

FLASHING BLADES™

An Ambassador's Tales



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FLASHING BLADES™

An Ambassador's Tales

A complete campaign for use with FLASHING BLADES. The player-adventurers are assigned to accompany an Ambassador from the Cardinal to foreign courts and they find adventure and danger along the way. Included in this book can be found:

- **HABSBURG HOSPITALITY:** The ambassador, Monsieur de Bienvenu, finds his life in danger in the Imperial Court of Austria. The player-characters must protect M. de Bienvenu, while at the same time avoiding an obvious show of their duties as the sanctity of the Imperial Court must retain the appearance of sanctity.
- **THE CONSTANTINOPLE EMERALD:** An adventure of intrigue and theft to procure a valuable gem in Venice amidst the chaos of the Venetian Carnival.
- **TORRE DEL DIABLO:** A dangerous mission to carry a message to a prisoner in a Spanish prison, and to bring back a reply in writing. Complications will arise as the adventurers must sneak into the prison and find their mysterious prisoner.
- **THE BINNENHOF AFFAIR:** Valuable stolen documents must be recovered for the ambassador while in the Hague. Espionage and deceit complicate matters as the characters encounter a sinister Dutch secret espionage organization.
- **DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY:** An adventure of intrigue and flight when the international code of Diplomatic Immunity breaks down in England.

An Ambassador's Tales is a complete campaign of five interlocking adventures for use with the FLASHING BLADES game system. FLASHING BLADES is required for use of this adventure/campaign package.

An Ambassador's Tales

AN AMBASSADOR'S TALES

Being, in the main, a series of adventures in foreign lands, in the company of Monsieur de Bienvenu, special envoy of the Cardinal.

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The Summons

INTRODUCTION

An Ambassador's Tales is a full campaign for *Flashing Blades*. The party of player-characters will be recruited into the entourage of Monsieur de Bienvenu, the Cardinal's special Ambassador to foreign lands. While in the company of the Ambassador's troupe, the party will receive special instructions from the Cardinal, and will be given a secret mission of some kind in five separate countries. Each mission is its own adventure, fraught with danger and intrigue.

The first of the five adventures of *An Ambassador's Tales* is *Habsburg Hospitality*. The party will travel with Monsieur de Bienvenu to a secret palace in Austria, for special negotiations with the Habsburg Emperor. While there, the evil Baron Otto von Vulkan, and his sinister servant Rolf, will attempt to assassinate M. de Bienvenu. The party must protect the Ambassador, and make sure that an internationally embarrassing scene does not occur.

In *The Constantinople Emerald*, the party will follow the Ambassador's troupe from Graz to Trieste, where a special Sardinian ship, commissioned in advance by the Cardinal, awaits. After a mysterious meeting with a Turkish Pirate off the coast of Dalmatia, the ship will leave M. de Bienvenu and his entourage at the Republic of Venice. There, the party will receive orders to recover a valuable gem, known as the Constantinople Emerald, while M. de Bienvenu negotiates with the Doge (leader of the Venetian Republic). The party will soon discover that the emerald is worn as a medallion by the Doge's beautiful daughter Iona. The party will also find itself caught in the middle of the chaos of the Venetian Carnival. This should lead to a merry chase and theft.

After leaving Venice, the characters will sail to Valencia, and take a coach to Segovia. Their orders will be to travel to a strange prison, known as Torre del Diablo, to deliver a message to one of the prisoners, and receive a reply. Complications will arise when the party learns that the prisoner has gone mad, and that the prison has been paid a surprise visit by Don Zaragoza, the Inquisitor General. The party must somehow work out the mess to achieve its mission. If the adventure at Torre del Diablo is successful, the party, along with M. de Bienvenu will ride north, through the Pyrenees, and along the King's roads, back to Paris, for fresh orders and an interview with the Cardinal.

Next the Ambassador's troupe will sail to the Netherlands, to take part in the *Binnenhof Affair*. The party will be assigned to recover secret documents stolen by a Dutch double-agent. After surviving a trap set by the double-agent, the party must steal the documents back from the Dutch. Fortunately, the documents are written in invisible ink, which should buy the party some time.

Finally, M. de Bienvenu and his entourage will sail west to England, to enjoy an adventure entitled *Diplomatic Immunity*. Again, the party will be betrayed. After sending the party on a wild goose chase to an estate outside of London, the English will attempt to assassinate the player-characters, and take M. de Bienvenu prisoner. Only a timely warning will save the party. The player-characters will still be required to make their way to Dover, against a series of obstacles, in order to cross the Channel, and escape from England. If they survive, the player-characters will be well rewarded upon their return to France.

An Ambassador's Tales is designed to accommodate *Flashing Blades* characters of all backgrounds. Chronologically, it is set in the winter, spring, and summer of 1625 or 1626 (part of the period of Dumas' *Three Musketeers*). The Gamemaster may change this time setting, however, to almost any time between 1622 (the ascendance of Cardinal Richelieu) and 1661 (the death of Mazarin) at the sacrifice of some historical accuracy.

An Ambassador's Tales should provide a good challenge for a party of four to six experienced characters, or six to eight beginning characters.

THE MISSION

King Louis XIII (or Louis XIV if the campaign is set by the Game-

master in a later period) has been advised by the Cardinal Richelieu (or Mazarin) to send a diplomat on a very dangerous mission through five foreign countries, to complete various tasks and negotiations. Monsieur de Bienvenu, a trustworthy protege of the Cardinal, has been chosen to lead the mission, as the King's Ambassador. It is well known that M. de Bienvenu has often served as the Cardinal's spy in various countries.

This information will be learned by any character in the Royal Bureaucracy, or by any noble who makes regular visits to the Court. Soon after the player-characters hear about the mission, M. de Bienvenu and the Cardinal will begin recruiting and organizing the Ambassador's Entourage.

Each player-character should have some skill or position necessary to the troupe. The entourage requires guards (characters in the lower ranks of the Royal Army, as well as expert marksmen, fencing masters, etc.), military advisors (characters in the Royal Army who have attained the rank of Captain or above), priests (any characters in the Clergy), clerks (characters from the Banking profession, perhaps promising Students of Law, or Lawyers), translators (characters who know German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, or English), spies (characters with such skills as Espionage, Stealth, Forgery, Bribery, Disguise, and Fine Manipulation), and various other aides and advisors (characters from the Bureaucracy or any characters with Social Ranks of 12 or higher).

Each player-character will receive a message sealed in a red envelope, bearing both the Royal Seal and the Cardinal's insignia. Inside the envelope will be found a brief letter asking the character to join the entourage, detailing his function (i.e. guard, clerk, etc.) and requesting an interview at the Palais Royal the following morning. Most characters will be immediately interested in a position in the troupe, as the rewards are guaranteed to be great. Characters with conflicting loyalties will be assigned by their patrons or sponsors to join the expedition as double-agents. Thus, a character in the special service of a nobleman opposed to Richelieu might be ordered to join M. de Bienvenu's party as the nobleman's spy. Characters who have long been enemies of the Cardinal, and who would never be chosen by him, may be recruited into the entourage by the King, in order to keep an eye on the expedition for him. A King's Spy will not be included in the interview with the Cardinal, but may take part in the adventures, provided he sends full reports back to the King.

The full ambassadorial entourage will include eight guards, and at least one military advisor, priest, clerk, translator, and aide. Those positions not taken by player-characters will be filled by Non-Player Characters. Even if there are no player-characters suited to the position of spy, an NPC will not take the position. Thus, if the party of player-characters includes two guards, one priest, one translator, and two aides, the other positions (six guards, one military advisor, and one clerk) would be filled by NPCs. Besides M. de Bienvenu and the guards, the NPCs of the entourage are unimportant, and will not take part in the adventures of the campaign. The Gamemaster should assume that they stay in the company of M. de Bienvenu, or comfortably out of the way. None of the NPCs of the entourage will be invited to the interview with the Cardinal.

If one of the player-characters holds the rank of Royal Official or Court Minister in the Royal Bureaucracy, the Gamemaster may have him appointed to the position of King's Ambassador, rather than M. de Bienvenu. In this case, the player-character will simply play the role allotted to this NPC. If two or more player-characters are qualified for the position of Ambassador, the Gamemaster may allow them to jointly share the rank, and give them each an illustrious title ('Senior Ambassadorial Aide' or 'Royal Diplomatic Advisor,' for example).

THE INTERVIEW

The morning after they receive the letter inviting them to join M. de Bienvenu's entourage, the player-characters may attend upon the



Cardinal at the Palais Royal. After waiting for a half hour, while men of the Cardinal's Guard company check the party's papers and search for hidden weapons, the party will be admitted to a large salon. This chamber, decorated in somber black velvet drapes, overlooks the palace gardens. The room will appear empty as the party enters. In the center of the chamber is a large oak desk with various papers and documents strewn upon it. Ranged about the desk are a number of chairs equal to the number of player-characters plus one.

Characters who search the desk will discover two piles of red envelopes, sealed with the Cardinal's insignia. Each pile contains three envelopes. The envelopes bear short instructions, such as 'Open upon crossing the Austrian border,' 'Open at Trieste,' 'Open at Valencia,' etc. There is also a pile of passport documents, one for each player-character.

The Cardinal himself is hiding behind one of the black draperies, and any character who searches behind the drapes will find him. If discovered, he will laugh with a sneer, and congratulate the character on his alertness. If any character attempts to open one of the envelopes, the Cardinal will leave his hiding place to stop the character.

If the Cardinal is not discovered, and does not disclose himself, he will wait until M. de Bienvenu enters before stepping from behind his drape. M. de Bienvenu will arrive ten minutes after the party. His entrance should suitably distract the player-characters. When they look back towards the desk again, the Cardinal will be standing next to it, appearing as if by magic. Only a character with Espionage skill (or one who states that he is carefully watching the drapes) will have a chance to see the Cardinal emerge (spotting him requires a roll against Wit - 1). M. de Bienvenu will be as surprised as the player-characters by the Cardinal's sudden appearance.

Most of the player-characters will first see M. de Bienvenu. He is a thin man of medium height, impeccably dressed and groomed. He wears a large white wig and pale facial makeup, to hide a naturally swarthy complexion. He has the appearance of a man of the world.

The Cardinal is a tall and somber-looking man. Although he wears the heavy riding boots and jerkin of a cavalier, and carries a rapier at his side, he also wears the traditional red cape and skull-cap of his office. His expression is one of complete calm and mastery, and he is obviously a man who expects to be obeyed when he gives an order. He walks with a slight limp. Beneath his cape the Cardinal conceals a double-barreled, finely-made, wheellock dueling pistol. He will only use it if a character makes an attempt on his life.

After making his dramatic first appearance, the Cardinal will politely ask the player-characters and M. de Bienvenu to be seated. He will briefly determine if each character is willing to accept his position in the entourage. Any who decline will be shown out of the palace by the guards outside the chamber. The others will be given the basic itinerary of the mission.

M. de Bienvenu will be supplied with three large carriages for the transportation of the entourage. Each carriage will be drawn by six fine horses, and will accommodate up to six people. The Ambassador and his troupe will travel first, in late January to Lyon, and from there, by way

of Switzerland and along the Rhone and Rhine to the Austrian border. Once in Austria, the carriages will be met by Imperial troops and guided through the County of Tyrol and the Duchy of Carinthia to the Emperor's secret palace in the mountains north of Graz. M. de Bienvenu will spend about a week there, making very delicate negotiations with the Habsburg Emperor.

Near the end of February, the troupe will head south to Trieste, where it will meet a Sardinian ship called the *Cerea*, commissioned by other agents of the Cardinal. After a short detour, the *Cerea* will take the entourage to Venice, where M. de Bienvenu will spend the Carnival (Catholic celebration before Lent) speaking with the Doge (leader of the Republic of Venice).

Next, the party will again board the *Cerea* and sail down out of the Adriatic, past Sicily, across the Mediterranean Sea, to Valencia (in Spain). From Valencia, the entourage will travel by carriages to Segovia, where M. de Bienvenu will meet with the representatives of Spain, in the ancient castle of the Kings of Castile. If all goes well, the entourage will return, by carriage, to Paris by traveling north through Pamplona, the Pyrenees mountain range, and the French cities of Bayonne, Bordeaux, Cognac, Châtellerauld, and Orleans. By the time the party returns, it should be early to middle April.

After the completion of the first part of the diplomatic mission, the party will be given about a month to rest and recuperate. Then, in early May, the troupe will receive new orders, and set off for Holland and England.

All expenses for food, supplies, accommodations, etc. will be paid by the Crown. In addition, each member of the entourage will receive his normal pay (from the ranks and positions he holds) and additional bonus, depending upon his function in the entourage:

| Position in Entourage | Bonus Pay per Month |
|---|---------------------|
| Ambassador (for M. de Bienvenu) | +100 L/month |
| Military Advisor or Aide | +60 L/month |
| Translator, Priest or Clerk | +40 L/month |
| Guard | +20 L/month |
| Spy | +10 L/month |

Time spent on this diplomatic mission may be counted towards a character's required duty time for those in the Military or Bureaucracy (i.e. a Minor Official must spend six months a year fulfilling his duties; if this campaign lasted for 4½ months, the character would only have to spend another month and a half throughout the rest of the year to complete his requirement).

Finally, the Cardinal will confide in the party that, while M. de Bienvenu completes his negotiations and diplomatic duties, the Cardinal has made out special orders, instructions, and missions for the party as well. He will hand the party three red envelopes from his desk, each sealed with the Cardinal's insignia. The first is to be opened upon crossing the Austrian border. The second should be opened when the party reaches Trieste. The last envelope is to be opened at Valencia. The Cardinal will warn the party that it could be dangerous to open

the letters before the times specified. The party will also be given a decoder, with which to decipher the letters within the envelopes.

After giving each character a passport, signed in his own hand, the Cardinal will dismiss the party, with instructions to prepare for the coming journey. M. de Bienvenu will remain behind to discuss further details of the journey. Observant players may recall that there were two piles of envelopes on the Cardinal's desk, and may deduce that the second pile contained special instructions for M. de Bienvenu.

M. de BIENVENU

As the characters will be spending most of their time accompanying, protecting, and matching wits with him, M. de Bienvenu is the most important NPC in the campaign. His statistics are listed below:

Monsieur de Bienvenu

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Strength 11 | Hit Points: 12 |
| Dexterity 13 | Armor: |
| Endurance 12 | Padded Doublet (1 on Chest and Flank) |
| Wit 17 | Padded Sleeves (1 on Arms) |
| Charm 18 | Padded Breeches (1 on Legs) |
| Luck 16 | |
| Attacks: | |
| Rapier (Expertise 13) | Chance to Hit: 12 |
| | Chance to Parry: 11 |
| | with Cloak: 13 |
| Wheellock Pistol (Expertise 18) | Chance to Hit: 15 |

Skills:

Bargaining, Bribery (Master), Bureaucratics, Captaincy, Carousing (Master), Espionage, Etiquette (Master), Heraldry, Languages (Italian and Spanish), Oratory.

M. de Bienvenu is an inveterate and crafty diplomat. He prefers not to use violence, and would rather run than fight. When he does fight, he fences with a rapier in his right hand and a cloak as a parrying device in his left. Beneath the cloak, in his left hand, he conceals a small wheellock pistol. When a fight turns against him, he will fire the pistol (at point-blank range) upon his unsuspecting foe (use normal close range modifiers +1 to hit for surprise).

M. de Bienvenu carries three envelopes, identical to those of the player-characters, with instructions from the Cardinal. Normally, he keeps them on his person. When he sleeps, they will be under his pillow. In emergencies, he may hide them beneath the cushions inside one of the three carriages provided for the mission. M. de Bienvenu keeps his decoder (which is different from that of the party) in the lip of his

boot. At night, he leaves it inside the boot. If the characters manage to steal the letters, they will have to decode them. Even without the decoder, a character with Espionage skill may decode the instructions if he makes a successful roll against his Wit -4. The messages inside are provided (after the party's instructions) at the beginning of each section of this campaign. The seals on the envelopes must be broken to open them, and only a character with Forgery skill who makes a successful roll against Luck can reseal them. M. de Bienvenu will destroy each message after reading it.

M. de Bienvenu also carries a set of very important papers, known as the Catholic League Documents. These he keeps tied to his chest with a sash. These papers are written in invisible ink (lemon juice) and normally appear to be blank sheets of thin parchment. When placed above a flame, the writing will come out clearly. The Catholic League Documents are a set of crucial agreements between the Catholic powers of Europe, concerning the armament and protection of the Holy Roman Empire. Many additions must be made by the various nations (this is the reason for the entire mission). The Protestant powers of Europe would do almost anything to get a copy of these documents. Cardinal Richelieu plans to have M. de Bienvenu negotiate over the final changes in the documents, and then sell portions of them to the Protestant Netherlands and England. The most important portion of these secret documents is the Rhine Military Clause, which gives details on Imperial military build-ups.

