she seems surprised and uncertain, and the mention of Touchard-Lemoines seems to shock her. Should the group talk about 'your brother' without

mentioning a name, her reaction is a blank stare, followed by slow comprehension and the question 'Which of my brothers do you mean?' She will not, however, seem particularly stricken with grief, even after hearing the full story.

When she accepts the letter, she looks carefully at the seal, smiles, and thanks the adventurers for their assistance. Then she apologizes, but asks them if they would kindly leave her to read her brother's last letter in peace. As a final gesture, though, she assures herself of the location of their lodgings and their names, saying that she will not forget their nobility in conveying this letter to her. With this hint of a reward to come, Camille dismisses the party, and is last seen breaking the seal and drawing out a whole bundle of papers.

### CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

From this point on, the actions of the adventurers will heavily influence the course of the game. Most of their major options are discussed in the sections which follow; the Gamemaster should act according to these basic outlines, but may have to interpolate the events based upon the specific activities attempted by the group.

These options are summed up briefly below, and are discussed in greater detail in separate, later sections.

#### 1. The Letter is Not Delivered

Naturally, the scene at the Rue Ferou does not take place. Several sub-options open up under this basic category, according to the actions of the adventurers:

- The letter is disposed of unopened.
- The letter is opened and read.
- The letter is passed on to a superior.

#### 2. The Letter is Delivered Without Further Inquiry

This would govern if the adventurers simply delivered the letter without being the least bit curious about it. There are no sub-options.

#### 3. The Letter is Delivered, But the Adventurers Investigate Further

In this case, the adventurers carry through with their promised mission, but are suspicious enough to keep an eye on Madame Suchet. The two major sub-options here include:

- The adventurers do not know the contents of the letter.
- The adventures do know the contents of the letter.

\* Guïton would later become Mayor of La Rochelle (April, 1628), to command the defense of the city during the last part of the siege.

Acting according to the major option (and sub-option) which seems most applicable, the Gamemaster should proceed to resolve the unfolding story appropriately.

### IF THE LETTER IS NOT DELIVERED

There are three subordinate options under this main course of action, and the results vary widely according to which option is pursued.

#### The Letter is Dipped of Unopened

In this case, the adventure tends to trail off without any further events. The group will learn, after their return from La Rochelle to the camp, that a spy named Bonaventure was captured in the interim, and proved to have copies of the Cardinal's battle plans. As a result, the assault is called off, Touchard-Lemoines is also revealed as a spy by his confessions, so the group realizes that they've had a narrow escape — and that it was only luck that kept them from walking into a trap with the rest of the assault force. In future, perhaps, they will be more inclined to get involved.

#### The Letter is Opened and Read

In this case, the adventurers learn first-hand of the letter's contents. A scrawled cover letter from Touchard-Lemoines tells of the ambush, and says that Bonaventure, his companion, got separated after the ambush. Touchard-Lemoines hopes that Bonaventure gets through, but is sending this material by another route in case he fails. The remaining material is composed of hasty, hand-copied notations of time-tables, troop strengths, and names of contacts within La Rochelle, all building towards a night attack in about a week's time by picked Royalist forces. Any character with Strategy skill will realize what it all means on a successful roll against Wit, and thus recognizes the danger to the planned assault posed by these documents.

Logically, the characters will either take this to a higher authority (it will take a Captain or higher to gain access to de Rochefort, the leader of the delegation, directly; if the group does not include a Captain, they must pass the letter on to an NPC of that rank). If this course of action is attempted, follow the notes for 'The Letter is Passed on to a Superior,' below.

Alternatively, the characters may attempt to take matters into their own hands. Here many possible courses exist, but everything comes down to the basic possibilities. Either the letter is delivered intact, but further investigation is made (see a later section for this); or the adventurers attempt to deliver false information.

If the seal is tampered with on the letter at all (as it will be if the adventurers open and read it), the fact will be discovered immediately if the Gamemaster makes a successful roll against Camille Suchet's Wit. And, in any event, the Gamemaster can always permit Henri Bonaventure to successfully reach La Rochelle with his (genuine) copy of the plans. Thus, attempts to falsify the documents in any way will lead inevitably to added trouble, for Camille's primary intention at this point will be to silence the adventurers so the Royalists will not learn that their assault plan has been compromised.

#### The Letter is Passed on to a Superior

If the letter is given to de Rochefort, the individual who passes it on will immediately earn de Rochefort's favor (the equivalent of the Advantage 'Favor'); de Rochefort is of Social Rank 12, and is close to the Cardinal's inner councils. Naturally, this is only of value to player-characters who earn it, and de Rochefort can only be approached directly by a Captain. An NPC Captain, however, will remember the player-characters enough to at least commend them to de Rochefort if some difficult but potentially profitable task comes up later, and indeed the opportunity presents itself right away.

De Rochefort, after seeing the letter, will know that there is a chance that Bonaventure has also reached the city. He will tell the Captain who brought him the letter to pick out some trustworthy people (the player-characters, of course) to determine whether or not the Huguenots have received the plans. To this end, they must do two things — first, find a member of the Order of the Dark Sea and take his signet, and, secondly, use the signet to re-seal the letter with false information and deliver it as before. After doing so, the characters are to keep an eye on Madame Suchet's house, and see what else they can learn. This leads to the option 'If the Letter is Delivered, But Investigated.'

### IF THE LETTER IS DELIVERED WITHOUT FURTHER INQUIRY

Should the characters fail to suspect any danger in the delivery of the letter, they will probably accept the message and the scene at the

Rue Ferou at face value. Returning to their temporary quarters, they will suspect nothing.

Camille Suchet, however, will want to make sure there are no loose ends. If word of the letter should get out, plans for the assault might be changed, rendering her information valueless. Therefore Madame Suchet sets plots in motion against the adventurers.

#### The Case of Wine

The afternoon following the delivery of the letter, a carriage delivers a case containing twelve bottles of a rare vintage of wine to the adventurers for their gallantry and friendship, and begs them 'toast the memory of a good man.' It is unsigned, in keeping with the discretion of not revealing anything of Touchard-Lemoines or his 'sister' to the rest of the world.

If the adventurers still do not suspect the wine, each must make a die roll of Luck or less; if any Luck throw is made successfully, another soldier or a servant drinks the wine before any of the characters do. The Gamemaster is encouraged to play up the scene, dramatizing the situation; the adventurers sitting down to dinner with glasses of wine at hand, and some friend (or enemy) appearing to make jibes at their 'conquests' in La Rochelle. The other soldier jokingly drinks from one of their glasses, and then falls, gasping on the ground. The wine is poisoned! This, or any other suitable scenario, should be played to the hilt in the best spirit of Dumas (c.f. Part 2, Chapter V of *The Three Musketeers*).

This will give an obvious hint that Camille Suchet wants them dead, though she will deny sending anything to them both to the adventurers and to the city authorities. It will be concluded that some fanatic did this out of hatred for the Royalists. Probably, though, it will motivate the adventurers to look into Madame Suchet's affairs somewhat more closely.

