

ALL FOR ONE

Régime Diabolique

RICHELIEU'S GUIDE TO

Intrigue & Diplomacy

❧ Introduction ❧

Intrigue is a staple of the swashbuckling genre. Nefarious schemes to overthrow kings, spies seeking to unlock secrets through larceny and seduction, and multi-layered plots set in motion by shadowy figures go hand in hand with swordsmanship and witty repartee. Tied into this is the murky world of diplomacy, where the great nations of Europe seek to outmaneuver each other on the continental stage. As one might expect, though, the world of diplomacy and intrigue is a complex one. The material in this supplement is greatly simplified, being intended as an aid for a gaming campaign rather than an historical treaty on early Enlightenment diplomacy.

Richelieu's Guide to Wondrous Devices, which introduces the Spying Skill as well as several tools of use to characters seeking to engage in intrigue, is highly recommended, but not essential.

A Very Brief History of European Diplomacy

Diplomacy is not a new idea. Since the dawn of civilization, cities and states sent representatives to negotiate with neighbors and rivals. Modern diplomacy is oft cited to have began in the early Renaissance, when the city-states of northern Italy, most notably Milan, created permanent embassies in the other Italian cities. As is the way of things, the practise spread, with Milan sending an official representative to the French court in 1455. Ironically, Milan initially declined to accept a French delegation, fearing both French meddling in its affairs and espionage.

The first country to send a permanent delegate to a foreign court was Spain, its ambassador taking up residence in England in 1487. By the end of the 16th century, the idea was firmly entrenched as part of European politics, with every nation having multiple embassies to conduct diplomatic relations with the various heads of state. The sole exception was the Holy Roman Empire, a scattered realm of semi-independent states who rarely agreed on anything. Expansion into Russia and Eastern Europe will take the best part of another century to achieve.

Politics is the polite way of getting what you want (war is the ugly way). In order to deal from a position of strength, one requires intelligence on rivals' strengths and weakness. The gathering of intelligence falls to spies. Every nation has its spy networks, and every nation knows its rivals operate spies in their territory. As well as gathering information through larceny, seduction, bribery, and blackmail, spies work to uncover and disrupt enemy plans, relay false information to their foreign counterparts, assassinate enemy agents,

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New Flaws

The following Flaws are open to any character.

Mental

Lazy: Your character is a slouch and avoids any form of chore like the plague. He might be a bully who demands others carry out his tasks or a charmer who slyly tricks others into doing his work for him. You earn a Style point any time your character convinces someone else to carry out a task he was supposed to perform himself or suffers because the person he manipulated let him down.

Repulsive: Whether it is his chronic flatulence, foul body odor, fetid breath, or some other disgusting habit or trait, your character makes people react negatively to him. People turn away in disgust, or outright flee from the vicinity. You suffer a -2 penalty to Charisma rolls to influence people (see Influence in All for One). You earn a Style point whenever your character's repulsive habit or trait causes him or his comrades to suffer in social situations.

Social

Distrustful: Your character has a hard time trusting others. Perhaps the nature of his work makes him suspicious of those who offer the hand of friendship, or maybe he was betrayed. Whatever the reason, he finds it very hard to open up to others. You earn a Style point whenever your character's distrustful nature prevents him from achieving a major goal or causes him or his friends trouble.

Judgmental: Your character makes snap judgments about people and situations and is extremely slow to change them, even when presented with facts to the contrary. To him, a man who dresses like a beggar is a beggar, even if he speaks like a nobleman. You earn a Style point whenever your character's swift judgments cause trouble for him or his companions.

Opinionated: Your character has an opinion about everything. Everything he believes, he believes utterly. Things he does not believe in he despises. He doesn't think himself better than others—just that his views are the right ones. You earn a Style point whenever your character's vocal opinions cause problems for him and his allies.

Righteous: Your character believes the end justifies the means. No matter how morally reprehensible the act, he is willing to do it if it leads to the conclusion he seeks, and is always prepared to defend his action. You earn a Style point if your character's action alienates him and his friends, or causes others to publicly question his motives and moral judgment.

or convert them to work as double agents. While many nobles employ spies, sometimes even using them against the crown, Cardinal Richelieu is the unrivaled spymaster of France, if not the entirety of Western Europe. Through his position and true origin, he has a veritable army of intelligence gatherers at his fingertips. Among his agents are private individuals (such as Milady de Winter), the cipher breakers of the Cabinet Noir, France's acknowledged premier spy agency, and the mystical and fanatical Hounds of Richelieu.

Diplomatic Ranks

As official representatives of their monarch or republic, ambassadors, the most senior diplomats, are noblemen. Depending on the nation he is attending, an ambassador's noble title varies from a lowly chevalier to that of duke. Sending a low ranking nobleman to a prestigious court is highly insulting, though rarely a cause for war. Regardless of personal status, ambassadors are expected to lead lavish lifestyles. Their houses are grand, bold statements about the wealth and status of their homeland, the frequent parties they throw are opulent affairs, and they are expected to maintain a large personal retinue.

Titles aside, ambassadors in and among Catholic nations are arranged in a strict hierarchy based on the status of their homeland. Ambassadors from the Vatican are rated highest. Beneath them are the representatives of kingdoms, then independent principalities and duchies, and so on. The lowest ranking ambassadors are, in Catholic eyes, always those from republic states. Unfortunately, no clear precedent exists within these categories, and ambassadors from the great nations, such as France and Spain, are often in direct competition to hold a superior position in a foreign court.