EXPERIENCE AND RECOVERY

At the end of each of the five adventures of *An Ambassador's Tales*, the player-characters will collect the benefits of experience, and will have some time to recover. Recovery from wounds will take place while the entourage travels to its next destination. Use the rules in section 4.8 of the *Flashing Blades* rulebook, and assume that M. de Bienvenu will hire a physician to attend wounded characters at the end of each adventure. A character who is very seriously wounded will be sent back to France in a special carriage, to await the troupe's return to Paris. Between *Torre del Diablo* and the *Binnenhof Affair*, the party will have a month in Paris, in which to recuperate and re-supply.

Experience is handled normally (as detailed in section 6.0 of the *Flashing Blades* rules) and characters will have a chance to advance at the end of each adventure. In addition, each character may choose one new skill he wishes to learn during the campaign. This must be Espionage, Etiquette, or a Language (German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch or English). At the end of the campaign, the character will have fully developed this new skill, by learning it 'hands-on' during the adventures that make up the campaign.

Habsburg Hospitality

INTRODUCTION

After the interview with the Cardinal, M. de Bienvenu and his entourage will set out for Austria, to negotiate with the Emperor at his secret palace north of Graz. When the lengthy journey is over, the player-characters will discover that their orders are to protect M. de Bienvenu from assassination attempts. They will meet the Cardinal's contact at the palace, Peter Reinke. With his help, they will have to foil a series of fiendish murder attempts by the evil Baron Otto von Vulkan and his servant Rolf.

As *Habsburg Hospitality* is the first adventure in the campaign, it is designed to be lighter and less dangerous than the others. It should be run as a series of humorous vignettes. M. de Bienvenu should not be assassinated unless the party is very careless (this would probably end the whole campaign).

THE JOURNEY

Near the end of January, the ambassadorial troupe will set off from Paris, towards Lyon. This journey will take three days. The Game-master should roll normally for encounters, but remember that bandits

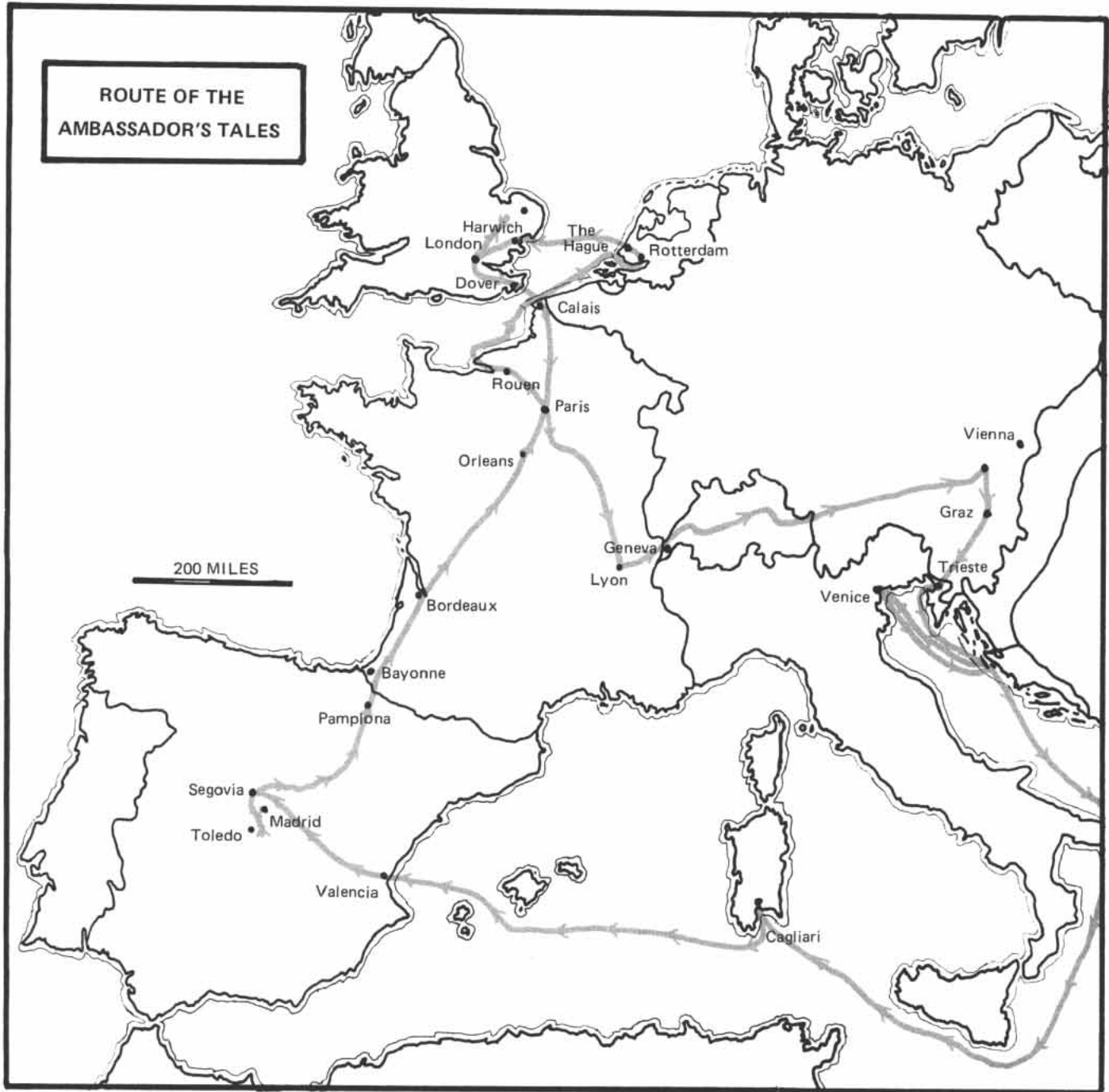
will probably not harass three large and well-guarded carriages. Upon reaching Lyon, the troupe will turn to the Swiss border. Traveling first to Geneva, the carriages will follow the Rhone and Rhine rivers for five days, until the Austrian border is reached.

Before reaching the border, M. de Bienvenu will tie a conspicuous red ribbon to each of the three carriages. This is the agreed upon sign to tell the border guards that these carriages belong to the Cardinal's emissaries. At the border the carriages will be met by a detachment of fifty Imperial Cuirassiers, who will guide and protect the troupe on the four day journey to the Emperor's palace.

On the third day of the journey to the palace, the party will sight smoke on the horizon to the north. One of the Austrian guards will explain that it is probably a sign that Bohemian Protestant Rebels have taken a town nearby. This will not affect the journey, but it should serve to make the players uneasy.

THE ENVELOPES

The first envelope should be opened and decoded when the troupe



crosses the Austrian border. The letter inside for the player-characters reads as follows:

'Messieurs,

Baron Otto von Vulkan, a powerful noble from Moravia, will be hurt by M. de Bienvenu's negotiations with the Emperor. It is highly probable that he will make several attempts on Bienvenu's life. Your orders are as follows: prevent any and all assassination attempts without attracting attention or disturbing M. de Bienvenu. A public scene would embarrass the Imperial Government and ruin negotiations. M. de Bienvenu should not be bothered unless absolutely necessary as all of his attention must be focused on his ambassadorial duties. For help in your assignment, contact Peter Reinke, one of the Palace Heralds. He is a spy in my pay. Identify yourselves to him with the code words: 'Regnum Sanctum.' Bon chance.

*By my own hand,
Richelieu*

If the party is able to somehow get ahold of M. de Bienvenu's letter and decode it (or if a player-character is taking the place of Bienvenu), it will read as follows:

'Monsieur,

Complete the negotiations with the Emperor as we have already discussed, and sign the Catholic League Documents in my name. Watch Baron Otto von Vulkan carefully, as the new clauses in the documents will greatly reduce his power, in favor of the Jesuits.

*By my own hand,
Richelieu*

ARRIVAL AT THE PALACE

M. de Bienvenu and his entourage will first sight the Emperor's secret palace as they wind up the mountain roads which lead to it. It is a powerful stone structure, bristling with towers and crenelations. M. de Bienvenu will sneer and say, quietly, that like all German 'palaces,' it looks like a fortress.

Inside, however, the palace is richly and sumptuously decorated. The entourage will be met by a large number of courtiers, and the imperial heralds. After they have been refreshed with wine and confections, the troupe will be taken to the Imperial Audience Hall, to meet the Emperor. Seated on a throne at the end of the gilded hall, he will welcome M. de Bienvenu courteously, and express his sincere hopes that the negotiations will go well. The Emperor will also an-

nounce the schedule for the proposed week-long Ambassadorial meeting:

(1) The first day (the day after the troupe arrives) will be spent negotiating the Rhine Military Clause. A large banquet will be held that evening as entertainment.

(2) The second day will be devoted to a discussion of the Bohemian Situation.

(3) The third day will be reserved for an agreement on the Jesuit Role in the Catholic League. That evening, M. de Bienvenu and his troupe will be entertained by a traditional Austrian Revel.

(4) The fourth day will be spent making the Vatican Negotiations.

(5) The fifth day will be devoted to a discussion of French military strength in Franch-Comte. In the evening, the Imperial Chamber Orchestra will entertain the troupe in the palace's fine Concert Hall.

(6) The sixth day will be spent in brief negotiations over the Mercantile Settlements Clause. Afterwards, the Ambassador and his troupe will be taken to a low slope near the palace for a Ski Trip.

(7) On the seventh day, the documents will finally be signed by the Emperor and M. de Bienvenu, and preparations will be made for the Ambassador's departure.

After the schedule has been announced, M. de Bienvenu and his troupe will be led to their Ambassadorial Quarters in one wing of the palace. The player-characters will probably start by searching the Quarters for any traps (and there is indeed one already set). A map of the suite is provided. Use the descriptions below as the key:

A) The Main Salon is a large, well-appointed room. A pair of inlaid wooden doors lead in from the hallway outside (at 'a'). Although not very strong (they could be broken through), these doors are provided with several latches and locks. In one corner of the Main Salon is a table with a set of four comfortable chairs (at 'b'). In the opposite corner stands an old heating stove (at 'c'), to provide warmth during the cold Austrian winter. A couch and chair are placed near the only window of the Main Salon (at 'd') to provide a dazzling view of the valley below the palace. Two french doors open in the middle of the window, allowing characters to pass onto the balcony (at 'e'). On the balcony is the first trap prepared by the Baron von Vulkan to assassinate M. de Bienvenu. The balcony overlooks a precipitous drop (of about sixteen meters) and the railing has been loosened. Below the railing, a handkerchief of cloth-of-gold is apparently caught. This is the bait. Any character who reaches for the handkerchief must lean upon the railing. Only a successful roll against Luck $\times \frac{1}{2}$ or Dexterity $\times \frac{1}{2}$ (player's choice, +2 for Acrobatics skill) will save a character who leans from falling. A fall from the balcony will cause three wounds (each doing 1D6 points of damage to random locations). If the handkerchief is recovered (one way or another), it will be found to have the initials O.V. on it, with a baronial coat-of-arms.

B) The Entourage Quarters are located along a hallway leading to the interior of the Ambassadorial Suite. The rooms are filled with a group of single or double beds. Each room should accommodate two or three members of the entourage. The total capacity is fourteen. If the

members of the entourage exceed this number, some of the guards will have to sleep in the Main Salon.

C) At the end of the hallway is the Ambassador's Dressing Room. The Emperor has kindly provided cabinets filled with clothes and wigs of the most recent German court fashion. On one wall of the Dressing Room is a large mirror, and a comfortable chair has been placed facing it.

D) The final room of the suite is the Ambassador's Chamber. It is decorated in the finest taste. In one corner, a desk has been provided (at 'h') covered with notes M. de Bienvenu will need for the important negotiations. The Ambassador has a large, comfortable canopy bed (at 'g').

CONTACTING REINKE

Peter Reinke, the Cardinal's spy at the Imperial Palace, will hover nearby the Ambassadorial Quarters once he has spotted the party. When the player-characters go out to find him, he will meet them in the hall, near their rooms, apparently by accident. He is a tall, blonde man, easy to recognize in his outfit as an Imperial Herald. He speaks perfect French. If the characters give the code words, 'Regnum Sanctum,' Reinke will take them to a private room to discuss their mission.

Reinke will warn the party that the Baron Otto von Vulkan (so titled for a volcanic mountain within his domain) is a clever and dangerous man. If the player-characters have the handkerchief from the balcony of the Main Salon, Reinke will be able to identify the coat-of-arms as those of von Vulkan.

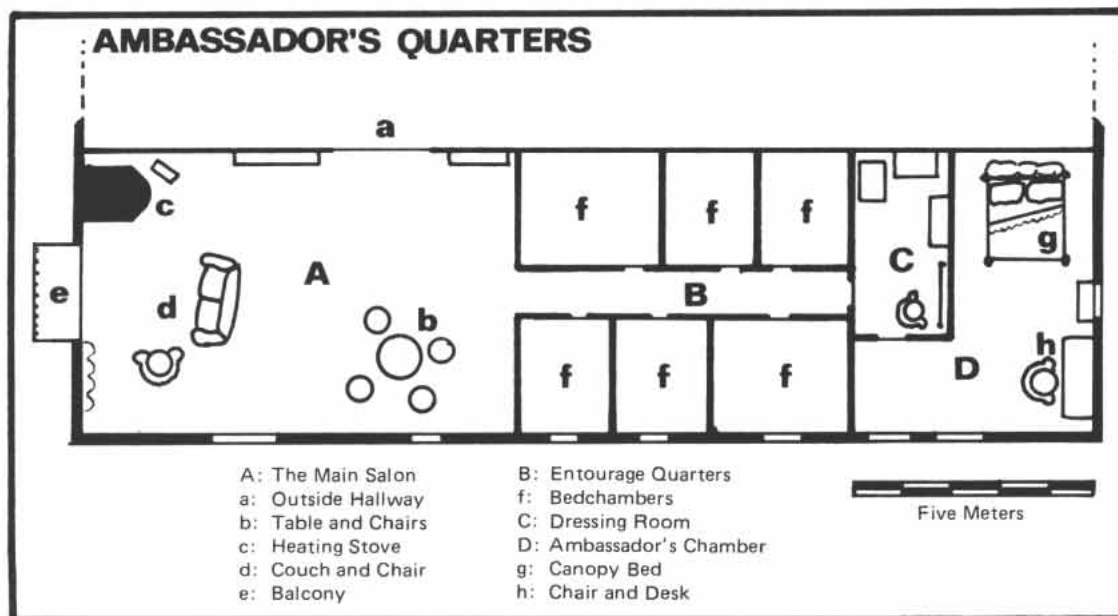
Reinke will advise the party that the assassination attempts themselves will probably be made by von Vulkan's sinister servant Rolf. Rolf was a thug, saved from the gallows by von Vulkan, and now his devoted agent. Rolf is a master of disguise and an expert with explosives. He is hard to spot, as he will nearly always wear the trappings of someone unexpected. The only identifying feature which he has trouble disguising is a finger he is missing on his right hand.

Reinke cannot do much more to help the party, except to promise to send a warning note if he notices anything suspicious.

von VULKAN and ROLF

The two enemies who the party must combat in *Habsburg Hospitality* are Baron Otto von Vulkan and his servant Rolf:

Von Vulkan is a muscular man of thirty-five years, with a harsh face. He wears his red hair quite long, and sports a mustache and goatee. His clothing is of the subdued German Catholic style. Otto von Vulkan holds territory in Moravia and has a great deal of power in the Catholic League. If M. de Bienvenu's negotiations are successful, he will lose his power to the Jesuits. He thus strongly desires to see Bienvenu meet a sticky end, before the documents are signed with the Emperor. He has made plans for seven attempts on the Ambassador's life: one for the day of arrival (the faulty railing) and one for each of the first six days of negotiation. His servant Rolf has been assigned to carry out the plans. Von Vulkan's full statistics are listed below:





Baron Otto von Vulkan

Strength 17
Dexterity 12
Endurance 16
Wit 16
Charm 9
Luck 10

Hit Points: 18

Armor:

Padded Doublet (1 on Chest and Flank)
Gauntlets & Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Boots & Breeches (2 on Legs)

Attacks:

Rapier (Expertise 18)

Chance to Hit: 15

Chance to Parry: 16
with Baton: 18

Skills:

Bribery, Captaincy, Carousing, Espionage (Master), Etiquette, Gambling, Horsemanship (Master), Strategy.