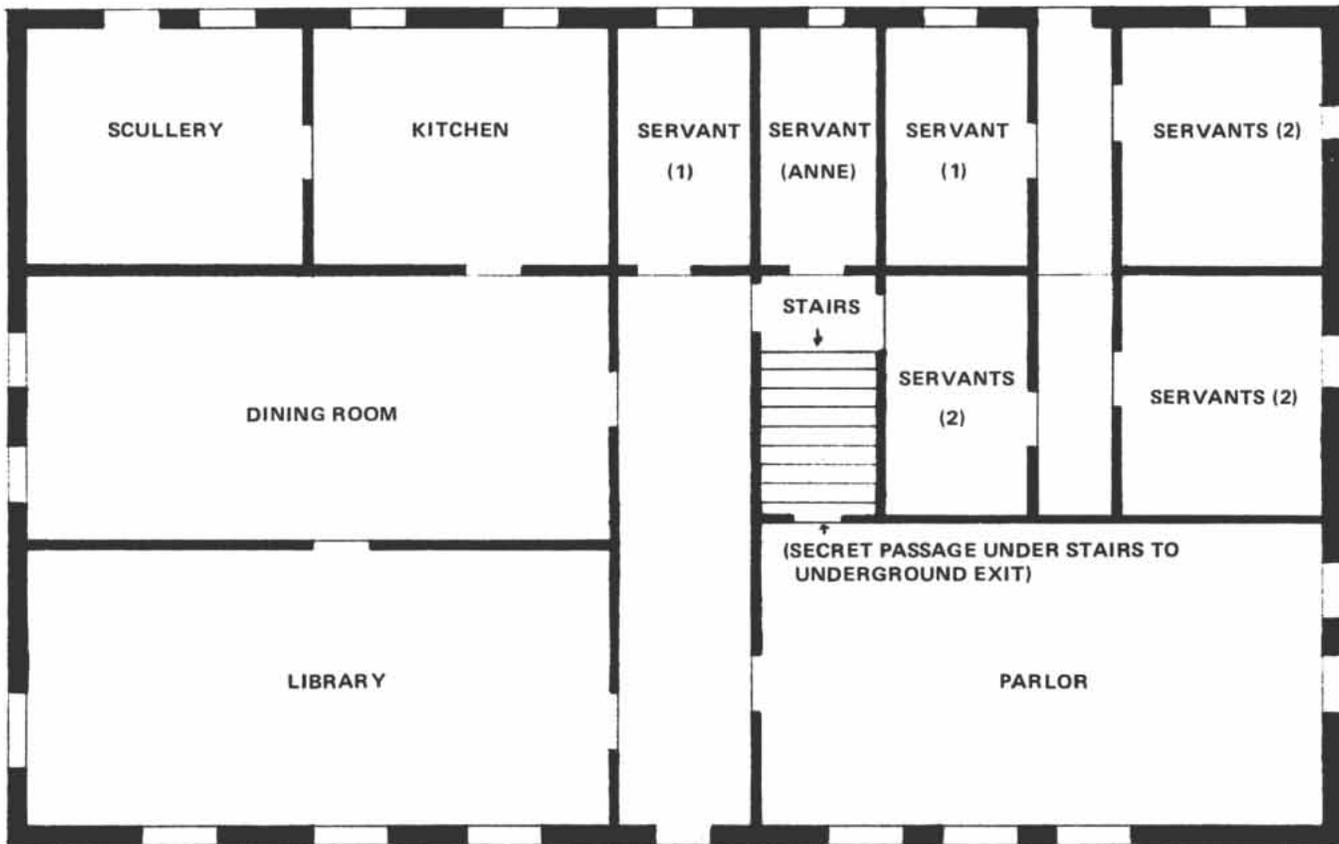
#### The Ambush

If the poisoning attempt is thwarted (or instead of that attempt, if the Gamemaster prefers), the party will be attacked in the streets that evening by a band of ruffians armed with rapiers (all have 18 Hit Points and Expertise 15, and are unarmored). This band should number at least 1D6 more than the size of the adventuring party. After resolving the fight, captured survivors may be persuaded to tell that they were hired by a lady, but they did not know her name or even see her face during the exchange. The group's names were given exactly as they gave them to Camille Suchet. Again, this should persuade the party to investigate the lady of La Rochelle.



# Madame Suchet's

FIFTEEN FEET



## IF THE LETTER IS DELIVERED, BUT INVESTIGATED

Sooner or later, most options lead to here. The party may or may not begin their investigations knowing about the contents of the letter, but this will have little effect upon the sequence of events. What will matter is the point at which their investigations begin, and the exact methods employed. For this reason, the sections that follow recount Madame Suchet's movements and actions day by day from the time the letter is delivered, and point up opportunities that may arise for the group to learn more.

### Day One

Following the delivery of the letter, Madame Suchet studies it carefully, and turns the material over to a trusted servant to have it copied out. She customarily does this to safeguard her position. She sends a servant out to purchase a case of wine, while she herself ventures out, heavily cloaked and hooded, to make contact with a Rogue who often supplies her with poisons and other illegal items. Then she returns home, and a short time later, the case of wine is sent out addressed to the adventurers at their lodgings. The man who delivers it also spends time talking to one of the (Huguenot) servants attending the delegation and escort, arranging to be informed of the results of the assassination attempt.

Early in the evening, another visitor arrives at the house, dressed in tattered, dishevelled clothing. This is Henri Bonaventure, delivering his copies of the plans. At this time, Camille Suchet discovers any forged material in the original letter, since Bonaventure can vouch for what was originally discovered by the three spies. Bonaventure remains in the house overnight; he is one of Madame Suchet's many lovers. At some point, if applicable, the failure of the poisoning attempt is reported by message from the Huguenot servant/spy.

### Day Two

A footman leaves the house carrying a message for M. Dupres, one of M. Guiton's aides. This message asks that Dupres come to Camille Suchet's home that evening, as she has valuable information for his attention. It is unsigned, but bears the seal of the Order. There is little other activity, save that Camille ventures out again, hooded and cloaked once more, and is seen talking to (and giving money to) some nasty-looking ruffians — hiring them to attack the adventurers.

In the evening, Dupres arrives, and is given the letters. Meanwhile, the adventurers are officially informed that their escort, along with the delegation, will be leaving the city the next day. This duly takes place on the morning of Day Three, the negotiations with the Senate of La Rochelle having proven useless.

## ADVENTURER ACTIONS

The actions of the adventurers throughout this period are largely up to them. If they merely follow and observe, they will see these various movements, but will learn little. A more active stance might have them attempt to break into the house to get a look at the letter (or to steal both it and Bonaventure's copy of it; remember that the group won't know of the extra copy made the day of the delivery). Another possibility would be to waylay Dupres (or the messenger to Dupres) and send one of their own number in to take the evidence, disguised as one of Guiton's other assistants.

Many other approaches are possible, and the Gamemaster must essentially 'go with the flow' in resolving the adventure. It should certainly come to some kind of exciting climax; if a break-in is attempted, the party can be discovered; a disguised character might be recognized by Madame Suchet. In any event, a last fight for possession of the documents can break out, turning into a climactic melee with thugs in the lady's employ, led by Bonaventure, an excellent swordsman. The outcome of this duel is, of course, determined by the performance of the adventurers.

In any event, Camille Suchet should be made to escape as things go against her henchmen. A secret passage in the walls of her house might enable her to get away at the last minute, thus allowing her to survive and become an ongoing enemy (with Sworn Vengeance) to members of the party. Her escape should also suggest the strong possibility that La Rochelle will still be warned of the attack.

## RESOLUTIONS

When he learns that plans for the attack have fallen into enemy hands, de Rochefort cancels the night assault on the city. Thus, by learning of the espionage activities of the Order, the characters have been instrumental in saving the lives of the volunteers assigned to the attack force (including themselves), and have averted a military catastrophe that would cost France dearly.

Historically, no such assault was attempted. After the final defeat of the English on the Ile de Ré, the Cardinal invaded La Rochelle by land, and began the construction of a huge mole across the seaward side of the port. After a siege of thirteen months, with starvation decimating the Huguenots, La Rochelle surrendered. Though not a spectacular, quick victory, it was a success that demonstrated vividly to all of France the ruthless determination of Cardinal Richelieu, and ended the threat of a major Protestant uprising once and for all.

## GAMEMASTER'S NOTES

This basic adventure offers many variations and nuances that can and should be explored.



## THE ORDER OF THE DARK SEA

This secret brotherhood can appear in other adventures as an organization sworn to fight the Church and King. A 'Secret Identity' as a member of this Order might be taken by player-characters, in which case they are considered to be working towards the furtherance of the Huguenot cause. Such characters, obviously, will be Protestants, though they pretend otherwise.

The Order is organized like any other Order, save that it is secret, and does not contribute troops to a campaign under any circumstances. Camille Suchet can be considered to be a 'Knight Captain' of the Order.