Ranking beneath ambassadors are envoys. These are usually from smaller states, and while they have the same level of ability to represent their liege, they are not as prestigious or socially important (or expected to lead the same lavish lifestyle) as ambassadors. The same rank may be used to represent the assistant ambassador.

Next down are consuls. While a nation maintains just a single embassy in a foreign land, it may have multiple consulates. These are smaller delegations, usually found in major cities, and serve to protect the interests of the consulate's countrymen at a local level. They are not representatives of their country in the same way as ambassadors, and have little to no access to the royal courts. Of similar rank are counselors. These are senior advisors to an ambassador or envoy.

Secretaries serve as managers, watching over the attachés and acting as an intermediary between the senior staff and the lower echelons. They have no authority to represent their homeland in a foreign court.

Unlike in the modern age, ambassadors and envoys are rarely men with political ambition—being an ambassador is very much about the social status, not the work.

To ensure they perform their duties effectively, ambassadors are surrounded by professional staff, career diplomats, historians, lawyers, scholars, and scribes. Whereas ambassadors are usually reassigned every few years, their staff might remain in the embassy for their entire political career. Ranking among the staff are members dedicated solely to espionage. Senior members of each department hold the title *attaché*, while their assistants are entitled *assistant attaché*.

Rank Table

Characters who wish to be official members of an embassy or consulate staff need to invest in the Rank Resource. The Rank table for diplomatic characters is shown below. Ranks for members of the Vatican's embassies (known as Papal Legates) are listed in parentheses where they differ from national ones.

Rank	Example
0	Assistant Attaché
1	Attaché
2	Secretary
3	Consul/Counselor
4	Envoy* (Internuncio)
5	Ambassador* (Nuncio)

** Requires Status 0 as a minimum. Characters hoping to be sent to a powerful or prestigious court, such as England, Spain, or the Vatican, must have Status 3+ in order to hold this rank.*

Diplomatic Immunity

In general, diplomats have enjoyed a degree of immunity throughout the ages. The Mongols, widely regarded as barbarian horsemen with few civil traits, held that diplomats were sacrosanct. Any mistreatment of their envoys would be met with fierce and bloody retaliation, and anyone who harmed a foreign emissary could expect a swift execution. Islamic tradition requires messengers not be harmed based on their nature or the contents of the message they carry. Without formal rules, however, this protection was not always assured.

Ambassadors and envoys hold noble titles. During the Renaissance it was not unusual for such delegates to be relatives of their liege. Even today, all senior diplomats hold high noble titles, though few are of royal blood. As a result, diplomatic immunity in 1636 is based on one's social status rather than one's role. The movement of a foreign ambassador might be slightly restricted during war, but the thought of placing an emissary under arrest, even house arrest, just because his master is currently one's enemy is unthinkable. However, this courtesy extends only to Western Europe.

The whole notion of war and how it affects foreign relationships deserve a little further explanation. In the

New Talents

Alternate Identity

Prerequisites: None

While anybody can pretend to be someone else, your character has a full alternate identity, complete with different friends, contacts, enemies, and perhaps even a different spouse.

Benefit: Your character has an alternate identity that will stand up to rigorous investigation. You may take new Resources for this alternate identity equal to the total levels of his existing ones. For instance, a character with Contacts 0 and Status 1 in his prime identity may switch these to Allies 1 and Patron 0 for his alternate identity. The different identities cannot access each other's Resources without drawing suspicion.

Normal: Your character has no alternate identity and cannot switch Resources.

Advanced: You may take this Talent three times. Your character gains a third identity at second level, and a fourth one at third level.

Rabble-Rouser

Unique

Prerequisites: Charisma 3

Your character easily manipulates or inspires common people to help him achieve his goals. When necessary, he can stir up the masses to join his cause.

Benefit: Your character may recruit temporary Followers. The cost of the new Resource is equivalent to boosting a Talent. Your character gains new Followers equal to the number of boosted Levels. The boosted Resource lasts for the remainder of the scene, at which point the new companion departs.

Normal: Your character is unable to recruit temporary followers.

age of *All for One*, wars are fought between monarchs (or similar rulers), not nations or individuals. As an aside, nationalism has its origins in this era thanks to the ongoing war in the Holy Roman Empire, but it is not yet a firm concept (and won't truly come to pass until the era of the American and French Revolutions).

As a result, foreign nationals are treated little different to normal. France may currently be at war with Spain, but not all Spaniards are viewed as potential spies or saboteurs. Indeed, while cannons boom and pikes clash across the battlefield, trade and exchanges of cultural, scholastic, and scientific ideas continues with only minimal interruption.

Officers, who are almost always of noble birth, frequently meet and fraternize with their opposite numbers

during truces, with no fear of treachery. Captured officers may offer parole, a promise not to try and escape, and to behave like a gentleman, in return for being held in very loose captivity until their freedom is negotiated. Such officers are entitled to bear arms while still classed as prisoners, and often spend their days socializing with the native population of their captors.