Rolf (surname unknown) is von Vulkan's servant and special agent. He was formerly a murderer, sentenced to be hanged. He was saved and trained by von Vulkan. He is now a master of disguise, and an excellent assassin. His appearance may alter radically — one day he is a tall blonde nobleman, the next a short dark-haired commoner. As earlier mentioned, his only distinguishing feature is the missing finger on his right hand (he is right-handed as well). Sometimes he attempts to hide this amputation with a false finger of wax. Careful inspection, however, will reveal the substitution (as he obviously cannot move or bend the false finger). Rolf knows all of the secret doors and passages in the palace, and may disappear quickly without a trace, when pursued. His statistics are listed below:

Rolf X

Strength 12
Dexterity 16
Endurance 12
Wit 14
Charm varies
Luck 15

Hit Points: 14

Armor:

None

Attacks:

Dagger (Expertise 18)

Chance to Hit: 14

Chance to Parry: 14

Poison Dart (Expertise 15)

Chance to Hit: 12

Skills:

Chemist (Master), Cut Purse, Disguise (Master Superior), Espion-

age, Etiquette, Fine Manipulation, Forgery, Grenadier (Master), Languages (German, French), Oratory, Stealth.

Special:

Due to his mastery of Chemistry and Grenadier skills, Rolf is considered an expert with explosives of any kind.

THE FIRST DAY

The first day after arriving, M. de Bienvenu is scheduled to discuss the Rhine Military Clause. In the meantime, von Vulkan and Rolf plan dual schemes for the evening's banquet. Rolf, disguised as a chef, will prepare a bomb within M. de Bienvenu's desert (a Bavarian chocolate cake) and will put poison in the wine of Bienvenu's bodyservant (to prepare for the second day, see below).

The party will be warned about this attempt with a note from Peter Reinke. The note will read:

'One of the pastry chefs has been taken mysteriously ill, and I suspect foul play. Be prepared for some sort of attempt on M. de Bienvenu's life at the banquet this evening.

Regnum Sanctum'

For most of the day, Rolf will be in the palace kitchens, watching over the explosive cake. He is disguised as a short, elderly chef. If the player-characters patrol the kitchens (remember, they probably don't speak German), he will quietly leave. Only a character who carefully watches the area around the pastries or deserts will have a chance of spotting Rolf as he escapes. This still requires a successful roll against Wit -2 (+3 for Espionage skill) to notice the chef with a missing finger. The characters will be unable to stop Rolf (if necessary, he will escape through some hidden passageway), but his presence should alert the party to the danger of the situation.

The party may search the kitchen before the banquet, but the chances of finding the explosive cake are slim. A small cake has been prepared for each guest at the banquet, so there are more than one hundred stacked in the pastry section of the kitchens. There will not be enough time to break open and inspect all of the cakes, and this tactic would probably anger the kitchen staff anyway. If the party can come up with a clever means of quickly testing the cakes (such as probing them with a hairpin, for instance), the Gamemaster may allow the character with the highest Luck to roll against that attribute, with a -3 modifier. If the roll is successful, the party will find the exploding cake (and will be able to remove it). Of course, the party will probably

first suspect poison (rather than explosives) and this may make the search more difficult.

If the player-characters create a disturbance in the kitchen, or if they stay there too long, obstructing the normal flow of things, the kitchen staff will call the palace guards. These burly troopers will quickly eject the party (and will not speak French). If the characters have not found the explosive cake by the time of their expulsion from the kitchen, they will have to wait until the banquet itself to get to it and defuse it.

In the evening, the courtiers and guests of the Emperor will be called to the banquet. Amid banners and fanfares, the Ambassador and his entourage will be shown to their seats at the Emperor's table in the huge banquet hall. The characters will not be able to spot Rolf, and will be told, if they ask, that Baron von Vulkan excused himself from the banquet feigning a slight indigestion.

The banquet will be a seven course affair, starting with potage, and continuing with pheasant, partridge, ham, salad, and mutton. The banquet will finish with Bavarian chocolate cake. Each course will last about fifteen minutes. While the ham is being served, the pastries will be set out at a short distance from the tables. At this point, the characters may search the pastries again. Any character who asks the servants will be told which cake is destined for the Ambassador.

The player-characters must be fairly tactful about dealing with the explosive cake and saving the Ambassador. The Bavarian chocolate cake is the Emperor's pride and joy, and any violent destruction of the pastries or ill-concealed removal might result in a bad scene. Clever characters may think of special excuses for removing the cake (e.g. saying that M. de Bienvenu has been advised by his doctor to avoid sweets, or, perhaps, that he is allergic to chocolate). Similarly, they might 'switch' cakes with him. Otherwise, some player-character with Etiquette skill must make a successful roll against Charm to avoid a scene.

If the party is discreet, it may have a chance to tamper with the chocolate cakes, either defusing the bomb or switching the Ambassador's cake with another. The explosive within the cake takes the form of a golfball-sized piece, designed to blow up when bitten into, and it is hidden in the exact center. A character with Chemistry or Grenadier skill may diffuse the bomb easily. Any other character must make a successful roll against Luck -5 (+3 for Fine Manipulation skill). Even if the bomb cannot be diffused, it may be removed without blowing up if the remover can make a successful roll against his Dexterity (+3 for Fine Manipulation or Grenadier skills). If the bomb explodes, it will do damage as a 5 point grenade. The simpler possibility (switching the cakes around) will probably result in some unfortunate Austrian minister exploding rather than the Ambassador. In this case, the party may be highly suspect, after being seen loitering about the pastry trays.

At the end of the banquet, regardless of what happens to the Ambassador and the party, M. de Bienvenu's personal body-servant (being served at one of the minor tables) will pitch violently forward into his cake, stone dead. Upon close inspection, it will be discovered that he has been poisoned. After the initial hubb has died down, the Emperor will apologize profusely to the Ambassador, assuring him that the murderer will be brought to justice, and that one of the palace stewards will serve as M. de Bienvenu's body-servant during his stay. He will add that he sincerely hopes that this unpleasant happening won't affect the delicate negotiations which occasion M. de Bienvenu's visit.

THE SECOND DAY

On the second day of his stay at the palace, M. de Bienvenu is scheduled to discuss the Bohemian Situation with the Emperor. The assassination attempt will be more subtle this time. Having seen to it that the Ambassador's body-servant is out of the way, Rolf will take his place (masquerading as a palace servant) in order to set two traps for M. de Bienvenu. As he dresses and prepares the Ambassador for his day, Rolf will leave him wearing a specially designed explosive wig and a poisoned handkerchief.

Just after dawn, a mysterious servant (Rolf in disguise) will knock on the door to the Main Salon of the Ambassador's Suite. He is dressed as a body-servant, and will identify himself as the replacement for M. de Bienvenu's previous (deceased) servant. His missing finger is covered by a false one of wax. Any player-character who looks at the servant's hands will notice the deception on a successful roll against Luck or Wit -5 (player's choice, +3 for characters with Espionage skill). If the player-characters immediately recognize him, Rolf will be forced to drop his things (including the wig and handkerchief designed as traps) and run. He will automatically escape if chased (using secret passages if necessary).

If he is not recognized, the servant will proceed into M. de Bienvenu's Dressing Room. There he will shave and dress the Ambassador

when he arises (at about 8:00 AM). He will carefully adjust the explosive wig on the Ambassador's head, and will slip the handkerchief into the Ambassador's pocket in place of his own. As he leaves the Ambassadorial Quarters, the party should have a final chance to recognize him (perhaps his wax finger will start to fall off). The party should be given some clue that he is not genuine. Again, if chased, Rolf will automatically escape.

If M. de Bienvenu is fully dressed by Rolf, it will be up to the party to spot the traps on his person. The wig is set with a tiny fuse (running up behind the length of its pig-tail) which will go off in ten minutes. It will cause damage as for a 2 point grenade (in the case of the Ambassador, this damage will be directly to the head). Anyone standing near the Ambassador may hear the fuse burning (on a successful Luck roll, +3 for Grenadier skill). It can be defused easily in a minute. If there is less time than this, the character attempting to defuse the bomb must roll against his Dexterity (+2 for Grenadier or Fine Manipulation skills) to put out the fuse in time. The inside of the wig itself is filled with gunpowder.

The handkerchief is impregnated with poison so potent that a deep sniff may result in death. Any character who looks at the handkerchief will notice that it is discolored. Any character with Chemistry or Espionage skill will be able to tell that it is poisoned. A light sniff from the handkerchief requires an Endurance roll to avoid nausea and weakness for an hour. A deep sniff requires two Endurance rolls: if neither is successful, the inhales dies; if only one is successful, the inhales suffers from nausea for an hour. M. de Bienvenu is likely to take a light sniff from his handkerchief once each day. He must make a Luck roll to avoid taking a deep sniff. If he feels ill, the Ambassador will mention it to the party. Any character with either Chemistry or Espionage skill will suspect poison, and the party will be able to trace the handkerchief in that manner. Otherwise, an exhaustive search of M. de Bienvenu's clothing and accoutrements may turn up the poisoned handkerchief.

THE THIRD DAY

On the third day, M. de Bienvenu is scheduled to speak with the Emperor about the Jesuit role in the Catholic League. In the evening, the Emperor plans to treat the Ambassador to a traditional Austrian revel. Von Vulkan has planned to have Rolf slip a poison dart down M. de Bienvenu's pipe at the revel, with dire consequences if the Ambassador inhales.

In the middle of the day, the party will receive a warning note from Peter Reinke:

*'Von Vulkan plans some trap for the revel tonight. Test everything destined for M. de Bienvenu's lips before they're reached.
Regnum Sanctum'*

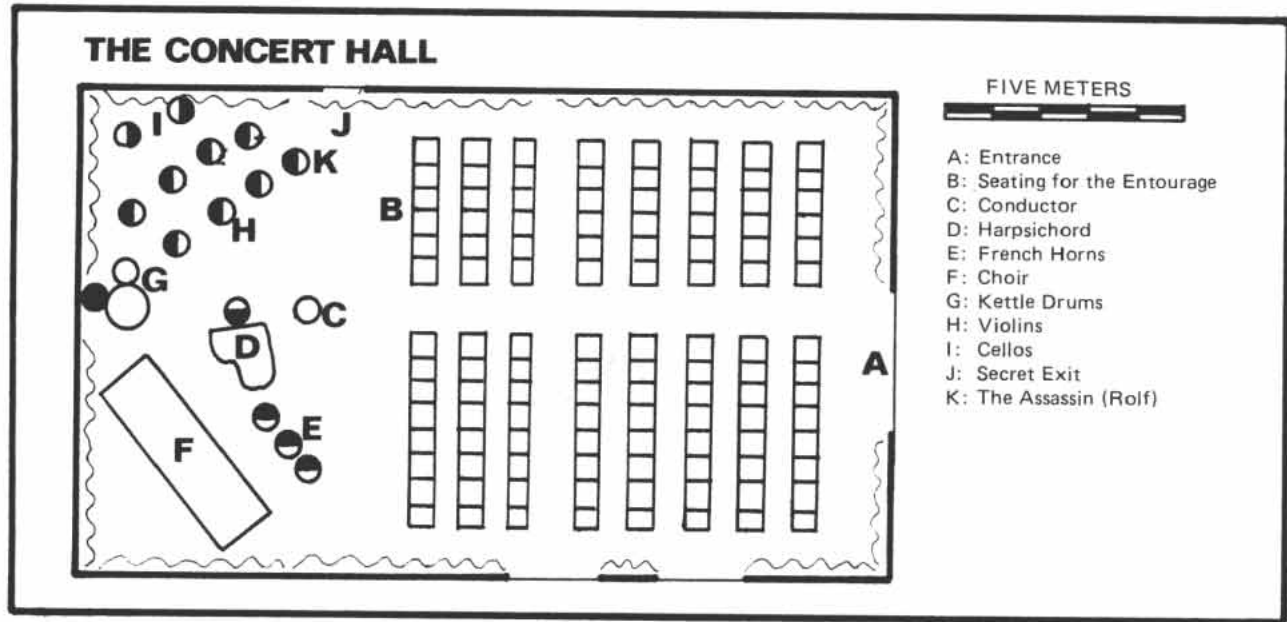
The Ambassador and his entourage will be called to the revel in the late evening, after enjoying a private dinner in their quarters. The revel will be held in the extensive beer-halls and wine cellars beneath the palace. More than two hundred courtiers will be present, and, again, the Ambassador and his entourage will be seated at the Emperor's table. Baron von Vulkan and Rolf are conspicuously absent.

The revel will commence with beer-drinking. The Emperor, eager to show M. de Bienvenu the range and diversity of Austrian and German ales and beers, will force mug after mug at him, to sample. The player-characters, if they are to test everything destined for the Ambassador's lips, must hurriedly sniff and taste from each stein as it passes. Each player-character must sample 3D6 separate beer-steins. Depending upon how much each character drinks with each sample, each may quickly be put under the table.

Next, the courtiers will join together in a series of traditional folk-dances, in the middle of the halls and on the tabletops. M. de Bienvenu (mildly inebriated) will join in wholeheartedly. In one dance, partners swing from side to side in a line, kissing members of the opposite sex on every pass. A clever (and/or paranoid) character may remember the warning again, and consider the possibility of poisoned-lips (the Gamemaster may even suggest this to a character with Espionage skill). Of course, none of the women have poisoned lips, but just worrying about it, the player-characters could get themselves into amusing situations. The party may spend the dance running from lady to lady ahead of the Ambassador, desperately testing and wiping lips! This strange behavior will probably be seen as an odd French custom by the carousing Austrians . . .

After the folk-dances, the revelers will sit down again to enjoy various German wines and sing old drinking songs. The party must again sample the drinks directed at the Ambassador (amounting to 1D6 goblets of wine per character).

Finally, with half of the revelers lying under the tables, the Emperor



and his ministers will indulge in a peaceful smoke. A pipe filled with the finest American tobacco has been prepared for M. de Bienvenu. It is in this pipe that Rolf has carefully slipped a poisoned dart. Anyone who inhales from the pipe will get the dart stuck in his throat. The dart requires an immediate Endurance roll to avoid death. Even if this roll is successful, the victim will fall unconscious for 1D6 hours and feel ill for a day. Remember that if someone suddenly slumps over at the revel, it will probably be interpreted as drunkenness and go unnoticed. The party should have time to test the pipe before it gets to M. de Bienvenu. If the pipe is tipped towards the mouth-piece, the dart will easily fall out.

THE FOURTH DAY

On the fourth day of his stay, M. de Bienvenu is scheduled to make the Vatican Negotiations with the Emperor and his ministers. On this day, von Vulkan and Rolf have prepared a deadly gift to be delivered to the Ambassador: a splendid Cuckoo Clock, designed to emit poison gas upon striking the hour.

In the morning, just after eight o'clock, a mysterious knock will be heard on the door to the Main Salon of the Ambassadorial Suite. When the characters open the door, there will be no one in sight, but a carefully wrapped gift will be found on the ground. A small perfumed letter on top reads 'With All My Affection' in French. Inside is a beautiful wooden Cuckoo Clock.

Of course, the party will suspect a trap from the start, but the problem remains: how to deal with the clock. The clock will be already running when the party finds it, and will go off at 9:00, spraying the immediate area with deadly poison gas (automatically fatal after two rounds). The mechanism is highly sensitive to tampering (any character with Fine Manipulation skill will be able to see this immediately). Chemistry skill is required to understand the full function of the trap. Any character with Fine Manipulation skill may defuse the mechanism if he can make a successful Dexterity roll. If this roll fails, however, the trap will be set off instantly. The most logical solution is to take the trap somewhere safe (i.e. outside the palace) and let it set itself off.

If the clock is simply turned over to M. de Bienvenu, he will put it up in his bedchamber, on the wall. This will almost surely kill him at 9:00.

THE FIFTH DAY

On the fifth day, M. de Bienvenu will discuss French military strength in Franche-Comte. In the evening, the Emperor has scheduled a musical performance in the palace Concert Hall. Rolf plans to show up disguised as a violinist, seated near the Ambassador. He has a specially designed violin which allows him to fire minute poison darts for a short distance. He plans to fire upon the Ambassador, and then flee through a secret passage nearby.