If a player-character in this adventure is a secret member of the Order, then that character will have the signet ring, and of course will instantly recognize (and be recognized by) the other agents in the Inn. The adventure here will be somewhat different, as this single individual will be contacted and entrusted to deliver the letter, and will do so willingly as an agent of the Order and its cause. In such a case, the adventure will revolve around conflicts within the adventuring group, as they become suspicious of their comrade's off behavior, and the messenger's attempts to carry out his mission without interference.

## THE HOUSE ON THE RUE FEROU

Camille Suchet's house on the Rue Ferou was left to her by her dead husband. Though not large, it is expensively decorated and furnished. The layout is shown on the map/diagram.

Camille is attended by her maid, Anne, and by a staff of eight domestic servants. These servants are armed with rapiers in a fight, and each is considered to have Expertise 15 and 12 Hit Points.

## REWARDS

As in all role-playing games, the Gamemaster must be careful to steer a middle course between rewards that are too lavish and those which offer inadequate incentive. Naturally, the 'best' reward in this adventure is to keep the army from falling into a trap, and this in itself gives the players a feeling of accomplishment. But material incentives are also important.

The group begins, of course, by earning fifty pises from Touchard-Lemoines. Any officer of rank Captain or higher who presents de Rochefort with the proofs of the successful enemy espionage will then be owed a Favor by de Rochefort. In all probability, too, de Rochefort will reward all those that the Captain singles out as helping him with a purse containing fifteen pistoles apiece. Finally, if the group's members showed special bravery or ability, each will be offered a position in the Cardinal's Guard upon the conclusion of the campaign (or will be promoted automatically if already in the Cardinal's Guard). Whether or not the position is accepted is up to the players.

Balancing this, however, is a 'reward' of a less pleasant nature — the undying enmity of Camille Suchet. Escaping the siege before the construction of the mole across the harbor, the Lady of La Rochelle can return on future occasions to exact her vengeance on all of the individuals who defeated her.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

For the most part, the characters who appear in this adventure are minor — ruffians, troopers, and individuals like Touchard-Lemoines who play no active part in affairs. If a minor character is needed, the Gamemaster can improvise as needed. Three characters, however, are described below in greater detail, as they may be actively encountered.

### Camille Suchet

Strength	8	Hit Points:	9
Dexterity	15	Armor:	None
Endurance	11		
Wit	15		
Charm	16		
Luck	14		



### Attacks:

Dagger (Expertise 15)      Chance to Hit: 12

### Skills:

Carousing, Disguise, Espionage, Etiquette, Seduction, Stealth.

### Notes:

Camille Suchet is tall, thin, and very beautiful, but beneath her seductive manner is an absolutely ruthless personality. She will use anything and anyone to gain her ends, and she never forgets a slight or injury.

### Henri Bonaventure

Strength	17	Hit Points:	14
Dexterity	16	Armor:	
Endurance	13		Leather jerkin (2 on Chest and Flank)
Wit	14		Gauntlets and Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Charm	10		Boots and Breeches (2 on Legs)
Luck	10		



### Attacks:

Longsword (Expertise 14)      Chance to Hit: 12

Chance to Parry: 12

Foil (Expertise 14)      Chance to Hit: 14

Chance to Parry: 13

Rapier (Expertise 17)      Chance to Hit: 15

Chance to Parry: 14

Wheellock Dueling Pistol      Chance to Hit: 9

(Expertise 12)

### Skills:

Disguise, Horsemanship, Seduction, Stealth.

### Notes:

Bonaventure is a large man, but agile and quick-moving nonetheless. He is young and inexperienced, but a fine natural swordsman with training in the French Style. Utterly devoted to Camille Suchet, he will lay down his life, if need be, to help her escape or to destroy her foes.

### Jacques Dupres

Strength	12	Hit Points:	11
Dexterity	15	Armor:	
Endurance	11		Padded Doublet (1 on Chest and Flank)
Wit	15		Padded Sleeves (1 on Arms)
Charm	12		Boots and Breeches (2 on Legs)
Luck	17		



### Attacks:

Longsword (Expertise 14)      Chance to Hit: 12

Chance to Parry: 12

Rapier (Expertise 15)      Chance to Hit: 14

Chance to Parry: 13

Unarmed Attacks (Expertise 12)      Chance to Hit: 6

### Skills:

Acrobatics, Bribery, Captaincy, Horsemanship, Literacy, Stealth.

### Notes:

Dupres is one of Jean Guiton's aides, a talented man who rose from the gutters of La Rochelle to become an important man in the city's militia. Though he is a Protestant fanatic and a member of the Order, Dupres is also a pragmatic man, and won't fight against hopeless odds. He cares little for Camille Suchet and her methods.

# The Royal Hunt

## INTRODUCTION

*The Royal Hunt* is an adventure of a party of four to eight experienced characters. It is designed to provide a country outing for the adventurers, a chance to match wits with an old enemy, and maybe even a chance to be noticed by the monarch. The King has decided to leave the court and government to the Cardinal and go for a five-day hunting trip to his palace at Fontainebleau. The party will receive permission to attend from a powerful patron or friend who is invited but unable to go. At the King's estate, the characters will have a chance to join in various royal sports and amusements. Their old enemy, however, will see to it that the outing is not without an element of danger.

An obvious requirement for this adventure is a powerful sworn enemy for the party to meet at Fontainebleau. Most characters will have built up an unhealthy list of enemies in their previous adventures. The Gamemaster should carefully pick one (or possibly more than one for a powerful party) to fill this role. Possible villains might include the Baron de Gilloir, or the Baron D'Ile-de-Batz from the Introductory Adventure booklet, or perhaps the Viscomte de Remoilles or the Duke of Montauban from *The Cardinal's Peril* in this booklet.

## THE INVITATION

One Spring or Summer day when the player-characters are sitting around in Paris, perhaps at a tavern over a round of ales, a messenger boy dressed in distinctive livery will approach them and ask for one of them by name. This should be some player-character who has a powerful patron or friend, met in a previous adventure, or as a Contact. The messenger wears the livery of this patron/friend, and the letter bears his seal. Once the character accepts the letter, and opens it, he will find that it reads as follows:

*'My dear (character's name),*

*The King has taken it into his head to leave court while the weather is so pleasant, and go hunting and sporting at his estate in Fontainebleau. The Lord Chamberlain has invited me to attend, but my gout is very painful right now and I will be unable to go. I took the liberty of extending the invitation to you and your comrades, as my personal friends. I must make my presence felt somehow, or the King will frown upon me. You and your friends undoubtedly need the exercise anyway. Try to behave yourselves.*

*By my own hand,  
(name of the patron/friend)'*

The outing at Fontainebleau will last for five days, during which time the party will participate in horse racing, tennis, falconry, shooting and, of course, hunting. This means that the player-characters must spend some time (during the week before the trip) buying equipment and preparing themselves.

The characters must have at least one riding horse per player-character, and a carriage (bought, borrowed, or rented) or they will be laughed at. Next, each character must have a tennis racket and ball (at a cost of 10 Livres). Those who are not acquainted with the game might wish to take some lessons (for 5 Livres) so they won't look too silly on the courts of Fontainebleau. Each character should have a musket or arquebus for shooting and hunting. The party should have at least two falcons (at a cost of 60 L each) for the falconry event, and a pack of six hunting dogs minimum (at a cost of 70 L each). All of the player-characters should wear fine dress.

The Nobles and Gentlemen in the party may spend the week before the outing giving the Rogues and Soldiers etiquette lessons. Still, there is not nearly enough time for rough-edged characters to fully learn the Etiquette skill. Fortunately, the royal court on hunting trips is far more relaxed than normal. Uncouth characters who are careful and quiet, and who take the advice of their more refined friends, will probably not make any great social blunders.

## ARRIVAL AT FONTAINEBLEAU

On the appointed day, the characters will leave Paris in the morning. After a pleasant carriage ride, they will arrive at the gates of the royal palace-estate at Fontainebleau. The carriage will be approached by a subaltern from the Swiss Guards, requesting to see the party's invitation. The party will be admitted when their patron's message is shown.