Spies, though, face different reprisals. A spy of noble birth likely faces arrest and expulsion, saved from execution by his birthright. Lower class spies have no such fall back—torture and execution await. Within France, Richelieu's agents may carry a *carte blanche*, an official document that guarantees protection from repercussions. Anyone seeking to abuse this protection should do so with great caution—captured bearers of the card are taken to Richelieu in person, thus bringing them to his direct attention.

❧ Campaign Advice ❧

This section looks at creating characters suited to diplomacy, courtly wit, social duels, and dastardly intrigue, and provides some basic advice for using politics and intrigue in campaigns.

Character Creation

All Musketeers receive four zero-level Skills and two zero-level Resources. Diplomats, spies, court wits, and other masters of diplomacy and intrigue receive the same general benefits, but with a few key differences.

Diplomats

Depending on the role he wishes to occupy within the embassy, a character must use a minimum of two of his zero-level Skills on Academics: Law (Papal diplomats *must* take Religion), Bureaucracy, Diplomacy, and Linguistics. Other useful but non-essential Skills include Con, Empathy, Investigation, Performance, and Warfare. Any remaining Skills should relate to the character's background and upbringing. Although typically middle-class, junior diplomats can, given the right circumstances rise from any background. Thus, no Skills are expressly forbidden to them.

One of the character's two free zero-level Resources must be Rank 0. This represents his position within the diplomatic world. Note that although characters who wish to eventually rise to the position of envoy or ambassador will need Status 3 as an absolute minimum, Status need not be taken during character generation—as explained in *Richelieu's Guide to Nobles and Courtiers*, noble rank can be awarded for service to the king.

Allies or Contacts may represent native sources of information within the country in which he is stationed, as well as friends and fellow countrymen. Patron can represent a senior member of the embassy staff, or perhaps

a powerful figure from his home nation who supports the character in return for small favors, such as acquiring documents or sabotaging a negotiation being conducted by a rival nation. Refuge most likely represents a private home, though it can equally apply to apartments within an embassy or consulate.

Unless the character lives a frugal lifestyle or has a sideline business, Wealth is an unlikely (but not impossible) starting Resource—lowly diplomatic aides are not well-paid, though a character who takes bribes or takes on a second job, perhaps as a scribe or translator, might well warrant the investment.

Spies

Intrigue-based characters have a lot more leeway in their choice of Skills. Spying (see *Richelieu's Guide to Wondrous Devices*) is the most obvious choice, followed by Investigation, Larceny, and Linguistics. However, these are not the only useful Skills. A daring spy who breaks into offices and apartments will find Athletics and Stealth of great use, while a smooth-talking spy who seduces the lords or ladies of the court should favor Con, Empathy, and Performance. As always, any other zero-level Skills the character takes should tie into his background and upbringing.

Spies also have more choice when it comes to their zero-level Resources than even diplomats. Ally might be a fellow countryman in a position to help your character or an accomplice, but it could just as easily represent a traitor willing to help him in return for coin, or one who simply dislikes the current state of affairs. Contacts are an ideal choice, but in the long-term this should be supported with the Well-Connected Talent for maximum effect. Patron is best suited to one's spymaster, who may be a shadowy figure whose identity is unknown to his subordinate. Fame, Rank, and Status can represent cover identities, such as a famous artist, a member of the embassy staff, or a nobleman. Refuge is ideally suited to a safe house, somewhere the spy can hide while the heat dies down.

Court Wits

Characters who wish to engage in courtly intrigue and battles of wits and words should take social Skills—Con, Diplomacy, Intimidation, and Streetwise. These Skills form the basis of the social dueling system, the primary method of combat in which the character will engage.

Social dueling relies heavily on status and reputation. Contacts, Fame, Rank, and Status all provide bonuses, though only the highest bonus applies. Since social dueling is not limited to the court, none of these is more important than the others, and the choice should depend on the character's background and occupation. Thus, while a courtier should take Rank or Status to represent his elevated position in society, a low-born demagogue who spreads rumors on the streets may find Contacts more useful in the long run.

Intrigue Campaigns

Intrigue adventures can be loosely grouped into political intrigue and general intrigue.

Politics on any level is a battlefield as deadly as any arrayed with companies of musket and batteries of cannon. It is a battlefield on which maneuvers and counter-maneuvers are made to secure a position of strength or exploit a weakness and pawns are sacrificed for the greater goal. It is a battlefield as deadly as any other, for a moment of weakness or hesitation can spell disaster.

While the armies of Europe fight with muskets, pike, and cannon, the politicians and courtiers engage each other with carefully phrased words and meticulously orchestrated actions. Here victory is gained not through might, but the acceptance of one's viewpoint as truth.

In order to work best, a political intrigue adventure requires the characters to forget their steel and instead rely on their wits. In most courtly intrigue a weapon is of little use, whereas a sharp tongue and quick mind are priceless. This is a battlefield where what you say is not as important as how you say it, and where a wrong word can ruin one's life forever. And for those who think lying is a winning tactic, be warned that a broken promise quickly leads to broken trust and broken reputations.

Intrigue isn't all about politics and courtly battles, though. Intrigue adventures can focus on thwarting nefarious plots with steel and lead, and a stout heart. What a good intrigue adventure needs above all else is layers.

Intrigue, as the word indicates, should be intriguing. That is, it should draw the players and characters in, and spur them to dig deeper into the mystery the Gamemaster has laid before them. In order to keep the characters both interested and from foiling the plot too early, a good intrigue adventure should be designed like an onion—peel away one layer and you find yet another, similar in nature, yet closer to the core.