Late in the evening of the fifth day, after another private dinner, the Emperor will proudly escort the Ambassador and his entourage to the Imperial Concert Hall (see map). It is an impressive Gothic chamber, entered through large oaken doors (at 'A' on the map). Most of the Hall is filled with plush seating for an audience of ninety-six courtiers. The front two rows on the right side (at 'B') have been reserved for M. de Bienvenu and his troupe. The orchestra itself consists

of a conductor (at 'C'), a harpsichord player (at 'D'), three French Horns (at 'E'), a choir of eighteen (at 'F'), a set of Kettle Drums (at 'G'), seven (real) Violinists (at 'H'), two Cellos (at 'I'), and one Assassin (at 'K'). Just behind the curtain on the side of the hall (at 'J') is a secret exit, leading to a passage out of the palace.

Rolf has disguised himself as a little old violinist with thick spectacles. He is seated as close to the Ambassadorial group as possible (about three meters from M. de Bienvenu). He is wearing a wax finger, and gloves (which hide any defects of the false finger). He is a tolerable violinist, but not gifted. He has a store of twelve tiny poisoned darts, which he is adept at shooting from the strings of his violin.

The concert will begin with a French march and rondeau, in honor of the Ambassador and his entourage. Next will be a series of Austrian melodies. The concert will end with some rousing Gregorian Chants from the Choir, emphasizing the unity of Roman Catholicism. It is during this final part of the ceremony (when he doesn't have to play anymore) that Rolf will begin shooting darts.

Rolf's darts are very small, almost invisible. The poison makes them lethal, but their small size gives them very little penetration value. Normal clothing will stop the darts, so it is necessary for Rolf to hit M. de Bienvenu's face (the Head Location). All of the rest of his body is covered. Rolf hits M. de Bienvenu somewhere on a roll of 12 or less. After he hits, a roll is made for location (and only the Head location counts for anything). Rolf's first shot will automatically miss. Each shot which misses on a roll of 13 or 14, will hit one of the people sitting next to M. de Bienvenu.

M. de Bienvenu will be so engrossed in the music that he will not notice the darts unless one hits his face (and then it will be too late). Any player-character will notice a dart zinging past if he can make a successful roll against Wit/2 (+1 for Espionage skill), or, automatically if one hits him. Once the darts are noticed, the player-characters must look around to see where they come from. This requires another successful roll against Wit (no modifiers). As soon as he is noticed, Rolf will jump behind the curtain and through the secret exit before the party can stop him. If a character notices the darts, but M. de Bienvenu is hit by one before he locates the source, he may pull the dart out before the poison really gets in, on a successful Dexterity roll.

THE SIXTH DAY

On the sixth day, the final day of negotiations, M. de Bienvenu and the Emperor will spend the morning making Mercantile Settlements. In the afternoon, the Emperor has scheduled a special treat for the Ambassador and his entourage: a ski outing on the slopes surrounding the palace. Von Vulkan and Rolf will make their final desperate attempt on M. de Bienvenu's life. This time, by sabotaging his skis.

Around noon on the sixth day, only a few hours before the ski trip, the party will receive a final warning note from Peter Reinke:

'The Baron is desperate now and less careful. A man with only four fingers was just seen in the ski shed outside the palace. I suspect that he has sabotaged the Ambassador's skis. If you hurry, you can get to the shed and have them replaced. I can meet you and guide you to the shed should you need help finding it.

Regnum Sanctum'

The ski shed is a small building adjacent to the palace, used to store skis and sleds. When the party goes to investigate, it will find the shed untended: the steward in charge is asleep on a barrel at the door (probably still recovering from the revel). Upon entering, the player-characters will find a number of racks of ski equipment, marked by the various coats-of-arms of the courtiers. On a rack bearing the French Royal Emblem (the Arms of the Bourbons) are the skis to be used by the Ambassador and his entourage. They have been subtly sabotaged so as to make control very difficult. On another shelf nearby is Baron von Vulkan's coat-of-arms. His ski equipment (two sets of skis, clearly intended for male skiers) appears nearly identical to that reserved for the Ambassador. There is also an unmarked rack containing extra sets of skis nearby. This is the party's chance to get back at von Vulkan. It is a simple matter to switch the ski equipment from one shelf to another, and play the joke back on the Baron! Two sets of sabotaged skis could be placed in the Baron's rack, while extra skis could be obtained for the other members of the entourage from the unmarked rack of unassigned ski equipment.

Later in the afternoon, the Ambassador and his entourage, along with most of the court, will travel in sleighs to the ski slopes. Ski equipment will be brought from the ski shed by various palace servants. The Emperor has thoughtfully provided ski instructors for M. de Bienvenu and the party. Player-characters may spend the afternoon learning as much about skiing as they dare. Each character may make one to four rolls against Dexterity (+2 for Acrobatics skill). For each roll missed, a character suffers 1 point of general damage due to falling. A character who makes one roll successfully, learns a bit about skiing. A character who makes two successful rolls learns well, and earns an experience check on Dexterity. A character who makes three successful rolls discovers that he has natural ability, in future games he may be assumed to be a good skier. 'Shy' characters need not roll at all, if they fear injury.

Meanwhile, von Vulkan, Rolf, and some of their henchmen will climb a bluff, to watch the goings on. Expectantly, they will wait to see M. de Bienvenu and the meddlesome player-characters fall victim to their sabotaged skis. After a while, however, they will become curious when nothing happens. (Assuming the party switched skis on them) they will ski down from their bluff and go out of control. To the horror of the court (and to the amusement of the party) the Baron and Rolf will whizz uncontrollably down the slope, and off a cliff. Rolf, by luck, will fly off further down the slope, into a forest. When he realizes what has happened to von Vulkan, he will escape (perhaps to return for revenge on the party in a later game).

THE SEVENTH DAY

On the seventh day, negotiations between M. de Bienvenu and the Emperor will end. The Catholic League Documents will be signed by both parties assuming (1) that the Ambassador is still alive, and (2) that no major 'scenes' have been caused by the party, while dealing with the assassination attempts. It takes alot to constitute a 'scene.' Unavoidable events, such as the Baron's demise on faulty skis, don't count. However, if the party started a brawl at the banquet or concert, or handed one of the various explosives and poisons irresponsibly

(i.e. caused and accidental death), the negotiations will be disturbed. If the party's actions constitute serious crimes, some, or all of the player-characters may be arrested and held in the palace dungeons. Such characters may be scheduled for executions, or used as political bargaining chips in the Emperor's future dealings with the Cardinal. They may also be interrogated for information. If this happens, the Gamemaster may have the Cardinal organize another party to attempt a rescue.

If M. de Bienvenu is successfully murdered by the Baron and Rolf, the campaign will probably end. The documents will go unsigned, and the player-characters may even be held by the Emperor as scapegoats for the Ambassador's death. Alternatively, at the Gamemaster's option, a message will arrive from the Cardinal promoting one of the player-characters (the one with the best diplomatic qualifications) to M. de Bienvenu's position. If this happens, the 'lucky' character will get a copy of the Ambassador's code and orders, and must finish up negotiations with the Emperor. The rest of the campaign will continue normally, with the player-character taking on the duties of M. de Bienvenu.

If M. de Bienvenu is not assassinated, but the negotiations fail due to the antics of the party, the campaign will continue normally to the next adventure. The player-characters will probably be in the 'doghouse' with the Cardinal and M. de Bienvenu, however, and really disruptive characters may even be dismissed.

REWARDS

The player-characters will only receive rewards from *Habsburg Hospitality* if they manage to save M. de Bienvenu without disturbing the negotiations. If this is the case, they will be summoned quietly on the morning of their departure, to one of the Emperor's private salons. Once inside, the Imperial Chamberlain, one of the Emperor's most trusted ministers, will meet the party and address it so:

'Gentlemen, the Emperor is not unaware of the great service you have done him this week, by protecting the life of the Cardinal's Ambassador. He has therefore decreed that each of you should be given an honorary knighthood in the Order of the Golden Fleece. It is my duty to bestow upon you this great honor.'

With this, the Chamberlain will present a golden medallion, bearing the imprint of a ram and the Austrian Habsburg arms, to each player-character. This does not make all of the player-characters knights. It is an honorary decoration, only recognized in German Catholic areas. Within the confines of the Emperor's domain, Knights of the Golden Fleece will be recognized as Social Rank 9, and will be allowed to use one Social Rank 9 favor. In France, Knighthood in the Order of the Golden Fleece will raise a character's Social Rank by 1, up to Social Rank 9. Any character whose Social Rank is already 9 or more receives no benefit in France. Remember that there are places (including most of the Protestant countries of Europe) where Knighthood in an Order of the Holy Roman Empire or Austria could be a dangerous position. For those rogues so crass, the medallion may be melted down into 120 Livres worth of gold.

The Constantinople Emerald

INTRODUCTION

Following M. de Bienvenu's negotiations with the Habsburg Emperor, the Ambassador and his entourage will take their carriages and travel south to Trieste. There, they will open their envelopes from the Cardinal. After meeting the *Cerea* at the port, the troupe will sail on it to a little island off the Dalmatian coast where M. de Bienvenu will hold a secret conference with Alsalah, the infamous Turkish pirate.

Alsalah, in a previous agreement with the Cardinal, has agreed to reveal complete documents on the military strength of the Ottoman Empire to the Cardinal's agent, in return for a precious national treasure: the Constantinople Emerald. Although they may not know its significance, the characters will discover that their orders are to recover (by whatever means) the Emerald for M. de Bienvenu (who will then pass it on to Alsalah).

After meeting the Cardinal's special contact in Venice, Senator Grimani, the player-characters will learn the location of the gem: it is kept as a medallion around the neck of the Doge's beautiful daughter, Iona. Her fanatic Swiss guards, compounded by the chaos and confusion of the Venetian Carnival, should make it a difficult task to steal the gem.

THE JOURNEY

Leaving the Emperor's secret palace amidst fanfares, the Ambassador and his entourage will journey south, first to Graz, and then on to Trieste. The total travel time will be three days. The Gamemaster need not roll for encounters — M. de Bienvenu and the party will be well protected by a mounted escort.

Once at Trieste, the group will meet the *Cerea*, a small Sardinian ship specially commissioned by the Cardinal. The crew will take one day preparing for the voyage. During this time, M. de Bienvenu and the party will have a chance to open their respective envelopes and receive their new orders.

THE ENVELOPES

The party's second envelope (marked 'Open at Trieste') contains the following message:

'Messieurs,

After leaving Trieste, M. de Bienvenu will take a short detour from his route to Venice. You are to ask no questions about this side-trip or the meeting which concludes it. The less you know, the safer you will be.

Next you will travel to the Republic of Venice. Your mission is to find and seize a precious gem, known as the Constantinople Emerald. It is of special political importance, known to M. de Bienvenu. You may receive assistance in Venice from my contact there, Senator Grimani. Identify yourselves to him with the code words 'Pax Tibi Marce Evangelista Meus.'

*By my own hand,
Richelieu'*

Any character with History skill who can make a successful roll against Wit (+2) will remember the basic history of the Constantinople Emerald. It was a large, perfect gem, taken by the Venetians from the Turks in the fourth Crusade. It still holds significance for various Turkish officials, and has led to some bad blood between them and the Republic of Venice.

M. de Bienvenu's second envelope (should the party have access to it) reads:

'Monsieur,

Take the Cerea and meet Alsalah on the specified isle. The crew has been informed of the destination, but not the purpose of your journey. Sign the agreement in my name, and accept from Alsalah the first half of the Ottoman Empire military papers. Then proceed to Venice.

First, send Alsalah's information to me immediately by secret courier. Second, begin bargaining with the Doge over the release of the specifics of the Catholic League Documents. This is your 'official' reason for visiting Venice. It is a cover for the mission of the special members of your entourage: to locate and purloin the Constantinople Emerald. Use the Catholic League documents as a diversion. Settle for any sum over 10,000 Livres, once you have secured the Emerald. Send half to my bankers in Rome, and keep the other half for yourself. Return to the island and give the gem to Alsalah in return for the second half of his information.

*By my own hand,
Richelieu'*

THE CLANDESTINE MEETING

On the fifth day after leaving the Emperor's palace, the Ambassador and the party will leave Trieste, heading south aboard the *Cerea*. In another day, the *Cerea* will reach her destination, a small uninhabitable island on the Dalmatian coast. There, she will drop anchor and wait.

The next day, around noon, the crew will sight ships on the horizon. As they come nearer, it will become apparent that they are sleek Turkish galleys. This will terrify the crew, but M. de Bienvenu will remain calm. As the galleys close upon the *Cerea*, the player-characters will see the hordes of eastern pirates lining their decks.

Finally, the lead galley will pull alongside the *Cerea*, and a grizzled Turkish cutthroat wearing an enormous white turban will jump aboard. He and M. de Bienvenu will slip below decks, to the Ambassador's cabin, leaving a squad of pirate henchmen on deck to keep an eye on the crew and party. The player-characters cannot help but guess that this pirate leader is the dread Turk Alsalah, whose inhuman deeds are the talk of Paris.

After nearly an hour, M. de Bienvenu and Alsalah will come on deck again. With a mocking French salute, and a toothy grin, Alsalah and his men will jump back to their galleys and depart as quickly as they arrived. M. de Bienvenu will give orders to the crew to sail for Venice. He will answer no questions about the strange conference.

ARRIVAL IN VENICE

Another journey of a day will bring the troupe to the Lagoon of Venice, that beautiful city on the water, at the end of February, right at the beginning of Carnival (Catholic celebration before Lent). The *Cerea* will be met by a Venetian pilot who will steer the Sardinian ship through the treacherous shallows of the Lagoon to dock at the island city of Venice. There, a special ferry, manned by guards from the Doge's Palace will meet the Ambassador and his entourage and take them to the Piazza San Marco. While traveling down the Grand Canal, the party will see preparations for the Carnival going on everywhere. Platforms and stages are being erected, decorations hung out, and all over are people already in masks and costumes.

The ferry will dock in the Bacino di San Marco, by the Piazza San Marco and the regal Doge's Palace. The palace guards will escort M. de Bienvenu and the party through the grand court to a large reception



hall, where they will be received by the Doge himself and several members of the Senate. Among the Senators announced will be Signor Grimani, the Cardinal's spy. As the people at the reception mix, the player-characters will have many chances to approach Grimani and whisper the code words. When he hears these, Grimani will hand the character a note, which reads: *'Meet me in my chambers in the Palace after the Reception.'*

The Doge is a stern, elderly man, not given to compliments or flattery. He is obviously pleased, however, at the Ambassador's visit. He will personally welcome each member of the entourage, and wish him a good time at the Carnival. M. de Bienvenu will be given a suite of princely apartments for his comfort in the Doge's palace. Rooms have been found at an inn adjacent to the Procuratie, north of the Piazza San Marco, for the Ambassador's entourage. Two servants or guards may stay with the Ambassador, but the rest of the party must stay at the inn.

Near the end of the Reception, the characters may notice a beautiful figure come out onto a balcony above the reception chamber (roll Luck -2 to notice). This stunning young woman of twenty, with golden hair but dark eyes, will look briefly around the chamber. If one of the male player-characters has a Charm of 15 or more, she may look at him for a moment. Any character who looks at her intently may notice (on a successful Wit roll) that she wears a large green gem around her neck like a medallion. After a moment, the Doge will notice the girl, and give her a stern look. At the same time, an old woman, probably the young woman's nurse or governess, will usher her back from the balcony. Later inquiry will reveal that this young woman is indeed Iona, the Doge's daughter. Any male character with the secret 'Don Juan' must make a roll against Luck after seeing her. If this roll is unsuccessful, he will immediately fall in love.

SENATOR GRIMANI

After the reception, the party may sneak through the palace to the chambers of Senator Grimani. They will be admitted by a servant, and shown into a library room, where the Senator awaits. The Senator is a thin man with an aging, clever face. As the party enters, it will discover him inspecting a large globe. Looking up with an enigmatic expression, he will motion the characters to seat themselves, and say, in good French: *'So gentlemen, what is your mission?'*

When told that the party must find and take the Constantinople

Emerald, he will inform them of what they may already suspect: the famous gem is kept as a medallion by the Doge's daughter, Iona. She wears it almost all of the time. The theft will be very difficult, the Senator will muse, as the princess is rarely seen in public. The confusion of the Carnival season, however, may make the robbery and get-away easier. The Senator will brief the characters on everything he knows about the Doge's daughter.

Iona is the Doge's only child, and her mother died in giving birth. The Doge is very protective of her; partly because it is in his nature, and partly because he plans to wed her one day to the young Prince of Napoli. Iona apparently is not pleased with the proposal, but cannot resist her father's will. He has had her kept at the palace of her mother's family (the Donas) under the strict surveillance of Signora Mantegna, her governess. She is also closely guarded by a group of special Swiss mercenaries hired by the Doge. These mercenaries (who also guard the Doge himself) are called the 'Lion's Claws,' in reference to the Lion of St. Mark, and are fifty in number. Twelve are always stationed at the Dona Palace, and four attend Iona wherever she goes. The Senator will mention that Iona may have more freedom during the Carnival, but she will still be accompanied by the Lion's Claws (all in costume, of course).