After driving down a long tree-lined lane, the party will arrive at a circle and fountain, in front of the King's 'Hunting Lodge' — which is a building large enough to be a chateau to anyone else! Various lackeys will rush out to help the player-characters from their coach. From this point on, in and around the lodge, the player-characters must role-play as haughty and important people, to get what they want. If the characters act at all meek or uncertain, the household stewards and butlers will quickly closet them away in tiny quarters towards the rear of the lodge, near the latrines. If the characters are able to impress or cow the servants, however, they will quickly be conducted to a fine second-story suite, overlooking the gardens.

Soon after arriving at the royal hunting lodge, and after unpacking and washing up in their quarters, the player-characters will be shown down to the main salon. This is an immense chamber, lit by the sun through large windows. Most of the courtiers and attendants invited have gathered here to await the King. There are more than two hundred of them. Upon entering the salon, the character with the highest Wit will spot the old enemy of the party, with a small entourage, in one corner of the room. As the character spots him, he will also see the party, and gasp with surprise. In a moment, however, he will regain his composure. He will avoid contact with the party at this time, and will retire to his private suite if approached.

## PERSONALITIES

There are several other important personalities whom the player-characters may meet in the main salon. These NPCs should continue to reappear throughout the party's stay at Fontainebleau.

### Mademoiselle de Coquine — 'La Chasseuse'

Mademoiselle de Coquine (known as 'La Chasseuse' — 'The Huntress') is an eccentric young noblewoman, the daughter of the influential Duke of Chaulnes. She dresses not in customary women's clothing, but in a rough leather jerkin and men's boots. Mademoiselle's chief hobby is the hunt, and nobody dares to not invite her to the royal outing.

Mademoiselle has curious tastes, involving leather, spurs and riding crops. If one of the male player-characters fails a Luck roll, Mademoiselle may take an interest in him. At the Gamemaster's (cruel) option, a player-character with the secret 'Don Juan' could fall in love with La Chasseuse. The only way to really win her affections is to beat her in a hunt. This could turn into a 'Taming of the Shrew' scenario — or a taming of the player-character!



### The Prince Bishop de Chalons

The Prince Bishop is a powerful clergyman, invited to the outing by the King because of his strong interest in horses and hunting. He is a lean fellow with a hawk-like face and thin black hair. He is closely followed by an entourage made up of his Curia and six guards, all dressed in distinctive black and red livery. The guards are armed and armored as arquebusiers.

The Prince Bishop has a problem: he needs a letter of great importance to be taken to Rome by trusted men. The letter denounces the Cardinal (Richelieu or Mazarin, depending on the time period) to the Pope. Obviously, if it came to light in France, the Prince Bishop would be in very hot water. While the Prince Bishop is at Fontainebleau, he will be searching for some trustworthy young adventurers on their way up in the world (i.e. the player-characters). He will be especially interested in contacting any members of the King's Musketeers (who are the sworn rivals of the Cardinal's power) and young Clergymen (whom he may bribe with a position on his Curia). The Prince Bishop plays a mean game of tennis, and if he meets an interesting character, he may invite him to a set or two the following morning. At the game he will speak more confidentially with the character.



### Monsieur LeFaquin

Monsieur LeFaquin is a famous Parisian Banker and Investor, and the Club Treasurer of L'Epee du Grand Henri. He was invited to the hunting lodge by the Minister of Finance, who wants to hear more of his extraordinary views on finance. Monsieur LeFaquin is a great giant of a man with a booming voice. Despite this, however, there is something of the dandy and the fop about him, and he has a sneaky, untrustworthy squint about the eyes. M. LeFaquin has a passion for gambling, but is not particularly good at it. The player-characters may meet him in the main salon when they arrive, or they may notice him in the evenings, throwing away his money at the card tables.

Monsieur LeFaquin really has no interest in hunting, racing, etc. Although the gambling tables may capture his fancy in the evenings, his real purpose is to find rich people to go along with him on his latest big investing strategy. He wishes to invest heavily in Finance for the coming year. He wants to gather 2000+ Livres in investment capital from interested parties at Fontainebleau. He may try to explain his plan to the player-characters, and try to get them to go along with him.



### The 'King of Diamonds'

This self-proclaimed 'King of Diamonds' is a famous gambler from Paris, who claims to have 'never lost a game of chance.' He was invited by the Lord Chamberlain to add some flair to the evening gambling sessions at the hunting lodge. He is a small man, with blond hair and a fashionable, but overly-large, mustache. He is a Master Superior in Gambling skill, with Luck 18, Dexterity 17, and Wit 19. It is hard to beat him in any game of chance when he is playing fair, and impossible when he is cheating.

This is the 'King of Diamonds' big chance. At the lodge, he will have a chance to play with the richest people in France. If he does well, he may have enough money to 'retire' and buy himself a nice little chateau in Longuedoc (this is his secret dream). He is secretly worried, however, that the courtiers will not bet him large amounts, based on his reputation. He therefore needs to recruit some 'shills.' If he meets some likely player-characters, he may make deals with them. One of two strategies may be adopted: (1) the player-characters consistently beat the King of Diamonds in his early games, lulling the nobility into betting large amounts against him later, or (2) in group games, the King of Diamonds will cheat in the characters' favor, allowing them to win while he loses. In either case, the King of Diamonds will let the characters keep half of their winnings, while he takes the other half.

Problems could arise with this little plot if the player-characters decide not to give the King of Diamonds his share of the winnings, or if some powerful noble is offended by losing his money to either the King of Diamonds or the characters. As a side-plot, M. LeFaquin could lose his investment money to the characters, and try to convince them to put it on Finance with him.



### Monsieur Charabie

Monsieur Charabie is the Chief Steward in the hunting lodge at Fontainebleau. The player-characters will probably first meet him when they arrive in their carriage. He is a pinched and crabby man with an unpleasant disposition. It is fully within M. Charabie's capacity to make the party's stay miserable, if he does not receive a healthy 'pourboire' (tip) of 5 to 10 Livres daily.



In addition to the personalities listed above, the Gamemaster may introduce other noble acquaintances from previous adventures, in the main salon.

### THE SCHEDULE

After about two hours of waiting in the main salon, the King and his main entourage will arrive in front of the hunting lodge in five splendid carriages, each drawn by twelve horses. He will alight with regal grace and step inside the lodge. The King will be tired from his journey, and wish to rest, but he will first allow all courtiers of Social

Rank 13 and above to kiss his hand. Then, he will retire to the royal suite.

Once the king has retired, his entourage will post the schedule of events for the five day outing:

**Day 1 (the day that the characters have arrived)** — In the afternoon, there will be a race of horses around the entire grounds (about 4 km.). Anyone may participate. The names of the various racers must be given to M. Charabie, who will organize the affair. Prize purses of 500 L, 300 L, and 200 L for first, second and third place will be awarded by the King at the end of the race.

**Day 2** — In the morning, the courtiers may play tennis. Courts must be reserved with the permission of M. Charabie. The King himself plans to play a set with each courtier of Social Rank 15 or more.

In the afternoon, the King and courtiers will participate in shooting, on the range beside the hunting lodge. The finest marksman will win an exceptional arquebus from the King's private armory.

**Day 3** — Again, the day will start with tennis. In the afternoon of the third day, the King and his courtiers will enjoy some falconry. The King offers to buy the finest falcon for 200 Livres.

**Day 4** — The fourth day will be spent hunting, in small groups, in the woods around the lodge, in preparation and practice for the event of the final day. The hunting group that brings back the finest prize will be allowed to sit near the King at dinner.

**Day 5** — On the fifth day, the King and all of the courtiers will participate in the Grand Chase. Six wild boars will be let loose in the morning, and the hunters will track them down throughout the day. The King offers to buy the finest dogs of the chase (not already his own) for 250 Livres apiece.

In the evening of each day, the King will hold an 'appartement' in the main salon. He will make an appearance, while the courtiers mingle and play at the gambling tables.

## THE EVENTS

Descriptions of the major events of the outing at Fontainebleau are listed below in order of their occurrence:

### THE RACE

In the afternoon of the first day, after the King has rested, a horse race around the estate will be held. M. Charabie is handling the lists, and if the player-characters miss his hints for a 'pourboire' they may be accidentally left out.