Designing an intrigue adventure is both simple and difficult. It is simple because all the Gamemaster needs is a villain and a devious plot, as with any other adventure. The difficulty comes in designing the layers of intrigue that insulate the villain from the story's protagonists, and prevent the characters from immediately seeing his goals. It doesn't matter whether you start at the core and work outward when designing the adventure, or start at the outside and work in. In some cases, it is actually easier to begin at the beginning and see where the chain of clues takes you.

Plots needn't be complex to be fun. Take the plot of *The Three Musketeers* as an example. King Louis gifts his wife a necklace. She in turn gives some of the diamonds to her paramour, the Duke of Buckingham. Cardinal Richelieu discovers this and devises a plot. On the one hand, if he can reveal the Queen's infidelity he can have her ousted from court and ingratiate himself deeper with the King. On the other, he can start a war with Protestant England. Richelieu persuades the King to host a ball, at which the Queen should wear her new necklace. On

Cutting Words

Social duels, which form part of courtly intrigue, require panache, style, and wit in equal measure. While the game relies on mechanics to arbitrate results, players may wish to roleplay the exchange of insults. A few examples are given below.

* Please accept my apologies for insulting your dancing; I mistakenly assumed you were having a fit.

* Do be careful; with the amount of feathers you are wearing you may take off if you continue to flap your arms so vigorously.

* (in response to an insult about your apparel) I shall pass my regards to your tailor.

* (in response to an insult about your apparel) I have learned my lesson—never copy your style.

* You have me at a disadvantage, sir; I refuse to battle wits with an unarmed man.

* Have you been practising your wit for long?

* Everyone has the right to be stupid, but please do not abuse the privilege.

* Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.

* Excuse me just a moment; I believe an intelligent person wishes to converse with me.

* I congratulate you on your dress sense; a catastrophic success!

* I never forget a face, but in your case I shall make an exception.

* I hear you are happily married but your wife is not (paraphrased from Victor Borge).

* If a man is supposed to learn from his mistake, why are you still talking?

* I may be drunk, but you are ugly, and in the morning I shall be sober (paraphrased from Winston Churchill).

* I shall attend the second recital of your performance, if the King allows such travesty (paraphrased from Winston Churchill).

* I shall forgive your poor manners, but I shall not forget them (paraphrased from John F. Kennedy).

* Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't (Margaret Thatcher).

* Do you never tire of having you around?

* If you stop telling lies about me, I'll stop telling the truth about you.

* How kind of you to set aside time to humiliate yourself in public.

* You are a person of rare intelligence; it is rare when you show any.

* How quaint; you are having delusions of competence!

* Is there a dog nearby? My ears are beset by an annoying yapping.

* I congratulate your tailor. He has almost managed to make last year's fashion look new.

Codes and Ciphers

Anyone who wishes to prevent others from reading their messages needs to encode the missive. Fortunately, a variety of ciphers exist. Historically, the word cryptography (“hidden writing”) comes into use in the decades after *All for One*. During this age, steganography (“concealed writing”) is the common term. Unlike a coded message, which attracts unwanted attention, steganographic codes may appear as plain text, the code being something as simple as reading the first letter of each word or every third word to decipher the true meaning of the missive. A small few of the ciphers employed in this age are briefly described below.

Alberti: Invented 1467. Uses two concentric discs attached by a pin, allowing both discs to rotate freely. Works by polyalphabetic substitution and changing the rotation at varying intervals in the message.

Alphabetum Kaldeorum: A Middle Ages substitution code, swapping standard letters of the alphabet for those in a pictogrammatic language. Different versions are used on the same message to prevent deciphering through spotting common letters.

Caesar Cipher: Named after Julius Caesar. A simple letter substitution, formed by moving to an alphabet a set number of places to the right. For instance, with a code of 3, B becomes E, C becomes F, and so on. Easily broken by analysis of letter frequency.

Grand Chiffre: (“Great cipher”) Invented by Antoine Rossignol, of the Cabinet Noir and his son, Bonaventure, in 1630. Based on 587 numbers that stand for syllables. A series of traps, including codes that told one to ignore previous letters, and “nulls” (such as meaningless words whose starting letters are used to form meaningful words) prevent frequency analysis of the code. It is France’s premier code, used by its embassy staff and trusted spies.

Mirror Writing: Text that appears readable only when viewed in a mirror. Easily deciphered. Popular with Leonardo da Vinci.

Poem Code: A series of numbers that relate to words in a pre-arranged poem. Once the poem is identified, the code is easily broken.

Polybius Square: A rudimentary substitution code using letters drawn in a grid pattern, with each row and column numbered. Letters are referenced by a two-digit code (row and column). Requires the recipient to have the same grid.

Scytale: Message written on a strip of parchment wound around a cylinder. Requires a cylinder of similar size to decode, but is very easy to break.

Vigenère Cipher: Invented 1586. A substitution system using a series of Caesar ciphers. Known as *le chiffre indéchiffrable* (“the unbreakable cipher”) because of its reliance on a repeating keyword to mask the message and deter frequency analysis.

discovering this, the Musketeers head to England to retrieve the diamonds and deliver them to the Queen before the ball begins. Richelieu’s involvement is known to D’Artagnan, but without proof he can do nothing except insinuate he knows the truth.