Senator Grimani can provide a number of items to help the player-characters with their mission. First, he will give them a map of the area around San Marco, with the Doge's Palace, the Dona Palace, and several other major landmarks shown (see the map in the text). It will allow the party to find its way around the maze of canals and streets.

Second, the Senator has a collection of varied costumes for the player-characters to wear during Carnival, so they can blend into the crowds. These include a Moorish Sultan costume, a lion, a devil, a Harlequin, an ape, a Grim Reaper, and a Pirate. If there are not enough costumes, or if some characters would rather be more anonymous, Grimani also has simple domino and drinking masks (common all over the city during Carnival). The Senator has various fabrics and materials as well, and any character with Disguise skill may custom design his own costume.

Third, the Senator will lend the player-characters his two private gondolas (with room for up to four people in each). These will be useful for getting around the city, and, as they bear the Grimani coat-of-arms, they are unlikely to be stolen or vandalized when left untended.

THE DOGE'S PALACE

To understand the Doge's Palace in Venice, it must be understood that Venice was a Constitutional Monarchy in which the Doge was an elected Monarch, elected by a council of the nobles of the Republic for a lifetime term of office. The Palace was both a residence for the Doge and his family, and an administrative center for the Venetian government. The family of the Doge would also continue to own their own family palace elsewhere in the city.

The following is an explanation of the various areas of the palace. The ground floor was simply a *broglia*, or area open to merchants and the public. It was not a formal part of the Venetian government edifice. The same is true of the courtyard between the two *loggias* or wings of the palace. The sections of interest here in terms of the Doge's quarters and governmental areas is confined to the second and third floors.

The second floor included the Doge's apartments (at O on the diagram) which ended at the *Scala de Oro*, a set of staircases leading down to the ground floor and up to the third floor.

A similar set of staircases, the *Scala dei Censori*, was that used by the various government officials using the building (at K on the diagram of both floors).

The significant areas for governmental use on this floor included the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio* or meeting chamber for the lower house of the Venetian government. For centuries this house was only open to those of noble blood (pure bloodlines on both sides of their families), though patents of nobility began to be purchased in the seventeenth century. The primary function of this body was the constant election of members to serve in other governmental committees and to higher offices. The chamber was also used, on occasion, for the formal banquets to entertain visiting royalty.

The *Sala Quarantia Civil Nuova* (at M on the diagram) was a court of civil appeal reserved for Venetian citizens from the mainland (not actual residents of the city).

The *Sala dello Scrutinio* (at N on the diagram) was the chamber reserved for deliberations and voting in the complex election procedure entailed in the election of a new Doge. It appears that this process was similar in duration and complexity to the election of a Pope.

The stairway from the *Sala dello Scrutinio* simply leads down to the ground floor.

Most government officials or guests would use the *Scala dei Censori* to reach the third floor (at K). To the right of the stairway, and down an additional short stair, are the various rooms that compose the ar-

chive. To the left of the stairway is the *Sala della Bussola* (at H on the diagram), where those summoned by the Council of Ten waited to be summoned into the *Consiglio dei Dieci*. The Council of Ten met and deliberated in the *Consiglio dei Dieci* (at G on the diagram). Their function was to discuss matters of extreme importance, often of a secret nature. This council had powers usurped from the Senate and, due to their secret meetings, appeared far more sinister and were often feared. While the Senate debated routine matters of state, emergency matters were secretly dealt with by the Council of Ten (whose very members attended meetings masked and whose identities were secret).

The *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci* (at I) was a meeting room for the three magistrates elected from the Council of Ten to read letters and accusations and decide when meetings should be called. To the right of this room is the *Inquisitori*, where two members of the Council of Ten and one ducal councillor investigated cases of treason. The stairs from here lead to the prison and torture chambers below the palace.

To the left of these Council chambers, and just beyond the *Scala d'Oro* (at A) is the *Anticollegio* (at B on the diagram), an antechamber leading into the *Sala de Collegio* (at C). This is where the Doge met with his twenty-five cabinet executive council, elected from the Great Council. Here, ambassadors were formally met (after having to climb several flights of stairs on the *Scala d'Oro*, probably to remind them of their relative importance to the Doge and the Republic).

From the *Sala de Collegio* one would enter the *Sala del Senato* (at D on the diagram), where the upper house of the Venetian government met and discussed matters of state. The Senate was made up of the Doge and his cabinet advisors, plus some two hundred senators, who were elected from amongst the members of Great Council or lower house of government. This remained an influential body, though many of its functions had been taken over by the Council of Ten by the Seventeenth Century.

Past the *Sala del Senato* are the Chapel and Ante-chapel for those who wished religious inspiration.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that the Doge had only limited power in presiding over the various councils. He was required to act upon the decisions of the Great Council and any other councils they might elect (from the Senate to the Council of Ten). Thus, any meetings with the Doge would also involve his *collegio*, the real power behind the Doge as representatives of the various councils.



Finally, the Senator will instruct a Venetian pilot in his secret employ to remain aboard the *Cerea* in case the party should be forced to leave Venice hurriedly. In this manner, the Ambassador and his entourage will be able to pass through the dangerous waters that surround the island city and escape to the open sea.

TRAVELING THROUGH THE CITY

The party has arrived just as the revels of Carnival are beginning, so travel by any means through the city will be slow. The streets are crowded with people, and the canals are busy with gondola traffic. During the day, a character can walk through the maze of streets at a rate of one and a half squares on the map (48 meters) per minute. A gondola can wend down the canals at a rate of three squares per minute (96 meters).

At night, the city will be transformed. The streets and canals will be so congested with revelers, entertainers and thieves, that passage will be all but impossible. At every palace marked on the map (with the exception of the Dona palace), a ball or fete will rage. At night a character can walk at a rate of one square (32 meters) per minute. A gondola can move at a rate of two squares (64m) per minute.

When traveling through Venice, characters must roll for encounters. Encounters are split into those met on the streets (blank squares on the map), by the bridges, and in the numerous piazzas (squares next to a church or palace count as piazzas).

During the day, characters must roll a D6 for encounters whenever they come to a piazza or bridge. A roll of 5 or 6 indicates an encounter in a piazza, and a roll of 6 means an encounter on a bridge. Gondolas roll only for bridge encounters.

At night, walking characters must roll for an encounter for each square they move through. A roll of 6 in the streets, 4, 5, or 6 at a piazza, or 5 or 6 at a bridge indicates an encounter. Gondolas only roll for encounters at bridges.

Once an encounter occurs, roll a D6 on the appropriate table below to determine its exact nature:

ENCOUNTERS IN A PIAZZA

Roll Encounter

- 1 Acrobats: a group of Turkish acrobats are busy forming human pyramids and doing various tricks. A thick crowd has gathered, and will delay the player-characters for two minutes.
- 2 Dancing: a small band made up of violins, cellos, fifes and drums have started playing in the piazza, and revelers have come to dance. Everywhere, people in strange costumes whirl by. The dancers will delay the party for one minute.
- 3 Bear-Baiting: some entertainers and revelers are engaging in the popular local sport of bear-baiting. A large bear is chained to a pole, with only a meter of slack. The people gathered around allow dogs on leashes to run up and worry the bear. Eventually, of course, the dogs will kill the bear, but in the meantime, a man with sticks goes about releasing bitten dogs from the bear's jaws. The crowd that has gathered to watch this spectacle will delay the party for two minutes.
- 4 Marionette Theatre: a platform and miniature theatre have been set up in the middle of the piazza, and a Punch-and-Judy marionette show is going on. Getting through the audience will delay the party for a minute.
- 5 Fireworks Show: a group of locals are selling and setting off fireworks in the piazza. If the player-characters want to buy some (perhaps for diversions later on, or just for fun), three rockets may be purchased for the equivalent of 1 Livre, and a Roman Candle may be bought for a sou.
- 6 The 'Cuccagna': another typically Venetian sport is being played by locals around the piazza. A pair of plump ducks have been tied to the top of a greased pole. Men stripped down to their undergarments are attempting to climb the pole to bring down the prize. The crowd which has gathered around to watch will delay the party for a minute. An extremely unlucky character (ne who misses a roll against his Luck +5) will be grabbed by the crowd, stripped, and forced to join in the sport.

ENCOUNTERS ON A BRIDGE

Roll Encounter

- 1 Gondolas: the area beneath the bridge is congested with gondolas. This has no effect on the characters crossing the bridge, but characters traveling by gondola will be delayed for three minutes.
- 2 Mysterious People: two or three mysterious people pass in a gondola. They are dressed in full costume, and they appear to be staring at the party as they pass. In reality, these people

have no effect on the game, but their behavior may make the party nervous.

- 3 Catch the Duck: some Venetians are playing a popular Carnival game on the bridge. A duck is being dangled from two ropes about three meters from the bridge, and slightly above it. Men are jumping off the bridge, in an attempt to grab the duck before falling into the water. This little game will delay characters on foot and characters in gondolas for three minutes. Unlucky characters walking across the bridge (those who miss a roll against Luck +5) will be grabbed by the fun-loving crowd and thrown off the bridge, at the duck.
- 4 Gondola Race: 1D6 + 2 gondolas have gathered under the bridge for a race around the 'block.' If the party is in a gondola, they may join in. The prize is the equivalent of 50 Livres.
- 5 Procession: an eerie procession of people costumed in white, with domino masks and candles passes on the bridge. Characters on foot will be delayed for a minute.
- 6 Lady in a Gondola: a beautiful lady, wearing a domino mask, passes in a gondola beneath the bridge. If she passes the party in its gondola, she will subtly drop a rose in it as she goes by. This lady is the wife of the powerful Don Mosto (a feared bandit leader). If she is followed or accosted, the party may have to deal with a group of thugs sent by the jealous husband.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE STREETS

Roll Encounter

- 1 Conjuror: a magician has started his act on the side of the street, and a small crowd has gathered to watch. The resulting jam up will delay the party for one minute.
- 2 Dancing: dancers have spilled out from the surrounding taverns and palaces to dance in the street. There is music and mayhem everywhere, and passing characters will be delayed for two minutes.
- 3 Cutpurses: a gang of 1D6 + 1 cutpurses are working this street. Each player-character must make a successful roll against Luck or become one of their victims. They're not terribly skillful, but given the crowding of the streets, it would be difficult for a character to chase them.
- 4 Mysterious People: two or three mysterious people in full costumes pass the party, and are gone before it can act. They appear to stare at the party as they go by. They have no real game purpose, but may unnerve the player-characters. Aware characters may just realize that there are 'costume watchers' traveling the streets and enjoying watching the crowds.
- 5 Cats: the characters find themselves walking along a totally deserted side-street, inhabited only by a gang of 3D6 cats. As the characters turn the corner, they will notice numerous little eyes staring at them out of the shadows. Of course, the cats are harmless and if the characters continue through the side-street, they will save one minute of travel time (due to the lack of crowds).
- 6 Procession: an eerie procession of people costumed in white with domino masks and candles passes down the street. There are so many of them that everyone else must step aside. This will delay the party for one minute.

STRATEGIES

The party may adopt one of many different strategies to get the Constantinople Emerald from Princess Iona. The most obvious possible strategy would be to find her outside of her palace, do away with her guards, and steal the gem. This would also be the most dangerous. During the Carnival, Iona only goes out at night. She is accompanied by four guards and trailed at a distance by Signora Mantegna (her governess) and four more guards. What's more, if Iona and her guards are attacked in the street, local Venetians are liable to come to their aid.

A better tactic might be a diversion and a subtle theft. The diversion would have to be sufficient to allow a character with Cut Purse or Fine Manipulation skill to get close to Iona, and past her guards. A roll against Dexterity (with a -3 modifier; +2 if the character has both Fine Manipulation and Cut Purse skills) would be required to quickly remove the medallion, and a roll against Luck to avoid being noticed. A typical diversion might be fireworks, aimed low to distract the guards. A clever means of snatching the Emerald might be a character hidden on the side of a canal, swimming up behind the Princess in her gondola.

The party might choose to break into the Dona Palace, to surprise the Princess and quickly steal the gem. This would be a serious mistake. The palace is immense, and well guarded. Besides the twelve Lion's Claws stationed there as guards, there are twenty family butlers, stew-

VENICE

O LESSER PALACE

C CHURCH

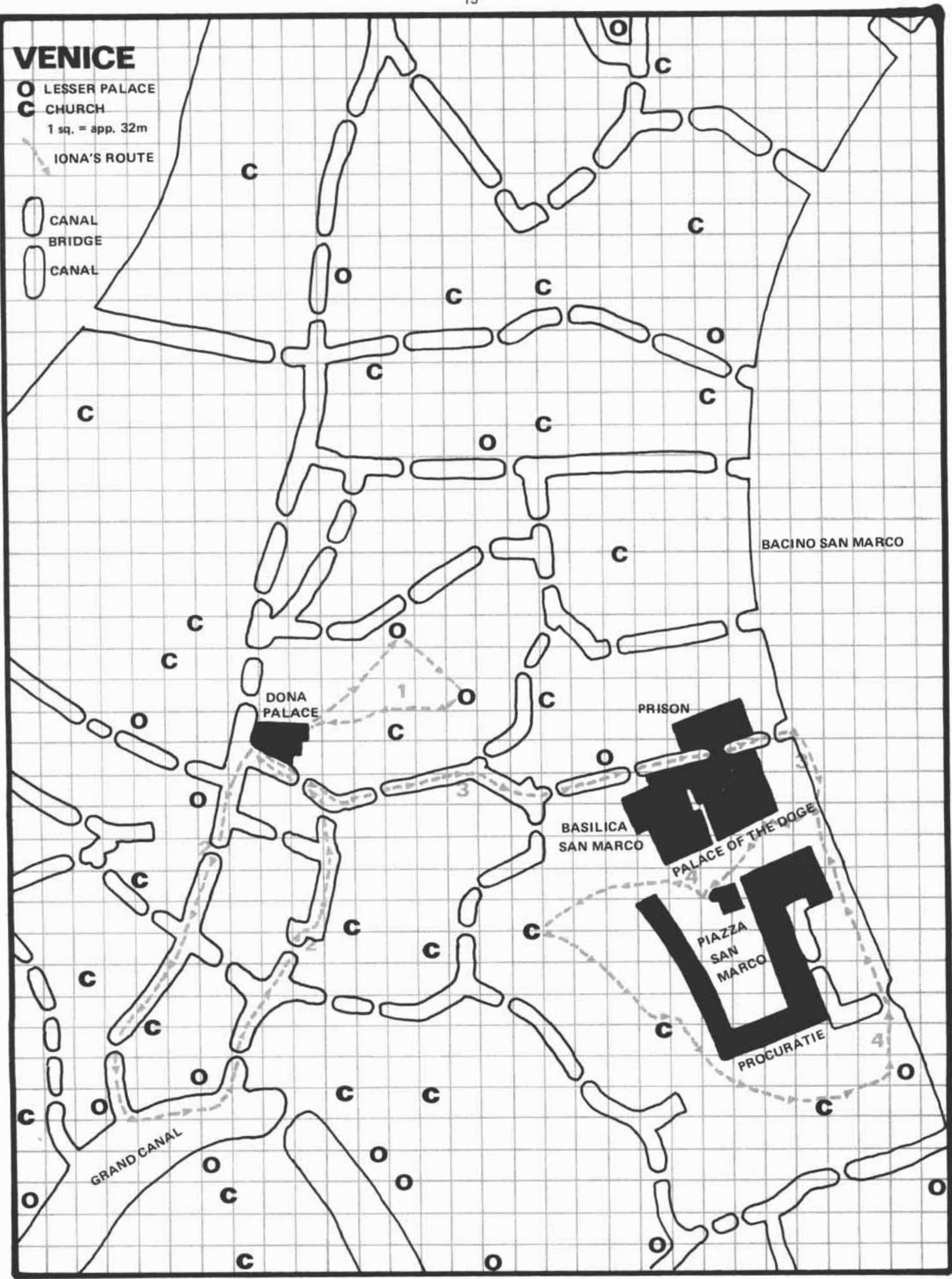
1 sq. = app. 32m

IONA'S ROUTE

CANAL

BRIDGE

CANAL



ards, and gondoliers inside. Assuming the player-characters could find their way safely through the maze of salons and sitting rooms, they would still have to pass through Signora Mantegna's chamber before entering Iona's. The Gamemaster should try to scare the party away from raiding the palace at first, by having them skirmish with the Lion's Claws and some household staff. If the players persist, however, they should get what they deserve. Once the alarm is raised in the Dona Palace, a squad of twenty city guards (armed and armored as fusiliers) will be sent to investigate. It should be difficult for the party to escape the ensuing fight and chase.