Before the race starts, while the characters are still in the main salon, their deadly enemy will send one of his men out to put burrs under the saddles of the player-characters. Any character who follows the enemy and watches his movements will notice the servant leave in the direction of the stables. The scoundrel will put burrs under the saddles of half of the party's horses. Then the grooms will notice him leave the stables (though they will not see what he is doing) and will drive him out. Roll randomly to determine which of the characters get the burrs under their saddles.

Forty courtiers and attendants, besides the player-characters, will participate in the race. Among these will be the Prince Bishop, Mademoiselle de Coquine, and the party's enemy (if possible). At the appointed time, the racers will line up before the royal pavilion, and prepare to start. At the King's signal, a shot from his dueling pistol, they will start the race.

Each character with no burrs under his saddle will have a chance to win the race. Add each character's Luck, Dexterity, and a roll on 3D6 (add an additional 5 for being a Master Horseman, +10 for being a Master Superior). Consult the table below to see how well each character does:

Total	Result
less than 25	Character is in the rear for the whole race, and makes a rather bad showing.
26 to 35	Character rides with the pack, sometimes gaining a little, sometimes losing. He will finish right in the middle.
36 to 45	Character rides very well, and is just behind the winners. Everyone is quite impressed with his horsemanship abilities.
46 or more	The Character finishes as one of the top three (the exact position is determined by his roll in relation to the others). If more than three have totals of 46 or more, then those with the lowest scores tie for third place.

The party's enemy, if he is a good horseman, will finish with a score of 46. Mademoiselle de Coquine will finish with a score of 48 (winning the race unless a player-character can beat her). As previously stated, the prizes given out by the King at the end of the race amount to 500



Livres for first place, 300 Livres for second place, and 200 Livres for third. The third prize will be split in the case of ties.

Characters with burrs beneath their saddles cannot hope to win the race, and must fight for their own safety. As the race begins, the characters will feel their horses grow agitated. After a few moments, if they continue, the horses will begin to buck. Each character on a burred horse must make successful rolls against Dexterity and Luck (+3 to each roll for Master Horsemen, +6 for Masters Superior). If both rolls are successful, the character may dismount easily. If one roll is successful, the character will be thrown, but will land lightly (suffering only 1 to 3 points of general damage). A character who misses both rolls will be thrown hard, suffering 1D6 points of damage directly to the head, and 1 to 3 additional points of general damage.

A successful roll against Wit (+3 for Master Horsemen, +6 for Masters Superior) is required to calm a frightened burred horse. If the character has dismounted (without being thrown) and thinks quickly of looking under the saddle and removing the burrs, he may rejoin the race, with a -10 modifier to his score.

### GAMBLING

Every evening, the King will hold an 'appartement' in the main salon. Each 'appartement' consists of three hours of mixing, drinking and gambling before dinner. The player-characters will have chances at each 'appartement' to meet the NPCs from the 'Personalities' section above, if they have not already done so. The King himself will observe his courtiers from a balcony above the main salon for fifteen minutes, before withdrawing. He will not mingle or gamble.

Three gaming tables, featuring different games of chance, are set up at each 'appartement':

**Table 1** features popular French card-games for large numbers of people. Bets start at 100 Livres minimum. Characters who join in must make Luck rolls each round (+3 for Gambling skill). An unsuccessful roll indicates that the character loses his entire bet. A normal roll indicates that the character retains the money he bet. A roll under half of the character's Luck indicates that the character wins double the amount he bet. Characters with Gambling skill may cheat. To cheat, a character must roll against his Dexterity; if the roll is successful, add +6 to his Luck that turn. If the roll is unsuccessful, someone may notice him stuffing aces up his sleeves.

**Table 2** features draughts (backgammon). The minimum starting bet for the first game is 50 Livres. A doubling cube is used, and it is polite to play six games to give each player an equal number of chances to double. Players may really play these games out, or they may match Resistance rolls on Luck to see who wins each game. Roll against Wit (+3 for Gambling skill) to see if the winner doubled during the game (if it was his turn). Characters may only cheat at draughts if they have brought weighted dice. A Dexterity roll is required to switch dice without being noticed.

**Table 3** features the Italian game of Minchiate, introduced to the court recently by a Florentine nobleman. This game, for three players, utilizes Tarot cards rather than a normal deck. Each player must bet 300 Livres. Two players play against the third (roll randomly to see who gets to be 'it'). If the single player wins, he takes all bets.

If the other two win, they split his bet between them. Each player should roll a D20 and add his Luck (+6 for Gambling skill). Double the single player's score, and compare it with the combined scores of the other two players. If the single player's score is greater than or equal to the combined scores of the others, he wins. Otherwise, the two defending players win. Players may attempt to cheat, but this is difficult, due to the ungainly size of Tarot cards. A roll against Dexterity (-4) is required (to gain a +5 advantage in the rolls).

M. LeFaquin and the King of Diamonds will be found playing the tables every night. M. LeFaquin prefers French card games, but will occasionally try the others. The King of Diamonds is proficient at all games of chance (and owns a pair of weighted dice). At the Game-master's option, the party's enemy may show up to match wits and luck with the player-characters.

## TENNIS

The mornings of the second and third days at the hunting lodge will be spent playing tennis. Interested characters must reserve courts with M. Charabie. If the expected 'pourboire' is not paid, the characters may find that their courts have been given to someone else.

The characters may play each other, or some of the personalities introduced in this adventure. The Prince Bishop is a fine tennis player, and may use a few games to get to know the player-characters and to discuss his mission (see 'Personalities'). M. LeFaquin may also be seen out on the courts in the morning, and he may approach the player-characters to discuss banking. Characters of Social Rank 15 or more will be invited to play a set with the King himself.

To determine each character's Tennis-playing ability, roll 2D6 and add attribute modifiers (as for weapons' Expertise, section 3.51 of the *Flashing Blades* rules). Add 2 for characters of Gentleman or Nobleman background. Add an additional 1 for characters who have trained in tennis the week before the outing, and 3 for characters who have belonged to a tennis club for a month or more. Finally, characters who are members of either the Fellows of St. George or L'Epee du Grand Henri may add 1 more.

The outcome of each actual game of tennis is determined by a resistance roll between the players on tennis ability. A set is won by the first character to win six games (the winner must win by at least two games, however, so continue playing if the score is 6 to 5).

The Prince Bishop has a tennis ability of 14. M. LeFaquin has an ability of 7. The King himself has an ability of 15.

## SHOOTING

In the afternoon of the second day, the King and court will go out to the fields by the lodge to enjoy some shooting. About seventy-five of the courtiers and attendants, including the Prince Bishop, Mademoiselle de Coquine and the party's enemy will participate.

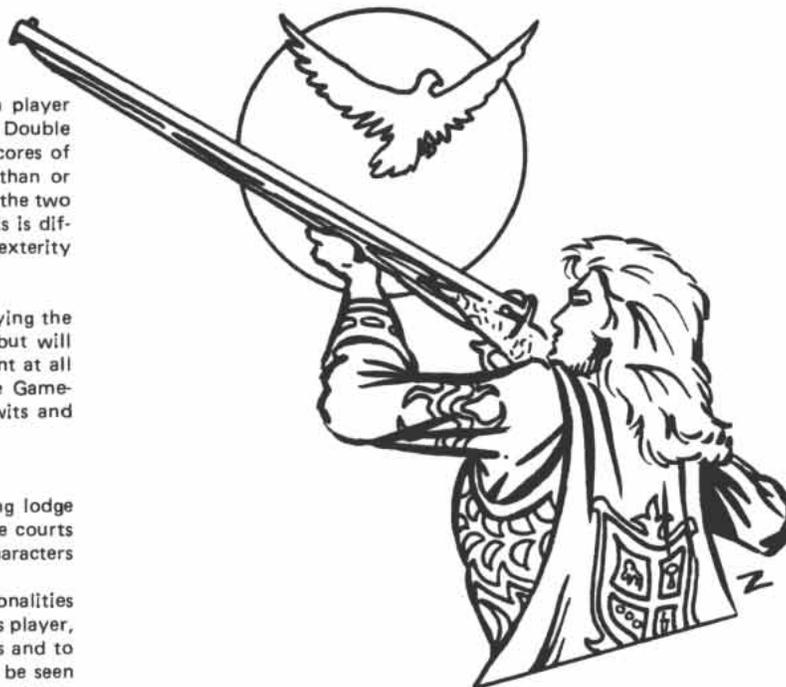
The shooting takes place at a range of forty meters (Long Range). Pigeons are released at this distance, and M. Charabie and the various stewards and butlers of the hunting lodge are assigned to count the number of pigeons shot by each marksman. If M. Charabie has not received his daily 'pourboire,' his stewards may 'miscount' the player-characters' scores.