One important thing to remember with intrigue adventures is that die rolls should never be allowed to uncover information the Gamemaster doesn’t want found. For instance, let’s say the characters have stopped a messenger delivering a message to a nobleman suspected of corruption. The letter makes it abundantly clear the nobleman is a pawn, but the only clue to his invisible master’s identity is a black rose petal. Investigation and Streetwise rolls might uncover the petal is the symbol of a shadowy organization, but it isn’t going to reveal the names of any members or reveal the location of their secret headquarters, no matter how long the characters spend on the task, unless the Gamemaster wants such information to be learned. Generally, such details should come about through uncovering evidence and following leads in play, and roleplaying asking the right questions of the right people at the right time.

As the characters work through the layers of intrigue, so they work through the villain’s chain of command. Early scenes or adventures should involve low-grade thugs easily beaten with steel or word. Typically these are Follower 0 or Ally 0 thugs. These expendable assets know nothing of their master’s plans, and in most cases are ignorant of his identity. The next layer involves slightly more skilled goons (Ally 1) but still without much knowledge of the plot. Delve deeper, and one encounters lieutenants, trusted minions and villains in their own right. Such characters are typically Ally 2 or Patron 1 equivalents, tough, but not so tough they don’t require support from a small number of lackeys or henchmen.

After battling their way through his army and uncovering all the evidence, the characters finally encounter the true villain. While it is tempting to have the villain be a master swordsman or powerful magician, a sly manipulator who tries to talk his way out of trouble or who casts doubts into the characters’ minds is just as memorable. Of course, it may be that the “grand villain” is actually just a pawn in a greater game. One onion of intrigue has been torn apart and its core exposed, but in doing so the first layer of a new onion has been exposed.

Intrigue of this sort can also be foreshadowed before it is fully introduced. This works well in what appear to be unconnected, episodic adventures. A friend of the characters is arrested on a false charge and they must rescue him from a cruel jailor. A saboteur is planting bombs around Paris. A holy relic is stolen from Notre Dame. And yet, in each case, the villain is found to be in possession of a black rose petal. Although the adventures appear to have no direct link, the presence of the petal hints at someone more powerful working behind the scenes. His or her motives are mysterious and appear to have no pattern, but through diligence the characters begin to realize they are pieces of a complex jigsaw that leads them into a frantic race to save France.

Cipher Breaker

Archetype: Academic

Motivation: Truth

Style: 3

Health: 4

Primary

Body: 2	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 4
Strength: 3	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 8*
Move: 5	Defense: 6
Perception: 6	Stun: 2

Skill	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Athletics	3	2	5	(2+)
Fencing: Geom- tria**	3	3	6	(3)
Firearms	2	3	5	(2+)
Gambling	4	2	6	(3)
Investigation	4	1	5	(2+)
Enigmas			6	(3)
Linguistics	4	3	7	(3+)
Codes			8	(4)
Riding	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Calculated Defense (Active Defense uses Intelligence)

* Quick Reflexes (+2 Initiative rating)

Resources

Followers 0 (Messenger)

Rank 0 (Musketeer; +1 Social bonus)

Flaw

Curious (+1 Style point whenever his curiosity gets him or his companions into trouble)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Punch	0N	0	0N	(0)N
Rapier	2L	0	8L	(4)L
Matchlock mus- ket	3L	0	8L	(4)L

** See Richelieu's Guide to Fencing Schools 2

"It's a simple substitution code. Give me a moment and I'll break it."

Character Background

Puzzles, ciphers, and enigmas have always been a part of my life. My father, a learned man and a bureaucrat in some government office, the exact nature of which I am still unsure, encouraged me to think at an early age by setting me riddles and creating simple codes which I had to solve or break in order to earn a reward. I attended university, where I studied languages. I had hoped to become a diplomat, a steady if not particularly glamorous occupation, and one that would, I hoped, lead to a noble title in later life.

I was returning to university after visiting my father when I happened to take pause at a roadside inn. Sat across from me were three King's Musketeers. It was apparent from their faces and the way they kept turning a piece of parchment that something vexed them. My curiosity piqued, I approached and asked what troubled them. At first they were reluctant to impart any information, but on learning that I was a student of languages they handed me the parchment. They explained that they had intercepted a messenger suspected of carrying missives between enemies of France plotting to kill the King. Naturally, the letter was encoded.

The cipher was relatively complex, but my father's training was thorough. Slowly patterns began to emerge, repetitive use of certain letters and numbers, offset with a change in substitution, but not beyond my ability to deduce. Within the hour the code was broken, the message deciphered, and the plot (later) foiled. My newfound friends accompanied me to Paris, whereupon they introduced me to their captain.

He thanked me for my assistance and offered me a posting with the Musketeers. I openly professed no martial skills worthy of such honor, but he responded that fencing was a skill any man could learn, whereas intelligence and the ability to think laterally was a gift few possessed. Won over by his words, I accepted his offer, putting aside my thoughts of becoming a diplomat for the time being in favor of serving France in another way. Although I am a soldier, I serve primarily as intelligence for the King, breaking the codes employed by France's enemies and ensuring that our communiques are not read.