The most subtle strategy of all could be romance. A character who was noticed by the Princess at the reception (when she appeared on the balcony) or one who fell in love with her at that time, may think of this course of action. The seductive character must have a Charm of 15 or more, and Seduction and Etiquette skills, or he doesn't have a chance. A character who meets these requirements may be able to capture the Princess's heart if he can manage to get a message to her or speak to her privately. Once the Princess and the character get in touch, he must roll against his Charm and Luck. If both are successful, Iona will take a serious interest in the character. If both rolls are unsuccessful, or if a character who does not meet the requirements makes an attempt for the Princess's affections, the would-be Romeo must make another roll against Luck or Iona will inform Signora Mantegna and her guards about him.

If his overtures are successful, a character might be able to convince Iona to give up the Emerald. Even enamored, the Princess isn't dumb, and she won't just hand the gem over. She may try to convince the player-character to help her escape Venice, and elope. In this case, the character will really be risking the Doge's wrath.

No matter what strategy the party chooses, it must recover the gem within a week. This is the longest period of time that M. de Bienvenu will be able to stall the Doge with negotiations for the sale of the Catholic League documents. After a week, the Doge will start to suspect something, and the Ambassador and his entourage will be forced to flee.

THE ITALIAN JEWELER

Should the characters wish to 'cover their tracks' by substituting a forged copy of the Constantinople Emerald to delay discovery of their theft, some means of having a forgery produced is required. Any character who asks Senator Grimani, or who is a Rogue and uses his knowledge of the 'streets' will be able to learn of Signor Argenti, a Florentine jeweler and merchant. Signor Argenti is known to be willing to take on unusual jobs where secrecy is important for fees that reflect the nature of his work. He also makes fine jewelry for the wealthy families of Venice and openly maintains a fine shop in the expensive district around San Marco.

Characters approaching Signor Argenti will find him to be a robust man of about fifty years of age. The jeweler speaks fluent French and will respond immediately to any tentative suggestions regarding secrecy and speed of manufacture. He will, of course, quickly imply that price necessarily reflects speed and the hidden nature of the work to be done. Signor Argenti is a willing accomplice with experience in this kind of work, especially in the intrigue and plot-filled environment of Venice. He will be easy to deal with and will only be firm in his demand for 1000 Livres for the production of a wax forgery of the Constantinople Emerald and its medallion chain setting. The final product, he promises, will be an accurate copy as all jewelers are quite familiar with the appearance of the gem. In fact, Argenti himself repaired the clasp to the chain of the gem a year or so earlier and is positive his forgery would not be detected unless closely examined by someone with a deep knowledge or familiarity with gems or this Emerald in particular.

A loan of 1000 Livres can be arranged through Senator Grimani and it will be treated as 'expense money' and repaid by the Cardinal. The Senator will expect his payment, with interest, to come direct from Paris and he will be most cooperative in this matter. Similarly, characters with Banking skills may be able to negotiate loans with the Venetian branches of Italian banks that have offices in Paris. Such loans would be easy to arrange for Bankers, and they would be sure that the Cardinal would repay the loan to the Parisian branch of the same bank.

Bank loans would take a day or two to negotiate, while Senator Grimani could provide the funds to the player-characters within one day. The work in producing the forged Constantinople Emerald will take three days — though Signor Argenti could be convinced to finish the work in two days at a 50% bonus over his required fee (1500 L).

THE LION'S CLAWS

The Lion's Claws are the Swiss mercenaries employed by the Doge as his personal guards. The Lion's Claws consist of fifty well-trained

and well-armed soldiers. Twelve are permanently stationed at the Dona Palace to guard Iona. When Iona goes out, she is accompanied by four of these guards. Another four follow at a discreet distance. Outside of the palace, the Lion's Claws dress in monochrome costumes with domino masks (i.e. a single soldier might wear red boots, red breeches, a red cuirass, red gauntlets, etc., and another might wear all green). Although this makes them look rather snappy, it also makes them highly visible in a crowd.

The statistics for the soldiers in the Lion's Claws are shown below:

The Lion's Claws

Strength 14
Dexterity 15
Endurance 15
Wit 13
Charm 12
Luck 12

Hit Points: 14

Armor:

Cuirass (3 on Chest and Flank)
Gauntlets & Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Boots & Breeches (2 on Legs)

Attacks:

Longsword (Expertise 15)

Chance to Hit: 13

Chance to Parry: 13

Wheellock Carbine (Exp. 13)

Chance to Hit: 11

Skills:

Acrobatics, Carousing, Espionage, Horsemanship, Languages (German, French, and Italian), Stealth, Tracking.

The Lion's Claws have access to three gondolas at the Dona Palace. If necessary, they will chase the party through the canals in them.

IONA'S SCHEDULE

It will probably be necessary for the party follow the daughter of the Doge, in order to get the Emerald, one way or another. Iona's days during the Carnival are scheduled in the following way:

Iona stays inside the palace, under the careful eye of Signora Mantegna, during the day. Her father has given her permission to tour the city in the evening, with her four guards as chaperones.

At 7:00 PM the Princess will leave the Dona Palace on foot, to visit the fetes at the two other palaces on her 'block.' At each, she will go in and watch the dancing, but won't participate.

At 8:30 the Princess will return to the Dona Palace to put on her costume. Dressed as an angel, she will emerge again at 9:00, and get into her gondola. She will then go for a leisurely trip to the Grand Canal and back. She will return at 9:30 to go back inside the Dona Palace and freshen her costume.

At 10:00 the Princess will board her gondola again, and take it down to the Bacino di San Marco. There she will disembark, and go inside the Doge's Palace to have dinner with her father.

At 11:00 the Princess will leave the Palace of the Doge to enjoy a stroll around the San Marco area, visiting each of the five piazzas on the 'block.' After about an hour of walking, she will return to her gondola.

At 12:00 the Princess will start to tour the map area in her gondola. She does this primarily to look at the costumes of the revelers. This is a good time for a player-character to catch the Princess's attention by wearing an interesting costume (or perhaps by leaning off a bridge on her route). The Princess changes her canal route each night for variety.

At 1:30 AM the Princess will return to the Dona Palace to go to bed. She will not come out again until the next evening.

CONCLUSION

Once the party has succeeded in getting the Constantinople Emerald, the Gamemaster should bring the adventure to a climactic conclusion. If possible, the alarm should be raised, and the characters should be chased (either in gondolas or on foot) back to the Doge's Palace. The various possible encounters and delays should be used to build up the players' tensions.

Once at the Doge's Palace with the gem, the party and M. de Bienvenu will prepare to leave immediately. If it is after the third day, M. de Bienvenu will have already sold copies of the Catholic League documents to the Doge. Otherwise, the party must wait another day for the negotiations to end. The player-characters may be forced to hide the gem or themselves during this final day, to avoid the Lion's Claws. Another chase might ensue as the Ambassador and his entourage rush down the Grand Canal, and back to the *Cerea*.

If the whole troupe escapes, M. de Bienvenu will order the ship back to the island on the Dalmatian coast, to meet Alsalah. This time, the Ambassador will give the Pirate the gem, in return for the rest of the papers on the Ottoman Empire's military forces. Alsalah will also provide protection from the Doge's warships for the *Cerea* until she leaves the Adriatic.

If one or more of the player-characters are caught and subdued by the Lion's Claws, they will be imprisoned in the dungeon across the

canal from the Doge's Palace. A prisoner in the Doge's jail must pay the equivalent of 2 Livres per day, or go without food (payment may be made through the character's bankers as well). Caged characters will be kept by the Doge for a while, in the hopes of finding out the location of the Emerald (and his daughter, if she eloped). After a week, he will resort to torture. After a month, characters will be sentenced to death for Espionage. M. de Bienvenu and the remaining party members may attempt to organize a rescue (perhaps using Senator Grimani again as an inside contact).

Even if all of the characters escape, the Doge's wrath will be fearful. First, he will send out all of the Venetian warships to search for the *Cerea*. They will be unable to harm her, though, because of Alsalah's protective Pirate fleet. Second, the Doge will set twenty of his Lion's Claws on the trail of the Ambassador and his entourage, with

a warship and 20,000 Livres. He will send out forty Lion's Claws if he lost both the Constantinople Emerald and Iona. These soldiers will not stop looking until they have found the party or died trying. The Gamemaster may have them turn up at some inopportune time in a later adventure.

On the brighter side, each player-character who went about in a costume during the Carnival will gain a check on Disguise skill. Also, if M. de Bienvenu was able to sell the Catholic League documents to the Doge, he will split his share of the take with the party. To determine how much the Ambassador got for the documents, roll 2D6 (x 1000 Livres) and add 8000 Livres. The Cardinal gets half of this money, and M. de Bienvenu gets one fourth. The rest may be split evenly between the player-characters.

Torre del Diablo

INTRODUCTION

Once M. de Bienvenu and his entourage have escaped the Doge's power, with the protection of Alsalah's pirate escort, they will travel in the *Cerea* out of the Adriatic, around Sicily, to the port of Cagliari, on Sardinia. After quickly replenishing supplies, the *Cerea* will sail on to Valencia, on the coast of Spain. Here, the party may open its third envelope.

The third set of orders from the Cardinal instruct the player-characters to travel to Segovia with M. de Bienvenu. There, they must meet with the Cardinal's spy, a Captain in the Spanish Noble Guard. This man will lead the party to a secret political prison near Toledo, where a French spy with important information is being held. The party must infiltrate the prison, take a message to the prisoner, and receive a reply, all without attracting attention or allowing the prisoner to escape. Matters will be complicated by the prisoner's recent insanity and the presence of the Inquisitor General at the Torre.

If successful, the party will rejoin M. de Bienvenu in Segovia for the long ride back to Paris.

THE JOURNEY

Six days after leaving Venice, the *Cerea* and her pirate escort will sight the shores of Sicily. Alsalah will then head east, back towards the Ottoman Empire, after wishing M. de Bienvenu and his troupe a fond (although uncouth) farewell. The *Cerea* will sail west, around Sicily. The coast of Sardinia should be sighted in another week. The *Cerea* will dock at Cagliari for three days to replenish supplies.

After leaving Sardinia, the *Cerea* will sail another five days before nearing the Balearic Islands, two more days still before reaching the Spanish harbor of Valencia. Once they are in Valencia, the party and M. de Bienvenu may open their third pair of envelopes.

THE ENVELOPES

The third envelope for the party bears a folded and sealed scroll, as well as the following message from the Cardinal:

'Messieurs,

Travel with M. de Bienvenu to the Alcazar at Segovia. Once there, contact Jose Picaza, a Captain in the Spanish Noble Guard, and my agent. Identify yourselves with the code words 'Pontifex Rex.' Picaza will lead you to the Torre del Diablo, a royal prison near Madrid. It holds only a handful of political prisoners dangerous to Olivares, the tyrant First Minister of Spain. These include an agent of mine, the Marquis de Challes. Your mission is to infiltrate the prison and take the enclosed scrolled message to the Marquis. Give him pen and paper and await a response. When you return to Segovia, give the reply to Picaza, in a sealed envelope, with instructions to send it to me. Under no circumstances allow the

Marquis to escape from the Torre del Diablo — he is doing penance.

By my own hand,

Richelieu'

If unsealed, the party will find that the scrolled message enclosed in the envelope reads as follows:

'Monsieur le Marquis,

Compile a list of all new prisoners brought to the Torre since our last correspondence. Briefly recount the results of the Duque de San Lucan's experiments. Your salvation has not yet arrived, but if you complete this assignment accurately, I will consider ending your penance.

Richelieu'

M. de Bienvenu's envelope, should the party have access to it, bears the following instructions:

'Monsieur,

Journey to the Alcazar at Segovia to negotiate with Olivares' representatives. Reveal the Catholic League Documents and discuss the details of the Infanta's marriage. My special agents within your entourage will leave you, on a secret mission. Delay negotiations, if necessary, until their return.

By my own hand,

Richelieu'

GAMEMASTER'S BACKGROUND

The Marquis de Challes was once a secret agent in the Cardinal's pay, who lived at the Spanish Court in Madrid. He turned coat, as a double agent, five years before the present events. The Cardinal, having received this news from other sources, betrayed de Challes to the Count-Duke Olivares, the First Minister of Spain. Thinking him a particularly dangerous man, Olivares sent de Challes to his secret political prison, the Torre del Diablo.

The Cardinal is a practical man, however, and he would not sacrifice an agent still useful in some capacity. The Cardinal is curious as to whom Olivares consigns to the Torre del Diablo, and as to the curious torture methods employed by the Torre's warped warden, el Duque de San Lucan. Over the past five years, the Cardinal has been able to smuggle information out of the prison, from de Challes, always holding the promise of eventual release ahead of the Marquis, like a carrot on a stick.

Five years within the Torre del Diablo have driven the Marquis de Challes nearly as mad as the warden. He is now a reduced creature, desperate beyond measure. He has started to babble strange things about 'penance' and 'salvation' (the Cardinal's metaphors for punish-

ment and release). News of these babblings, along with the strange torture techniques used by the Duque, have attracted the attention of the Inquisition. When the party arrives at the Torre, they will be hindered by two unforeseen problems: the Marquis' madness, and the presence of Don Zaragoza, Inquisitor General, at the prison, on special inspection.

Any player-character with Heraldry, History or Espionage skill has a chance of knowing something about the Marquis' fate. The required roll is Wit/2 or less (+3 for being in the Cardinal's Guard, +6 for having been a spy for the Cardinal in the past). If the roll is successful, the character will remember hearing that the Marquis was a double agent, for the Cardinal and Olivares, and that he was seized, five years before this adventure, by the Spanish authorities in Madrid. Any player-character who is in the Clergy, and who has had contact with the Inquisition (determine by a Luck roll if unknown), will know of Don Zaragoza, the Inquisitor General. Espionage skill and a successful roll against Wit will indicate that the character has heard rumor of Don Zaragoza's more than professional interest in torture devices, and about his 'tours of inspection' to the prisons of Olivares.

SEGOVIA

From Valencia, M. de Bienvenu and his troupe will make a two and a half day trip to Segovia, accompanied by twelve mounted fusiliers from the Valencia city guards.

Early on the third day of travel (probably still sometime in late March, if the party has stayed on schedule) the troupe will sight a number of cavalrymen on the hilly horizon. As the approach, it will become apparent that they are a detachment of twenty-four cavaliers from the Spanish Noble Guard, resplendent in their yellow 'surcoats' emblazoned with the Spanish royal arms. They carry blades of fine Toledo steel clanking by their sides and present a truly military air in their 'Musketeer-like' uniforms. This dazzling company will escort the Ambassador's three carriages through the town of Segovia.

The player-characters, leaning out of the windows of the coaches, will see a wonderful spectacle pass by: cobblestone streets, white stucco townhouses and villas, and the majestic arches of a Roman Aqueduct. The carriages will wind up little streets, higher and higher, until the pinnacle of the town, the Alcazar, is reached. The Alcazar, ancient court of the Kings of Castille, is a fairy-tale castle which crowns the hill and town.

At the gates of the Alcazar, M. de Bienvenu will be met by three special delegates of the Count-Duke Olivares. The entourage will be shown to special quarters by a detachment of Noble Guards.

At this point, the characters may attempt to contact Captain Picaza. Anyone around the Alcazar will be able to point him out. He is a handsome young officer, with sharply dark features. Upon hearing the code words, he will lead the party to a secret chamber in the armory section of the castle, where they may speak in secrecy.

Senor Picaza speaks good French, and may communicate easily with the party. When he hears about the party's mission, he will blanch for a moment and murmur 'El Loco' under his breath. If asked about this, he will reply that 'El Loco' (the madman) is the common nickname for the Duque de San Lucan, warden of Torre del Diablo and special servant to Olivares. He is greatly feared by the common people in the countryside near the prison, and is said to be a warlock or a sorcerer.

Picaza will lead the player-characters to the Torre del Diablo, and will wait for them nearby, but he will not go in with them. He knows of a secret entrance, from the side of the moat to a well in the courtyard, which the party may use to infiltrate the prison. Picaza will organize the expedition to the Torre (get supplies, provisions, horses, etc.) as soon as the player-characters are ready.

Picaza will lead the player-characters out of the Alcazar at night, disguised as Noble Guardsmen. After leaving the city, it will be a day's ride over rocky terrain to the prison.