For the player-characters, roll twelve times to find how many pigeons are shot down. Any firearm may be used, but an arquebus is the preferred weapon. Each pigeon has a -5 modifier to be hit (due to its small size and speed). Characters may brace before each shot, however, for a +3 bonus. Pole-braces may not be used.

For the NPCs participating in the shooting event, simply roll dice to see how many pigeons are hit. For the Prince Bishop, roll 1D6 + 4; for Mademoiselle de Coquine, roll 1D6 + 6; for the party's enemy, roll 1D6 + 5. In addition, roll 2D6 for each of ten other top participants (unnamed NPCs). If the top marksmen tie, they will each get another chance to shoot (12 shots each) until one wins.

During the shooting event, the King and his top Courtiers will sit under the shade of an awning. As mentioned above, he is offering an excellent arquebus from his armory, made by master Florentine gunsmiths, as the prize for the finest marksman of the day. If a character shoots more pigeons than the others but is cheated of his victory by M. Charabie's count, roll a D6: on a roll of 4, 5, or 6, the King has noticed the character's excellent marksmanship, and will award him the prize regardless of the score. The prize arquebus is finely made (+1 to hit) and is inlaid with hunting scenes in silver. The firing mechanism is a wheellock.

At the end of the shooting event, the lodge stewards will wander through the fields, picking up pigeons for the evenings' meal.



## FALCONRY

In the afternoon of the third day, the court will retire again to the fields, to enjoy the sport of hawking. Any character with a falcon may participate. Among the NPCs, twenty falconers will participate in this event, including Mademoiselle de Coquine.

At one end of the field, the lodge stewards will release various birds, mostly pigeons and sparrows. One by one, the falcons will be set upon the smaller birds. Roll 1D6 to see how many birds each falcon brings down (Mademoiselle's falcon adds +1 to this roll). If two or more tie for the largest number, they will each be sent up again until one wins.

The King has offered to buy the finest falcon from its owner for 200 Livres at the end of the event. If her bird wins, Mademoiselle de Coquine will give it to the King as a gift.

## HUNTING

The fourth day will be spent hunting in small groups in the woods surrounding the royal lodge. The party should be split into groups of two or three characters each. The hunting on the fourth day is in preparation for the Grand Chase, to be held on the fifth day.

The hunt on the fourth day will last from about 10:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the afternoon. For each hour that a hunting group spends in the woods, roll once for Animals, and once for Misfortune. Roll for animals on 2D6; the required roll to find an animal is 10 or more (+2 if a character in the group has Tracking skill, +1 if the group has a pack of three or more dogs). Roll for Misfortune on a D6; a misfortune occurs on a roll of 6. Roll for the results of Animals or Misfortunes on the tables below:

Roll	Animals (roll 1D20) Result
1-2	Skunk: Each character in the group must make a successful Luck roll or get sprayed by the frightened little creature. A sprayed character will have to go back to the lodge and change clothing quickly.
3-4	Wounded Dog: The group comes upon a wounded hunting dog, probably left for dead by one of the other hunters. It is a large and powerful beast, and if helped away and allowed to heal, it will become the loyal companion of the player-characters. It is fearless and has above-average canine intelligence.
5-6	Stray Horse: The group sights a stray horse wearing a saddle. The rider is probably another hunter who has been thrown. If the characters go to help, they may discover that the rider is someone they know (the Prince Bishop or Mademoiselle de Coquine, perhaps, or even the party's enemy).
7-8	Rabbit: The group sights a rabbit at medium range. Each character gets one chance to fire (-3 to hit, due to the animal's small size). Otherwise, each dog has a one in six chance of catching it.

9-10	Fox: The group sights a fox at medium range. Each character gets one chance to fire (-3 to hit, due to the animal's small size). Otherwise, each dog has a one in six chance of catching it.
11-12	Pheasant: The group sights a pheasant at short range. Each character gets one chance to fire (-2 to hit). Otherwise, each dog has a two in six chance to catch it.
13-14	Deer: The group sights a deer at long range. Each character gets one chance to fire (-1 to hit). The deer must take 5 points of damage or more to be brought down. Otherwise, every two dogs in the pack have a one in six chance of catching it.
15-16	Stag: The group sights a noble stag at long range. Each character gets one chance to fire. The stag must take 7 points of damage or more to be brought down. Otherwise, every two dogs in the pack have a one in six chance of catching it. If the dogs fall upon the stag, it will kill one to three of them with its horns.
17-18	Boar: The group sights a wild boar at long range. Each character has one chance to fire. The boar must take 8 points of damage or more to be brought down. If it is not immediately killed, roll 1D6: on a 1 to 3 the boar will flee (each pair of dogs have a one in six chance of catching it). Otherwise it will turn upon its attackers, killing one to three dogs and charging the player-characters. The boar's charge has a 12 chance (on a D20) of hitting each turn, and does 3 points of damage on a successful hit.
19-20	Great Stag: The group sights a great and noble stag at long range. Each character gets one chance to fire. The great stag must take 11 points of damage or more to be brought down. If it is not immediately killed, the great stag will turn upon its attackers, killing one to six dogs. Each dog who is not killed will cause the great stag 1 point of damage before it reaches the characters. Each turn, the great stag will charge with its antlers. It has a 14 chance (on a D20) to hit, with potential damage of 3 points.

Whenever a Misfortune occurs, roll on the table below:

Roll	Misfortunes (roll 1D6) Result
1	Swamp: The group rides after its hounds, in hot pursuit of a trail, and into a soupy, swampy area on the edge of the King's estates. Each dog has a one in six chance of being drowned in the bogs. Each rider must make a Luck roll (+3 for Master Horsemen) or his horse will get stuck in the marshy soil. Stuck horses may be pulled out by more successful mounts, or the characters will have to return to the hunting lodge for help.
2	Trap: The party's enemy has set a trap for the group. Ahead of the characters, a wire has been tied between two trees at ankle-height. Any horse who rides through at any pace faster than a walk will be knocked down (and take 1D6 points of damage; 2 in 6 chance of being crippled). The lead rider must make a Wit roll (+1 for Espionage skill, +2 for Tracking skill, -3 if horse is riding at a gallop) to spot the wire in time. Characters thrown when their horses are tripped will suffer 1D6 + 1 points of general damage (-1 for characters with Acrobatics skill).
3	Pasture: The dogs lead the group rapidly out of the woods, over a broken-down fence, and into a farmer's pasture (a neighbor to the King's estate). As the characters try to convince the dogs that cows are not hunting prey, a large and red-eyed bull will come along. Seeing the dogs and hunters, he will paw the ground and charge. This should lead to a humorous romp around the pasture. There is a two in six chance that the bull will catch and gore one of the dogs. Otherwise, the characters should be allowed to escape. If the group kills the bull, they may be faced with an angry Gentleman Farmer, and a musket full of grape-shot.
4	Ambush: The group is ambushed by a band of ruffians hired by the party's enemy. There are four of them, armed with matchlock pistols and sabres (Expertise

Roll	Result
	11 with each, 12 Hit Points, 1 point armor on every location but head). In addition, they have four large wolf-hounds. These will first attack the hunting dogs, and will then worry the characters' horses. Each combat turn roll a D6 for each wolf-hound and hunting dog, on a 6 the it kills its opponent. If the hunting dogs kill all the wolf-hounds, they will aid their masters and attack the ruffians. The ruffians will flee if the fight turns against them. If captured and tortured, they will confess to being hired by the party's enemy.
5	Bad Spring: The group stops before a spring of fetid water. Any character with Chemistry skill will instantly spot it as such. Otherwise, the lead rider must roll against ½ of his Wit, or the dogs will start to drink. After a quick taste, the dogs will turn away. If the characters still approach to drink, or bring their horses to water, they deserve what they get (stomach cramps or even death).
6	Duel: The group arrives in an isolated clearing. In the middle stands the party's enemy, with two henchmen behind him. He will challenge the best swordsman in the group to deal to the third blood. The other character(s) will serve as his second(s). If the character refuses and attempts to ride off, the enemy will undoubtedly have some treachery planned. If the enemy is killed in a fair duel, his henchmen will ride back to the hunting lodge (unless stopped by the characters) to report that the enemy was ambushed and killed unfairly).