Roleplaying

You are driven by curiosity, and seek to solve mysteries. Partly this stems from a desire to display your intelligence, and partly because you hate it when you do not know what is going on.

Concealer of the Truth

Archetype: Guardian

Motivation: Mystery

Style: 3

Health: 5

Primary

Body: 2 Charisma: 4*

Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 3

Strength: 2 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 5

Move: 4 Defense: 4

Perception: 6 Stun: 2

Skill	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Academics: Occult	3	2	5	(2+)
Bureaucracy	3	2	5	(2+)
Con	4	3	7	(3+)
Diplomacy	4	3	7	(3+)
Empathy	3	2	5	(2+)
Investigation	3	2	5	(2+)
Linguistics	3	1	4	(2)
Melee	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

*Charismatic (+1 Charisma rating)

Resources

Followers 1 (Knight of St. Michael)

Rank 0 (Sergeant-Templar of the Knights of St. Michael; +1 bonus)

Status 0 (Chevalier; +1 Social bonus)

Flaw

Fanatical (+1 Style point whenever his devotion causes harm or converts someone else to his way of thinking)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Punch	0N	0	0N	(0)N
Long Sword	3L	0	7L	(3+)L

"Tell them the truth? They couldn't handle the truth."

Character Background

I had long thought my family to be undistinguished, despite holding a minor title since time immemorial. It was only when I became an adult that my parents told me the full history of our family, how we had served the Church but were betrayed, how my ancestors fought against the forces of Hell on Earth, and how they were forced to hide their heritage and calling from their persecutors for centuries. At the age of 16 I was inducted into the Knights of St. Michael, and quickly after that the True Knights, a secretive branch devoted to continuing the unending war against Satan and his hellish legions.

I was apprenticed to a Templar, and sent into the field to face the forces of damnation first hand. Peasants had reported attacks on their sheep by a monstrous wolf; a creature they publicly professed was a demon. My master and I slew the beast, but I knew we could not simply walk away without giving the villagers an explanation as to why the attacks had ended. I came upon the idea to hunt and slay a large wolf, which we would proclaim as the sheep-killer. By displaying the carcass, we would quash further talk of demons. My ruse worked perfectly.

While my ruses changed to suit the circumstances, I continued proclaiming rational explanations to the ills of France for several more years. Then, one day, I was summoned to the order's secret headquarters, where I would converse with the Patriarch. We spoke at length about the war we waged, and how fear fuelled the murder of innocents and the break down of society. Although I was, and remain, a relatively low-ranking member, the Patriarch appointed me the position and title of Voice of Reason. My new duty to the order, he said, was to conceal the truth behind a veil of reason, so as to convince the citizens that the terrors that stalked the night had rational explanations they could understand. Since our order has many enemies, I was assigned a bodyguard.

Some might say I am performing the Devil's work, convincing others that he does not exist, but I refute that claim. The Devil feeds on fear, and I remove that source of sustenance. Because of me, the peasants can sleep soundly in their beds at night.

Roleplaying

You are patient and eloquent, adept at countering claims of demonic activity with perfectly rational explanations. While you prefer to use reason, you are quite prepared to destroy the reputations, and occasionally the lives, of those who refute your arguments, branding them liars and madmen or, in the worst cases, servants of the very Devil they fear. Such work is not enjoyable to you, but in war there are always casualties.

Magickal Manipulator

Archetype: *Noble*

Motivation: *Duty*

Style: 3

Health: 6

Primary

Body: 2	Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 2	Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 4	Defense: 4
Perception: 6	Stun: 2

Skill	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Bureaucracy	2	2	4	(2)
Con	3	2	5	(2+)
Diplomacy	3	2	5	(2+)
Empathy	2	2	4	(2)
Intimidation	3	2	5	(2+)
Linguistics	2	2	4	(2)
Magick: Enchantment	4	1	5	(2+)
Magick: Homomancy	4	3	7	(3+)
Performance	3	1	4	(2)

Talents

Magickal Aptitude (Theurgy)
Well-Connected (May boost Contacts as if a Talent)

Resources

Followers 0 (Rumormonger)
Status 0 (Chevalier; +1 Social bonus)

Flaw

Cautious (+1 Style point whenever she or her comrades suffer from her inability to make a quick decision)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Punch	0N	0	0N	(0)N

"I hear the duc farted rather loudly in front of the king. Such unfortunate timing."

Character Background

Who do you think wields the true power at court? The High Steward, who controls the King's finances and determines who receives a courtly position? Maybe you favor the Lord Chancellor because he can stamp official documents with the power of the king? The Grand Chamberlain, who records oaths of allegiance? No, the true power is the unseen individual who guides or stays the hand with carefully chosen words.

Some are born to greatness, but squander their potential on idle pursuits or use their position for wickedness. Others are humble men, yet ones who deserve recognition and status. The system is balanced to support the former and keep the underdog in his place. I am a facilitator, gently guiding those who need a helping hand to fulfil their destiny and punishing those who have more than they deserve or who would act against the best interests of this fair land. I operate on the periphery of the court, a minor adornment unnoticed by the peacocks and self-professed power brokers except when they desire a dance partner. And yet, I wield power as much as any Great Officer.

Had I the mind for it I could achieve great personal power and wealth, but I crave not such things. I work for the betterment of France alone, and my loyalty lies with King Louis and those who support his reign. Some may seek to destroy France's enemies with steel and lead, but not I. Power, like wealth, can be stolen, and what crueler fate is there for a man who claims a position at court than to rob him of the King's favor?