TORRE DEL DIABLO

The Torre itself is an imposing black fortress, built in a hilly area east of Madrid. A small stream runs nearby, providing water for the moat. Captain Picaza will hide the horses behind a hill, and describe the secret entrance to the party. It is located several feet underwater, on the south side of the prison, just to the left of the drawbridge (see illustration on the map). Because the player-characters must swim the moat to get to the secret entrance, no armor may be worn, and firearms and grenades will be useless. For a full description of the interior of the prison, use this section as a key to the Torre map:

A) The Main Entrance to the Torre is over the Drawbridge. This is let down for six hours during the day, but is pulled up in the afternoon.

Two guards are stationed in the sentinel boxes at the base of the drawbridge.

B) The Moat is fed by a nearby stream, and it surrounds the prison. It is four meters deep and six meters wide at the narrowest points. A character who attempts to slip into the moat and swim it must make a roll against Luck to avoid being spotted (-6 during the day, -4 more if the drawbridge is down, +2 for Stealth skill, +6 at night). The walls of the fortress are slimy with lichen and algae, and it would be impossible to climb them. It is possible, however, to climb up the base of the Drawbridge (A) from the moat. Characters who swim the moat on the south side of the Torre may swim into the secret underwater passage (one meter beneath the water level) to the well inside the courtyard (D). There is some air at the top of the passage, so a character could hide in this passage for a while, if necessary.

C) The Small Gate Tower at the end of the drawbridge is complete with a portcullis and two guards. The portcullis remains lowered unless someone enters or exits the prison. The drawbridge and portcullis are normally raised and lowered by means of winches and pulleys inside the gate tower. An extraordinarily strong character might be able to lift the portcullis long enough to allow other characters to scurry beneath it. The portcullis weighs 80 weight points; consult section 3.1 of the *Flashing Blades* rules to determine if a character can lift it.

D) The Well is in the center of the interior courtyard, and is used by the personnel inside for their supply of fresh water. Unbeknownst to the guards and prisoners within the Torre, a secret passage leads from the moat (B), on the south side, to the well. It is a simple matter for a character in the passage to climb out into the courtyard from the well. This may require various Stealth rolls to avoid notice, depending upon who is in the courtyard (at the Gamemaster's discretion).

E) The Wheels are three strange structures erected in the courtyard near the prison building (I). They appear to be large wagon wheels attached to the tops of poles. These are, in fact, the famous 'Devil's Wheels' used to execute condemned prisoners by slow exposure to the elements and starvation. Characters who inspect these structures carefully will notice weathered skeletons chained to the wheels above.

F) The Side Towers are located on the northwest and southwest corners of the prison. Each has two guards stationed in it.

G) The Stables lie along the west wall of the Torre. Normally, only six horses are kept inside (those of the warden and his five top officers). Four extra horses and a carriage have been added, however, by the unexpected arrival of Don Zaragoza, the Inquisitor General. On the sides of the coach are emblazoned the Inquisitor's arms. These should be recognizable to any character in the Clergy, or any character with Heraldry skill who can make a successful Wit roll.

H) The Barracks are located in the northwest corner of the courtyard. Inside are bunks and living space for the thirty-six guards who are stationed at the Torre del Diablo. During the day, twelve to twenty-four of the guards may be found here. At night, twenty-four guards will be here sleeping. In one corner of the barracks, some makeshift beds have been provided for the Inquisitor General and his aides, with a curtain hung around it, for privacy.

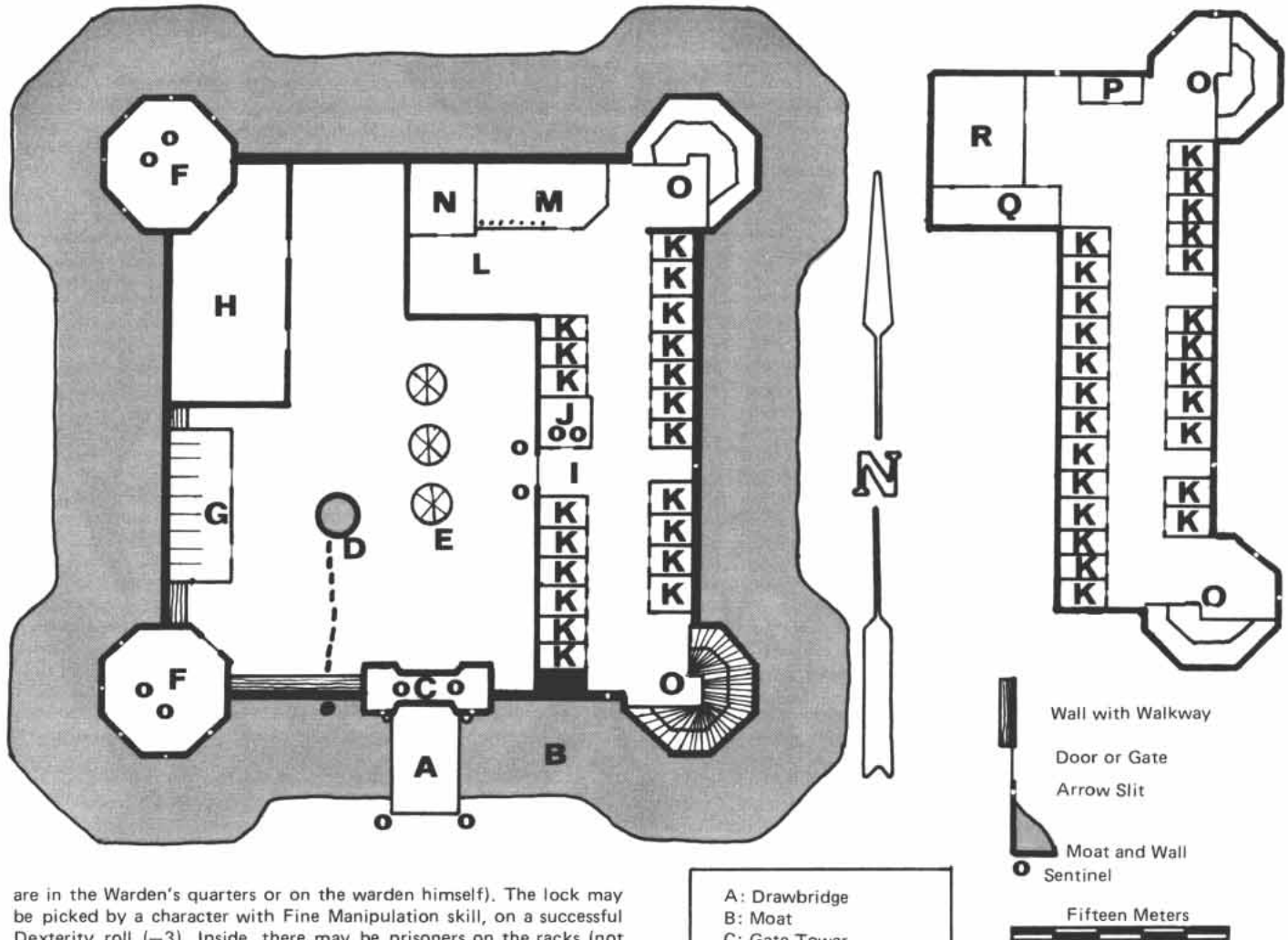
I) The Prison Building is a megalithic structure, the real dungeon of the Torre del Diablo, and the domain of the mad warden, El Duque de San Lucan. Outside, two guards are stationed as sentinels. These are often asleep or away from their posts, however. Inside, the building is dark and tomblike.

J) The Guard Room is near the door of the Prison Building (I), where two guards are normally stationed. When no one is looking (and especially at night), the two sentinels from outside sneak into this chamber to play cards with the other guards. Their card games are loud, raucous, and drunken, and characters will have an easy time of it, sneaking by the guard room. On the north wall of the guard room are hung three sets of keys for the cells.

K) The Cells are inside the Prison Building and there are forty-five such individual cells. There are only thirty prisoners, however, so fifteen cells are empty. The warden likes to switch prisoners from cell to cell every few days, in order to keep them disoriented. If the party scouts the prison to find the Marquis, and returns later, he may have moved. There are no names on the cell doors. Each cell is locked with a bolt lock (on the outside) and a key-lock. All of the key-locks are the same. The keys may be found either in the guard room (J) or the warden's quarters (N). Otherwise, the locks may be picked by characters with Fine Manipulation skill, on a successful Dexterity roll (-3). Inside each cell is a straw pallet on a cold stone floor. Further luxuries are not allowed by the warden.

L) Two Cages take up this area (housing the skeletons of condemned prisoners) and a table is here with a selection of Thumbscrews. The odd finger has been left (severed) in the bite of the screws.

M) Two Spanish Racks are in this chamber, along with the warden's collection of whips. The door to this room is normally locked (the keys



are in the Warden's quarters or on the warden himself). The lock may be picked by a character with Fine Manipulation skill, on a successful Dexterity roll (-3). Inside, there may be prisoners on the racks (not the Marquis however). The whips are of the highest quality, and would make nice souvenirs.

N) 'El Loco's' Quarters are the den of the mad warden of the Torre del Diablo. The door is normally locked, and the only key is on the warden himself. The lock may be picked by a character with Fine Manipulation skill on a successful Dexterity roll (-3). Inside is only a bed, some bloody clothes, and a few random implements of torture. Under the mattress of the bed, el Loco has hidden a spare set of keys to the prison cells (K), the rack and whip room (M), the water torture chamber (P), the pantry (Q), and the Great Machine chamber (R).

O) Two Wide Spiral Stairwells lead up to the upper story of the prison building.

P) The Water Torture Chamber is a small room used for this unusual purpose by the mad warden. Continuous drips of water drop from the ceiling to the floor, and due to the carefully engineered acoustics of the room, the echo is deafening. In a few weeks, the water torture will drive any man mad. It is possible that the party will find a desperate prisoner trapped inside (not the Marquis however). The door to this chamber is normally locked (the key may be found in the warden's quarters or on the warden himself). The lock may be picked by a character with Fine Manipulation skill, on a successful Dexterity roll (-3).

Q) The Pantry is behind a locked door and is a secret known only to the warden. The key to this door may be found in either the warden's quarters (N) or on the warden himself. Otherwise, the lock may be picked by a character with Fine Manipulation skill on a successful Dexterity roll (-3). When the warden is inside, both doors of this chamber will be barred (each door has 40 Hit Points for breakage purposes). Inside the pantry, the warden keeps a large assortment of strange herbs, spices, and components, mostly of a Moorish nature. Among the bric-a-brac, characters may find bottles of bats' wings, mandrake roots, and extract of hashish, along with various treatises in medieval Spanish on magic and demonology. This should confirm the local suspicions that El Loco (the warden) is a sorcerer. The warden has no actual magical powers (although he may believe he does), but the contents of this room may serve to unnerve the party.

- A: Drawbridge
- B: Moat
- C: Gate Tower
- D: Well
- E: Wheels
- F: Side Towers
- G: Stables
- H: Barracks
- I: Prison Building
- J: Guard Room
- K: Individual Cells
- L: Cages & Thumbscrews
- M: Wracks & Whips
- N: Loco's Quarters
- O: Tower Stairwells
- P: Water Torture
- Q: Pantry
- R: The Great Machine

R) The Inner Sanctum of the Torre del Diablo is the chamber which contains the warden's most elaborate creation and experiment: the Great Machine. The door is always locked (the key may be found in the warden's quarters or on the warden himself). Otherwise, the lock may be picked by a character with Fine Manipulation skill on a successful Dexterity roll (-3). The room itself is nearly filled by the Great Machine. This creation, envisioned by the warden to be the ultimate device of torture, appears to be a huge sarcophagus. Within the machine are separate aparati for impaling the victim with little spikes (like an iron maiden), spinning him around, squeezing him, and for inundating him with water or scalding oil. The full 'treatment' prescribed by the warden lasts twenty-four hours, and alternates between these effects until the victim is maimed and mangled, and barely alive. Any character with Espionage skill (or any other character who has been in the Cardinal's employ before this campaign) will realize that the Cardinal would be very interested in hearing about the Great Machine. The party should, if possible, at least make a sketch of the device to show to the Cardinal.



INHABITANTS

Inside the Torre del Diablo are numerous NPCs. The chief personalities and groups guarding/inhabiting the prison are listed below:

1. El Duque de San Lucan, Warden of the Torre del Diablo ('El Loco')

'El Loco' is the main NPC within the prison. He is the trusted servant of the Count-Duke Olivares, First Minister of Spain, and he was appointed warden by Olivares for this reason. The Duque is frothing mad, and an incurable sadist. His chief pleasure is inventing new devices of torture and experimenting with them upon the political prisoners held in the fortress. His greatest invention to date is the Great Machine (see R in the section above), which he thinks of as his crowning achievement. The Duque also believes himself to be a powerful sorcerer, and is encouraged in his beliefs by an occasional swig of extract of hashish, kept in his pantry (see Q above).

Physically, the Duque is a short but incredibly stocky man. His black hair is long and unkempt, and he has a bushy beard and mustache. He prefers to wear heavy leather gear and a breastplate (often flaked and spattered with blood). He nearly always stays inside the prison building, and keeps it abnormally dark (light hurts his eyes). He leaves the discipline of the guards to his officers, and takes little interest in things other than torture and black magic.

The warden's full statistics are listed below:

Duque de San Lucan

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Strength 17 | Hit Points 17 |
| Dexterity 12 | Armor: |
| Endurance 19 | Jerkin & Cuirass (5 on Chest & Flank) |
| Wit 11 | Gauntlets & Sleeves (2 on Arms) |
| Charm 3 | Boots & Breeches (2 on Legs) |
| Luck 13 | |
| Attacks: | |
| Cutlass (Expertise 17) | Chance to Hit: 14 |
| | Chance to Parry: 13 |
| Flintlock Carbine (Expertise 14) | Chance to Hit: 11 |
| Skills: | |
| Captaincy (Master), Carousing, Chemist, Espionage, Fine Manip- | |

ulation, and Horsemanship.

2. The Guards

The warden is assisted in keeping the prison by thirty-six guards. These are ordinary fusiliers, put on special duty at the Torre del Diablo. Twelve are normally on duty at any given time (stationed at the spots indicated on the Torre map). The others may be found mostly in the barracks (H), or scattered about, playing cards with the sentinels. Five of the guards are officers (the equivalent of Sergeants) who keep lax discipline with the others. All of the guards fear the warden, and they constantly gossip about his practice of black magic. He pays little attention to them, however.

Inspections are rare and the guards are, in general, lazy. The warden never allows the guards into his inner sanctum or pantry (rooms Q and R on the map).

Each guard at the Torre wears fusilier's armor (although, often, due to poor discipline, the guards fail to wear their helmets and cuirasses). Each is armed with a longsword (Expertise 12) and a flintlock musket (Expertise 9). Each normal guard has 10 Hit Points, officers have 12 Hit Points.

3. Political Prisoners

Thirty political prisoners, the enemies (or imagined enemies) of the Count-Duke Olivares are imprisoned in the Torre del Diablo. As the player-characters search for the Marquis de Challes, they will encounter numerous prisoners. Each time the characters inspect a cell, or come near a torture chamber or device, roll a D6. On a roll of 1 to 4, a prisoner is here. Roll another D6 to determine the condition of the prisoner:

Roll Condition of Prisoner

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Unconscious: prisoner is comatose (or possibly dead) due to torture and ill-treatment. |
| 2 | Wretched: the prisoner is conscious, but just barely. He may be oblivious to the presence of the party, or unable to speak. |
| 3 | Desperate: the prisoner is so desperate that he will demand that the player-characters rescue him. If they refuse, he may |

raise the alarm by screaming at them.

- 4 Mad: the prisoner has gone crazy, and may react to the party in strange, unpredictable ways (the Gamemaster should use his or her discretion as to this NPC's actions).
- 5 Wily: the prisoner sees a key to possible escape in the player-characters. He may try to convince them that he is the Marquis de Challes, or that he knows where the Marquis may be found (even if he doesn't) just to save himself.
- 6 Lucid: the prisoner is sane and helpful. He may know where the Marquis de Challes is, and will inform the party.

The prisoners are weak (6 Hit Points) and are unarmed and unarmored.

4. The Marquis de Challes

To the party, the most important NPC in the Torre del Diablo is the Marquis de Challes, the man with information for the Cardinal. The Marquis is a spare aristocrat, with hawklike features and a wild grey beard (grown in prison). He still dresses in the rags of his court-clothes, from his former days in Madrid, and he still retains an aura of dignity.