Among the NPCs, the Prince Bishop, Mademoiselle de Coquine, M. LeFaquin, and the party's enemy will go hunting. The Prince Bishop will go with two of the hardier members of his Curia, with an extra horse and a pack of twenty dogs. He will return in the evening with two deer, a pheasant and several rabbits. Mademoiselle de Coquine hunts alone, with an extra horse, and a team of twelve well-bred hounds. She will return at the end of the hunt with a boar, a stag, and two deer. M. LeFaquin will go with two other Parisian gentlemen (perhaps to discuss his investment theories with them) with a pack of twelve dogs. His group will return in the evening with one rabbit (and a distinctly skunk-like aroma). The party's enemy will go out to hunt with two of his henchmen. He will probably spend too much time laying traps for the player-characters to get much hunting done. The King himself will hunt with five of his top courtiers and ministers and a pack of thirty dogs. He will return with a boar, two stags and three deer.

After all of the animals have been catalogued and taken to the kitchens, M. Charabie will, with the King's permission, decide upon the greatest prize, and invite the winning group to the King's table at dinner. Any group of characters which brings in a great stag will win (if two groups bring in great stags, they both get to sit at the King's table). Otherwise, the group which brings in the most boars and stags will win (Mademoiselle de Coquine will probably win if some player-characters don't).

If a group of player-characters wins the hunt, they will be allowed to sit at the King's table, along with his most important courtiers. A character with courtly graces may wish to distinguish himself in the King's presence (by making witty remarks, praising the King's policies, making fun of his enemies, etc.). This requires that the character have Etiquette skill, and that he make rolls against Charm and Wit (+2 to these rolls for Oratory skill, +1 for Social Rank 13 or more, -1 for each Social Rank below 9). If both rolls are successful, he will receive a brief positive glance from the King. If both rolls are unsuccessful, he will make a fool of himself in front of the most important nobles of France. If one or both of the rolls is a 20, the poor character may be removed from the King's table by two burly stewards. Characters without great social skills or rank may just lay low during the dinner, to avoid notice, good or bad.

#### THE GRAND CHASE

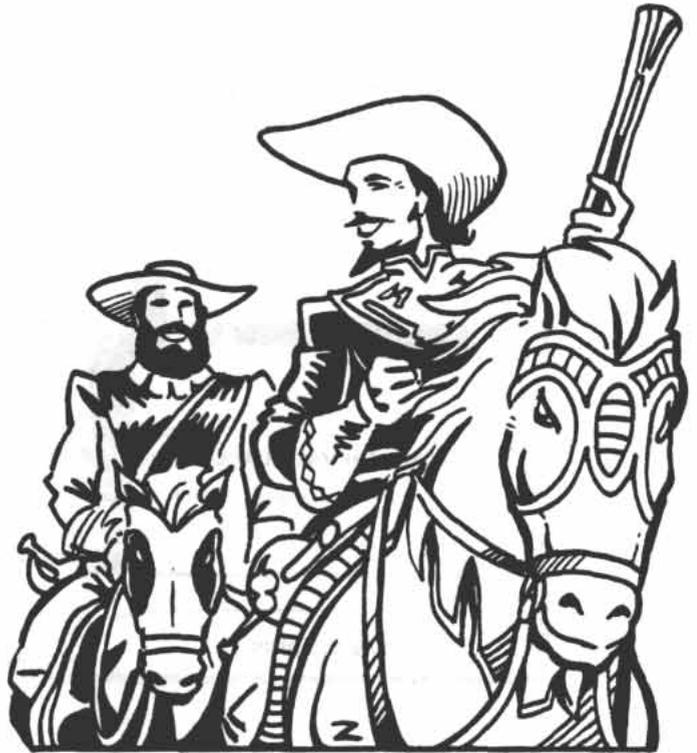
On the final day of the outing at Fontainebleau, the party will have an opportunity to participate in the Grand Chase, the culminating sporting event. At 10:00 in the morning, the hardiest hunters at the lodge, including Mademoiselle de Coquine, the King, the party's enemy, and thirty other courtiers and attendants, will gather in the fields by the forest's edge, with a total pack of 450 hounds. Six enormous wild boars will be let loose into the forest by the stewards, and given a ten minute head start. Then the chase will begin, the King and his hunting

party will track down and kill the boars.

Each player-character should roll against Wit (+3 for Tracking skill), Dexterity (+3 for Master Horsemen), Luck and Endurance. Add the number of successful rolls to a roll on a D6, and consult the table below to see what happens to the characters (if two characters have the same total, they share the same result, at the same time):

Total	Result
1-2	The character is quickly forced to the rear of the hunting party, and is choked by the dust of the other riders' horses. As the chase turns suddenly, he falls from his horse, and into a mud puddle (a Luck roll is required or he will take 1 to 3 points of general damage). By the time the character pulls his face out of the mud, the hunting party will be out of sight.
3-4	The character is stuck in the rear of the hunting party, squeezed in the middle of a mass of other riders and horses. He spends several unpleasant hours following the leader and breathing in dust, sweat and horse-foam, without ever seeing any real action.
5	The character rides in the middle of the pack, but manages to ride forward as some of the dogs corner one of the boars. He and 1D6 other hunters and 20 dogs get to kill the boar (use the statistics under 'Hunting' above, to determine the boar's capabilities).
6	The character rides towards the front of the pack, just behind Mademoiselle de Coquine. As the riders charge forward, Mademoiselle will turn from the pack and, alone, follow her dogs on another trail. If the character follows her, he will find that she has tracked down one of the boars. She has fired, and only lightly wounded the boar. The boar has broken through her pack of dogs, and it is up to the player-character to save Mademoiselle from its charge.
7	The character rides towards the front of the pack. Suddenly, the hunting party splits in different directions. Following his own dogs, the character discovers a boar, and must fight and kill it himself.
8	The character rides with the leaders of the pack, right next to the party's enemy. When the hunting party splits to pursue different quarry, the character suddenly finds himself in a clearing, at close range with a boar and the enemy. As the character accidentally rides by, the enemy will push him from his horse and ride away. The character must make a roll against Dexterity (+3 for Acrobatics, +3 for Master Horsemen) to land on his feet. Otherwise, he will be stunned for one round while the boar charges.
9	The character rides with the leaders of the pack, right next to the party's enemy. When the hunting party splits to pursue different quarry, the enemy will disappear momentarily. Then, a few moments later, the character will find himself alone in a clearing, at close range with a boar. Before he can react, the enemy will ride by, looking over his shoulder (possibly after pushing a character in 8 above). The character will have a chance to push him from his saddle as he passes, down upon the boar's upturned tusks.
10	The character rides at the very front of the hunting party, along with the King, leading the other riders through the forest. After the pack has split up, the character will find himself alone with the King and a boar at short range. They will have 3D6 dogs in addition to the character's own. The character must protect the King.

After a few hours, all six boars will have been killed. The King will offer to buy the finest dogs of the chase for 250 Livres apiece. A character's own pack will win this honor if he had an encounter with a boar and his dogs brought it down.