I profess my talents are not entirely natural. I am a magician, and through my Arts I can cause a dancer to stumble, a painter to create a masterpiece, an orator to stutter, or a wallflower to blossom. My gifts, and I am generous, can cause a lady to be the center of men's attention, a lord's tights to split as he bows, and a letter to spark or quell a revolt. No, I do not fear you will tell others my secret. After all, I made you with a single word, and I can break you just as easily.

Roleplaying

You manipulate others into carrying out your plans, but not for self-gain. You are a loyal supporter of the king, opposed to the corruption eating away at the court and the misery the nobility are inflicting on the masses. You work with subtle charm and carefully chosen words, guiding the deserving to greatness and the undeserving to humiliation or infamy. And in return you ask nothing except the occasional favor.

Papal Agent

Archetype: *Spy*

Motivation: *Truth*

Style: 3

Health: 4

Primary

Body: 2	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 3
Strength: 3	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 6
Move: 6	Defense: 5
Perception: 5	Stun: 2

Skill	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Academics: Religion	3	1	4	(2)
Con	2	3	5	(2+)
Fencing: Spanish	3	3	6	(3)
Investigation	3	3	6	(3)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Ride	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	3	2	5	(2+)

Talents

Flurry (May attack the same opponent twice at -2)

Furious Slash (+4 bonus to his attack roll when making a Total Attack)

Resources

Followers 0 (Finder of Secrets)

Rank 0 (Musketeer; +1 Social bonus)

Flaw

Impulsive (+1 Style point whenever his impulsiveness gets him or his companions into serious trouble)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Punch	0N	0	0N	(0)N
Rapier	2L	0	8L	(4)L
Matchlock Musket	3L	0	9L	(4+)L

"The Pope will be very upset when I tell him this news."

Character Background

Yes, I have met the Pope many times, but only once have I spoken with him. I am Swiss by birth, though my mother is French. Like many good Swiss Catholics I dreamed of serving in the Swiss Guard, the Pope's personal bodyguards. To cut a long story short, my quest was successful and I became one of the chosen few.

I was guarding His Holiness during a meeting, ignored as a fixture of the Vatican and sworn never to repeat anything I overheard lest my soul be condemned to Hell for eternity. The Pope was concerned about reports from France, reports that indicated all was not well. Talk of demons walking the land and corruption in the highest echelons of the nobility vexed him sorely. At least one of the Pope's agents had indicated the entire court was corrupt; even the King, a foppish young man by all accounts. Speaking aloud and rhetorically, the Pope asked what was to be done about the situation.

I am by nature impulsive, prone to act on a whim and speak without thought. Before I knew what was happening I proposed a solution. Me, a humble guardsman daring to interrupt the Pope. At least one cardinal rose to chastise me, but my words were faster than his rage. I proposed that the Vatican send an agent to infiltrate the King's Musketeers, trusted men (and women thanks to Cardinal Richelieu) who had the King's ear, or so I had heard. Surely they above all others would know the truth of the situation. Bemused, the Pope asked if I had anyone in mind for such a role. Again I spoke without thinking, claiming that I would be honored to undertake the task. So it was that I rode to France and, equipped with false letters of introduction proclaiming me to be a former Swiss soldier of French parentage (not a total lie), enlisted in the King's Musketeers.

My position has given me much access to the nobility of France, and I have not been pleased with what I have discovered. At least one was a servant of Satan, though he will trouble the land no further. But now I am troubled. France has joined the war that ravages Europe, siding not with the Vatican's Hapsburg allies but with the Protestants. This is indeed a wicked land, but I shall find the root of the evil, and then the Pope will unleash the full fury of the Church against them.

Roleplaying

You are a slave to your instincts, quick to act and slow to think. Although you serve France and the King as a Musketeer, your first loyalty is to the Vatican. You have learned that the court is corrupt, but the King is not to blame. Someone else is gnawing away at France's heart, and you are determined to find out whom.

Secret Republican

Archetype: Noble

Motivation: Faith

Style: 3

Health: 5

Primary	
Body: 2	Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 3	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes	
Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 5	Defense: 4
Perception: 5	Stun: 2

Skill		Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Academics: Philosophy	Phi-	2	3	5	(2+)
Athletics		3	1	4	(2)
Diplomacy		3	2	5	(2+)
Empathy		3	2	5	(2+)
Fencing: Dardi		3	3	6	(3)
Investigation		2	2	4	(2)
Performance		3	2	5	(2+)
Ride		2	2	4	(2)

Talents
Cloak the Form (Gains the benefits of half cover (+2 Defense) when using his cloak)

Resources
Ally 1 (Two fellow republicans)
Followers 0 (Bomb throwing radical)
Rank 0 (Chevalier; +1 Social bonus)

Flaw
Righteous (+1 Style point whenever his action alienate him and his friends, or cause others to publicly question his motives and moral judgment)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Punch	0N	0	0N	(0)N
Rapier	2L	0	8L	(4)L

"Your actions not only disgrace your name, they disgrace that of France!"

Character Background

Although I carry a noble title, it is one I earned through long service as a junior government minister; a reward for hard work and loyalty, not a gift for being born to the right parents. Through my work I have had course to meet with many nobles, and my experiences have been far from pleasant. With power comes responsibility, and for the most part that responsibility has been ignored.