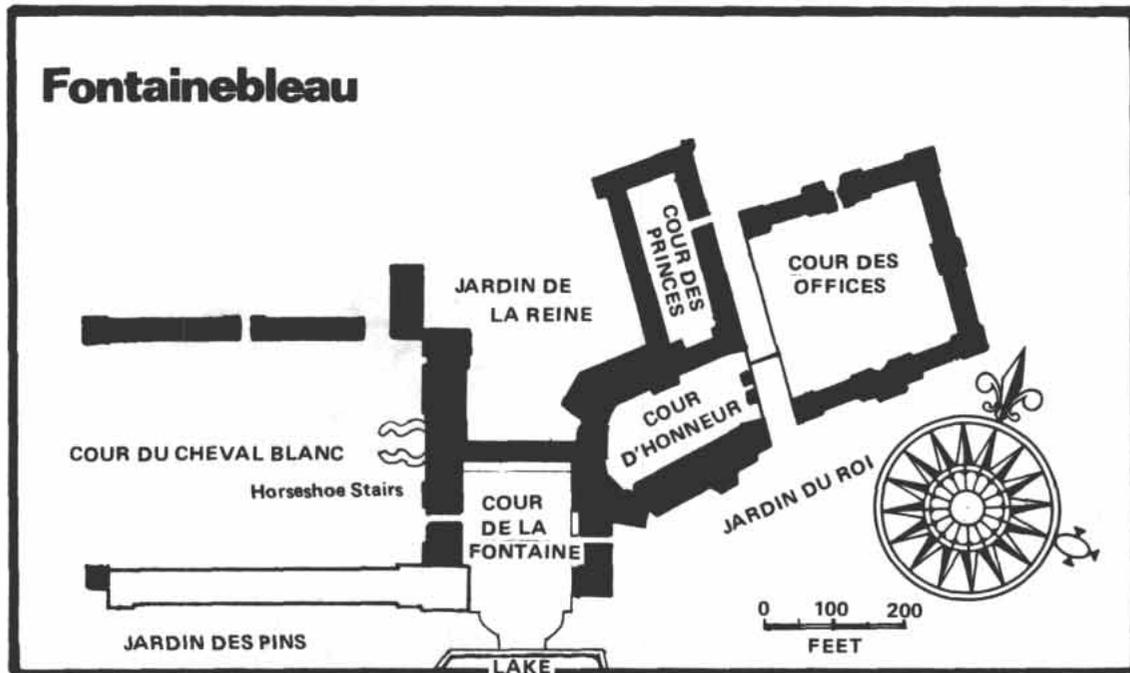


## REWARDS

At the end of the five-day outing at the King's estate in Fontainebleau, the player-characters may return to Paris with various rewards. Besides the rewards and prizes for the winners of the sporting events, and the possible profits from gambling at the King's 'appartements,' listed above, the characters may reap social advantages by having attracted the King's notice.

Any character who receives the King's notice will get +1 to his next set of rolls for positions, openings, and promotions in the hierarchies to which he belongs. Coming in second or third in the race, winning the shooting match, sporting the finest falcon or dogs, or bringing in the best hunting prize will attract the King's notice.

Any character who impresses the King will receive a +2 bonus to his next set of rolls for positions, openings, and promotions in the hierarchies. Winning the race, giving rather than selling the finest falcon or dogs to the King, refusing the prized arquebus, speaking well at the dinner table of the King, or saving the King's life in the Grand Chase will impress the monarch. In addition, a character will immediately be raised to Social Rank 6 (if he is below this level), or admitted to the Noble or Royal Order of his choice (if of Social Rank 6+); a character who is already in an order will be promoted by one rank within the order or nobility (player's choice).



Although not strictly needed as a map for the preceding adventure, the map on this page is presented to give players an idea of the layout of the palace at Fontainebleau during this period. This palace went through numerous additions and changes throughout the period and the solid areas represent buildings present in the reign of Louis XIV. If a campaign is being set in the reign of Louis XIII, simply remove the wing of buildings on the east side of the Cour des Princes, leaving that side of the enclosed courtyard open. The solid outline of a wing at the south of the Cour du Cheval Blanc represents construction under Louis XV, well after the period of *Flashing Blades*, but included to make the best known 'front view' of the palace recognizable from pictures of the palace.

The palace was originally constructed by Francis I and was added to by Charles IX, Henry IV, Louis XIV and Louis XV. Many sections were demolished when new sections were added. Thus, in the reign of Henry IV there was an entire wing to the west side of the Cour du Cheval Blanc that had probably been demolished by the time of Louis XIII and *Flashing Blades*.

The grounds to Fontainebleau were extensive and included formal gardens immediately around the palace (shown and named) and extensive tracts of undeveloped land as a hunting and recreation preserve for the use of the royal family and their guests.

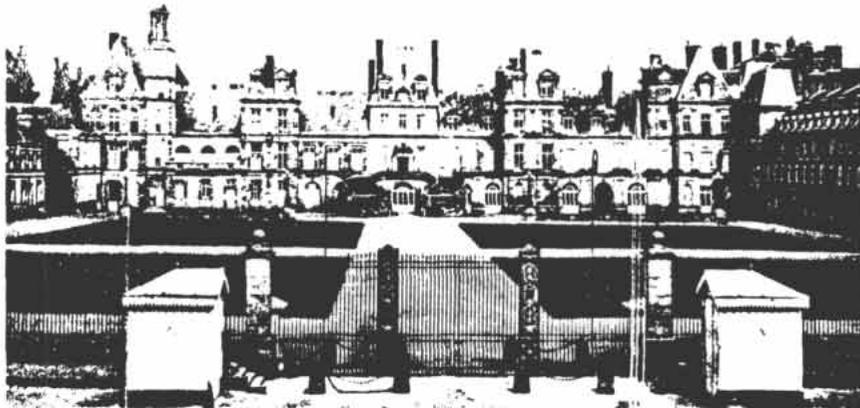
Though we have no way to determine where such things as the

tennis courts would have been, they could logically have been in any of the courtyards of the palace. Some of the marksmanship events might take place in the Jardin des Pins (Garden of Pines), which was an extensive park of promenades lined with pine trees, with many large open areas.

The picture of the palace, below, shows the main or front entry some time after the construction of additional wings by Louis XV. The main buildings in the foreground will give readers an idea of the size and height of the various wings at Fontainebleau. In fact, all areas and wings of the palace are multi-storied and appear to have varied from three to five stories in height.

The formal gardens to the south of the palace (Jardin du Roi and Jardin des Pins) seem to have followed the general outline of most such gardens of the period, being large parks with well defined paths. These would be somewhat like those at Versailles, though more open with fewer intricate pathways, fountains, etc.

Though interior floorplans are unavailable for the period, it would be a good assumption that the interior of the buildings would have been a maze of apartments and cabinets, as is the case with Versailles. Larger and better accessed lodgings would have been provided to those with the most influence. Thus, the size of one rooms and their degree of easy access would reflect the character's position on the Social Scale (as well as the whim of the likes of Monsieur Charabie).





## **THE CARDINAL'S PERIL**

An adventure pack for use with FLASHING BLADES. Included in this package are four complete adventures and a bonus section. Herein can be found:

- **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MUSKETEERS:** An overview of the formation and history of the Musketeers (both the King's Musketeers and the Cardinal's Guard), including notes on their uniforms and organization.
- **THE HAUNTED VILLA:** A complete adventure filled with suspense as the characters explore a long-deserted villa in the countryside. None who had ventured there previously had ever returned – hence the reputation as 'haunted.'
- **THE CARDINAL'S PERIL:** A complete adventure of disguise and intrigue set during the preparations for the siege of La Rochelle. The Cardinal has his share of political enemies; it stands to reason that they view him as a threat.
- **THE LADY OF LA ROCHELLE:** A complete adventure of espionage, intrigue and of a diplomatic mission to La Rochelle during the siege of the city.
- **THE ROYAL HUNT:** An adventurous outing to the King's hunting lodge at Fontainebleu where subplots abound and the formal activities run the gamut of sporting events and (of course) gambling.

The Cardinal's Peril (and other tales) is designed for use with the FLASHING BLADES game system. FLASHING BLADES is required for the use of this package.