At the heart of the corruption lies the King. Aye, treasonous talk, but that does not make it any less untrue. With the aid of Richelieu, the king edges closer toward absolute rule each day. The *lit de justice* chips away at the power of the regional *parlements*, taxation policies outside of noble lands have been taken on by the crown rather than local officials, he has brought us into war on the side of the Protestants, and he ignores the cries of his people. The nobles are little better. They baulk at the King's new laws not because they care for the peasants, but because it erodes their power. While they dine and dance in their opulent chateaus, the peasants starve in their hovels, taxed to excess to fund the nobles' lavish lifestyles. The entire system stinks of corruption from top to bottom, and I for one can stomach no more!

I favor a complete overhaul of the system. In place of absolute rule, power would be placed in the hands of a single *parlement*. Its officers would be elected to hold office by the people, and would serve for the people. Those who fail in their duties would face expulsion by common consent. Regular elections would give the citizens chance to shape their future.

I may be old, but I am no fool. Such a system can only come into being with the full will of the people. Alas, the people are ignorant of the true extent of the cancer. The only way to enlighten them, to strengthen their will to demand change, is to expose the evil that governs them. Although I prefer to uncover evidence pointing to noble excesses, publishing my findings anonymously, I am not above violence as a means to an end. Once the truth is known, the people will clamor for change, and the will of the people cannot be ignored for long. *Vive la France, vive la République!*

Roleplaying

You strongly believe that those with power have a responsibility to those without. The nobility have lost their way, walked the path of corruption, and thus are no longer fit to rule. France is sick, and the cure, in your eyes, is a change of management. Those who will not go willingly must be forced to concede defeat.

Sample Lackeys

Codebreaker

Follower 0

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 1, Strength 1, Charisma 1, Intelligence 2, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 2, Perception 4, Initiative 3, Defense 3, Stun 2, Health 4

Skills: Investigation 4 (*Enigmas* 5), Linguistics 4 (*Codes* 5)

Talents/Resources: None

Flaws: Blasé (+1 Style point whenever his indifference causes harm)

Weapons: Punch 0N

Destroyer of Reputations

Follower 1

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 2, Strength 2, Charisma 3, Intelligence 2, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 4, Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 3, Stun 1, Health 3

Skills: Con 5, Diplomacy 5, Investigation 4, Linguistics 4, Streetwise 5

Talents: Barbed Tongue (+2 bonus in social duels)

Resources: None

Flaws: Gossip (+1 Style point whenever he spreads gossip that inadvertently causes trouble)

Weapons: Punch 0N

Diplomatic Attaché

Follower 0

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 1, Strength 1, Charisma 2, Intelligence 2, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 2, Perception 4, Initiative 3, Defense 2, Stun 1, Health 3

Skills: Bureaucracy 4 (*Government* 5), Diplomacy 4 (*Etiquette* 5)

Talents/Resources: None

Flaws: Intolerant (+1 Style point whenever his intolerance causes trouble)

Weapons: Punch 0N

Finder of Secrets

Follower 0

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 1, Strength 1, Charisma 2, Intelligence 2, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 2, Perception 4, Initiative 3, Defense 2, Stun 1, Health 3

Skills: Empathy 3, Investigation 4, Streetwise 4

Talents/Resources: None

Flaws: Coward (+1 Style point whenever he abandons his friends to save his own skin)

Weapons: Punch 0N

Manipulative Servant

Follower 0

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 1, Strength 2, Charisma 2, Intelligence 2, Willpower 1

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 3, Perception 3, Initiative 3, Defense 2, Stun 1, Health 2

Skills: Con 4 (*Tricks* 5), Empathy 4 (*Emotions* 5)

Talents/Resources: None

Flaws: Lazy (+1 Style point whenever he convinces someone else to carry out a task he was supposed to perform)

Weapons: Punch 0N

Messenger

Follower 0

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 2, Strength 2, Charisma 1, Intelligence 1, Willpower 1

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 4, Perception 2, Initiative 3, Defense 4, Stun 2, Health 3

Skills: Athletics 4 (*Running* 5), Riding 4 (*Galloping* 5)

Talents/Resources: None

Flaws: Code of Conduct (+1 Style point whenever his code forces her to make something much more difficult than might otherwise be necessary)

Weapons: Punch 0N

Politician

Follower 0

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 1, Strength 1, Charisma 2, Intelligence 2, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 2, Perception 4, Initiative 3, Defense 2, Stun 1, Health 3

Skills: Con 4 (*Lying* 5), Diplomacy 4 (*Politics* 5)

Talents/Resources: None

Flaws: Fanatical (+1 Style point whenever his devotion causes harm or he converts someone else to his way of thinking)

Weapons: Punch 0N

Spy

Follower 1

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 2, Strength 2, Charisma 2, Intelligence 2, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 4, Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 4, Stun 2, Health 4

Skills: Con 4, Diplomacy 4, Linguistics 4, Spying 4, Stealth 4

Talents: Total Recall (always remembers details without having to make an Intelligence roll)

Resources: None

Flaws: Secret (Spy; +1 Style point whenever he is confronted by the truth or goes out of his way to protect the secret)

Weapons: Punch 0N