The Marquis was once an agent of the Cardinal. When he turned double-agent, the Cardinal betrayed him to Olivares, the First Minister of Spain, and he was imprisoned in the Torre. Since then, the Cardinal has pumped the Marquis for information about his prison. In the interim of five years, the Marquis has gone quite mad. He now believes himself to be something of a prophet, and preaches about 'penance' and 'salvation' to anyone who will listen. Even after the party finds him, it may be difficult to get the Marquis to write a reply to the Cardinal. The player-characters must humor him, perhaps telling him that it is further penance, and alluding to future salvation. If a member of the party is a Clergyman or a Student of Theology, it will be much easier to convince the Marquis to do what is required.

The Marquis' mood and temperament change quickly. Every quarter of an hour roll 1D6 on the Prisoner Condition table above (in section number 3) to determine the Marquis' present attitude. When 'wily' he may try to convince the party to rescue him. When 'mad' he may preach to the party or become violent. When 'lucid' the party may be able to convince him to write a reply to the Cardinal.

5. Don Zaragoza, The Inquisitor General

The final major NPC in the Torre del Diablo is Don Zaragoza, the Inquisitor General. This powerful man has a keen (and more-than-professional) interest in torture. He is also an old enemy of the Count-Duke Olivares. He has decided to make a surprise visit to the Torre del Diablo to examine the warden's methods of torture. Don Zaragoza secretly wishes to relieve the warden, el Duque de San Lucan, of his position, and take over the prison for the Inquisition. If he finds any excuse to do so, he will.

Don Zaragoza is a gaunt, vulture-like creature, with a long scar on his left cheek. He wears black robes at all times. His only weapon is a poisoned dagger, hidden inside the large crucifix hanging from his belt. If this dagger does any damage to a character, he must roll against Endurance or die in 2D6 minutes (the immediate aid of a Physician or Chemist allows an additional Endurance roll to survive).

The Inquisitor General's exact statistics are listed below:

Don Zaragoza (the Inquisitor General)

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| Strength 7 | Hit Points: 10 |
| Dexterity 16 | Armor: |
| Endurance 8 | None |
| Wit 17 | |
| Charm 13 | |
| Luck 17 | |

Attacks:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Poisoned Dagger (Expertise 19) | Chance to Hit: 14 |
| | Chance to Parry: 14 |

Skills:

Bargaining, Bribery, Bureaucratics, Captaincy (Master), Disguise, Espionage, Etiquette, Fine Manipulation, Heraldry, Languages (French, Latin), Magistracy, Strategy (Master), and Theology.

Don Zaragoza is accompanied by three young Inquisitors, acting as his aides and guards. Each wears Musketeer's armor and carries a rapier (Expertise 15). They each have 13 Hit Points and the following skills: Espionage, Fine Manipulation, Horsemanship, Languages (French and Latin), Stealth, and Theology.

RESOLUTION

The resolution of *Torre del Diablo* is up to the cleverness of the party and the discretion of the Gamemaster. Once the characters

have found their way inside the Torre (most probably through the underwater passage), they will be faced with a series of obstacles. The first of these is the vigilance of the guards. The Gamemaster should remember that the guards are undisciplined and lazy. Sneaking by them might require a Luck roll (-5 during daytime, +5 at night, +3 for Stealth skill, +2 to +5 if the guards are playing cards, drinking, sleeping, etc.). Even if the characters are spotted, the guards will not attack unless they outnumber the party. In the chaos of a general alarm, the characters would have a good chance to run back to the well and hide in the underwater passage.

The second difficulty the party may have is that of finding the Marquis de Challes inside the prison building. This will probably turn into a hit-or-miss search, until the player-characters find a lucid prisoner who can tell them where the Marquis is. If the Gamemaster wishes to make the search a real challenge, he may have the Marquis imprisoned in the Great Machine, undergoing the warden's 'treatment.' This would require the party to both find and rescue the Marquis.

Third, the party must show the Marquis the scroll from the Cardinal and have him write a reply. As detailed above, it may be difficult to get the Marquis to comply. The Gamemaster should play this by ear, allowing the Marquis to make a reply only after being thoroughly coaxed, humored and threatened by the player-characters.

If the Gamemaster wishes to throw in an additional wild card, he may have the party encounter Don Zaragoza, the Inquisitor General. Don Zaragoza is in the habit of prowling the Torre day and night (followed closely by his aides) admiring the warden's methods, and looking for a way to take the prison for himself. Often, he explores the prison building at night, against the wishes and orders of the warden. He is unlikely to sound the alarm if encountered in these circumstances, as he too is an intruder. Although he is no great friend of the French Cardinal, Don Zaragoza is a sworn enemy of the Count-Duke Olivares, First Minister of Spain. He may be willing to make some sort of deal with the player-characters, to help them. If the player-characters know about the warden's black magic materials in the pantry, they may tell Don Zaragoza. This would give the Inquisitor General a perfect excuse for doing away with el Duque de San Lucan (the warden) and taking the prison for himself. If given this important information, Don Zaragoza will not only help the party fulfill its mission, but he will also become a powerful friend and contact in Spain for the player-characters, in future adventures.

Finally, once the player-characters have gotten a reply from the Marquis, they must escape the prison (again, through the well). The Gamemaster may require various rolls to avoid detection. Outside, the party may meet Captain Picaza and return to the Ambassador at Segovia.

RETURN TO PARIS

At the Alcazar, in Segovia, the party will reunite M. de Bienvenu and his entourage. The Ambassador will quickly finish up his negotiations with Olivares' representatives, and the whole troupe will start north, back to France.

The seven day carriage ride will take the party through Pamplona, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Cognac, Châtelleraut, Orleans, and finally to Paris. The three coaches will be met by an escort of twelve mounted musketeers of the Cardinal's Guard at Bayonne. The Gamemaster may roll normally for encounters along the roads, but should remember that bandits will not attack a company so heavily armed.

If the party is on schedule, it should arrive in Paris in early to mid-April. This will allow the player-characters about a month to rest and recover from the first three adventures of the Campaign. Characters who have been seriously hurt or wounded will be provided with fine physicians by the Cardinal.

After their first week back in Paris, each member of M. de Bienvenu's entourage will be contacted by the Cardinal. A meeting, similar to the first, will be set up at the Palais Royal. If the player-characters have done well so far, the Cardinal will congratulate them. Otherwise, he will inform them that their services are no longer required. Either way, they will be paid the agreed upon wages, depending upon their positions in the entourage. If they did well, each player-character will be given a bonus of 10 to 100 Livres, depending upon his personal role in the adventures.

If the party has done well, and wishes to continue in the Cardinal's service for another two adventures, the Cardinal will provide two more sealed red envelopes, titled: 'Open upon reaching the Hague,' and 'Open when you land in England.' The instructions within should guide the party through the next two adventures. M. de Bienvenu will receive a similar pair of new envelopes.

The Cardinal will also present each party member with a special item, reserved only for the Cardinal's trusted agents. Each is a finely made dagger (+1 to hit and parry, and +1 on the weapon strength

table). The pommels are hollow, and inside are stored three poison tablets. These tablets will dissolve quickly in any liquid and only a Chemist may spot the presence of the poison. If ingested, the victim must make an Endurance roll or die in 1D6 hours (the immediate attention of a Physician or Chemist allows another attempted Endurance roll). Even if this roll is successful, the victim will be weak and sick for 1D6 hours. The Cardinal suggests that these tablets be used

only on the enemies of France, or upon the player-characters, if capture and torture are eminent. On the blade of each dagger is the engraving of a little fleur-de-lys, and the Cardinal's coat-of-arms.

Finally, the Cardinal will instruct the party to prepare to leave with M. de Bienvenu for the United Provinces (the Netherlands) in mid-May.

The Binnenhof Affair

INTRODUCTION

In mid-May, M. de Bienvenu and his entourage will regroup in Paris, and make a one-day carriage ride to Rouen. There, they will meet a Dutch ship, which will take them to the Hague, the capitol of the United Provinces. After a reception by the Hertog (Duke) Van Almsvelt, the party will contact the Cardinal's special agent, Jan Van Rijsweg (a Magistrate in the Hague).

Unknown to the player-characters, both Hertog Van Almsvelt and Van Rijsweg are members of the Geheimebond, a secret branch of the Dutch government, devoted to international espionage. On the night of M. de Bienvenu's arrival, they will have the Rhine Military Clause of the Catholic League Documents stolen. The party, through the evidence left by the thief, should be able to glean a few clues from the short (unsuccessful) chase which follows.

Fortunately, the Cardinal has had the documents written in invisible ink. This should provide the party with some time before the contents of the documents are fully understood by the Geheimebond. The party will probably go first to Van Rijsweg (still believing him to be serving France). He will send the party on a goose chase to an estate near the Hague, with fake letters of introduction. When they reach the estate, the characters will be sent back. On the way back, they will be ambushed by Wilhelm Haarlemmer, Van Rijsweg's servant, and several footpads. Should the party survive, they will find clues leading to the headquarters of the Geheimebond, in the Hague. This will allow them to go back and re-steal the documents, and possibly discover some classified Geheimebond information as well.

TRIP TO THE HAGUE

In the middle of May, M. de Bienvenu and his entourage will meet at the Palais Royal. The troupe will then embark on a one-day carriage ride to Rouen. There, after showing the proper papers, the Ambassador and company will be allowed on the Dutch frigate *Het Onweer*.

The voyage north is not without its dangers. The Spanish require ships sailing through the channel to stop at Antwerp for 'official' customs inspection. This tactic is an attempt to cripple trade to and from the United Provinces. Dutch ships which enter the port at Antwerp are often confiscated by the Spanish authorities. For this reason, *Het Onweer* must attempt to slip through the channel and outrun patrols from the Spanish Netherlands. The Gamemaster may add some tension to the passage by having *Het Onweer* narrowly escape a Spanish Warship. They may even come close enough to exchange cannonfire.

Once past the Spanish Netherlands, the journey will be safe. Three days after leaving Rouen, *Het Onweer* will dock in Rotterdam, south of the Hague. Special carriages, sent by the Hertog (Duke) Van Almsvelt, will arrive at the landing site, to carry M. de Bienvenu and his entourage to the Hague.

THE ENVELOPES

On the way to the Hague, the party may open the next envelope of instructions from the Cardinal. The letter inside reads:

'Messieurs,

M. de Bienvenu's most secret documents have been reduced to plain sheets of paper, with the writing in invisible ink. Only heat placed under the pages will make the papers legible. Remember, you are now in a highly Protestant country, and nothing is certain.

If these documents should be stolen (and I have reason to believe that there will be an attempt), recover them as quickly as possible. Destroy them if necessary. If you require aid, contact my special agent, M. Jan Van Rijsweg, a Magistrate in the Hague. Identify yourselves to him with the code-words 'Custodes Libertatis.'

*By my own hand,
Richelieu'*

M. de Bienvenu's instructions, should the party have access to them, are as follows:

'Monsieur,

Negotiate for the sale of the first three chapters of the Catholic League Documents. Settle at no price below 5000 Livres. At all costs, make sure the Dutch know nothing of the Rhine Military Clause.

*By my own hand,
Richelieu'*

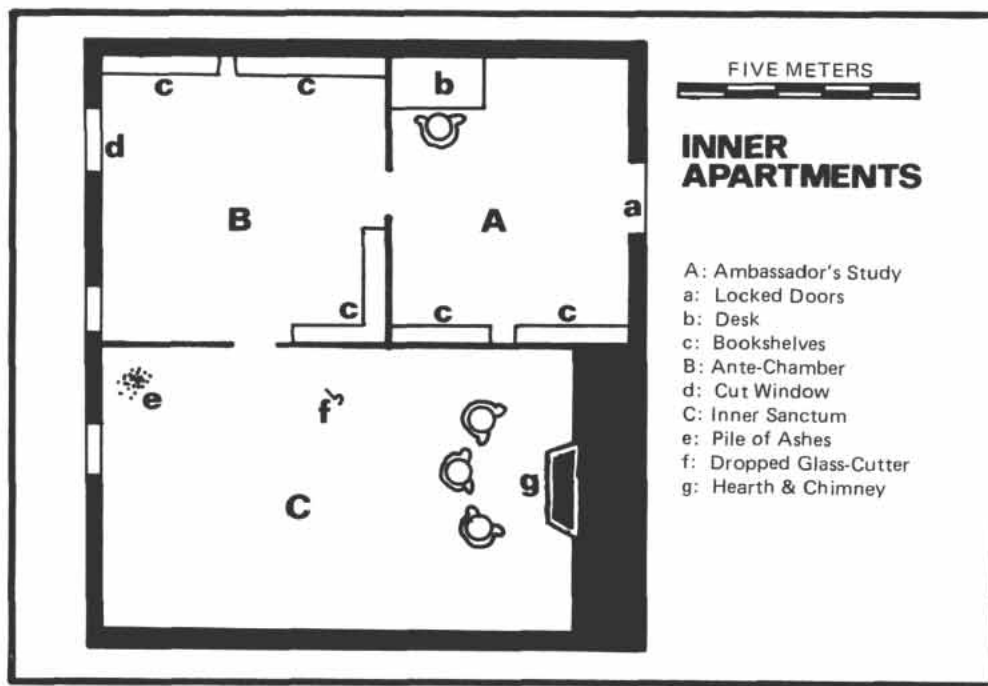
ARRIVAL AT THE HAGUE

At the Hague, the party will be driven in carriages through the narrow streets and over canal bridges, to the center of the city and the Dutch government, the Binnenhof. This is an impressive complex of castle-like government buildings, and the royal Knights' Hall. At the gates, M. de Bienvenu and his entourage will be met by the diplomatic representative of the King, the Hertog (Duke) Van Almsvelt, at the head of a company of Dutch Civil Guards, all dressed in bright orange. Any player-character who can make a successful roll against his Luck/2 will notice an embroidered glove and scroll on the front of Van Almsvelt's doublet. This is the symbol of the Geheimebond (Dutch Secret Service), and although it will mean nothing to the characters at first, they will be able to recognize it when it appears again later. After formally greeting the Ambassador, Van Almsvelt will show the troupe into the beautiful Knights' Hall.

Inside the Hall, a huge chamber decorated with the flags and insignia of the many provinces and cities of the Free Netherlands, the Ambassador and the party will be introduced to various nobles, government representatives, and city officials. Among these will be Jan Van Rijsweg (the Cardinal's contact). Van Rijsweg is a tall, ruddy man with keen eyes. Always just behind him is his servant and bodyguard, Wilhelm Haarlemmer, a thin, cat-like man. If the player-characters approach Van Rijsweg and give the code-words, he will, in a whisper, promise them his aid, should they need it.

The player-characters will have no trouble communicating with the Dutch in the Binnenhof. The royal family of the United Provinces, the House of Orange, was originally French, and the entire Court speaks French perfectly. Outside the Binnenhof, the common people are likely to know at least a little French. In the Knights' Hall, however, the characters may feel almost as if they never left home.

After his introduction at the Knights' Hall, M. de Bienvenu, along with his entourage, will be escorted to special quarters near the Binnenhof. The troupe is to be housed in a tall, thin building in the regent class district. It will be carefully guarded by soldiers in the neighboring buildings. On the top floor are the Inner Apartments of the Ambassadorial Suite, which M. de Bienvenu will take as his study. M. de



Bienvenu will be given a chance to rest before negotiations begin in the morning.

THE THEFT

In the afternoon, after the troupe's arrival and reception in the Hague, M. de Bienvenu will closet himself in the Inner Apartments of the Suite, and lock the door. In the evening, after attending to his ambassadorial paperwork, he will leave the Inner Apartments, carefully locking the doors behind himself. A few minutes later, he will remember some chore he forgot to do, and will go back to the Inner Apartments to attend to it. After opening the bolt-lock with his keys, he will discover that the doors still don't open. The latch inside must have been locked! At this point, the Ambassador will call the player-characters to his aid, to help him to break down the door, and figure out what has happened.

The Gamemaster should refer to the map of the Inner Apartments as the party investigates them. The doors (at a) to the Ambassador's Study (A) have indeed been latched from the inside. Two player-characters with Strengths of 10 or better should be able to break them down easily. Inside are the Ambassador's desk (at b) and some bookshelves lining the walls (at c). M. de Bienvenu will quickly rush to the desk, but too late! A locked drawer has been broken open, and the most valuable document, the Rhine Military Clause has been taken. The details of this document were, however, in invisible ink. It is of the utmost importance that the party quickly recover them, before the Geheimebond is able to make the writing legible.

The Ante-Chamber (B) is the next room in the Inner Apartments. It contains three bookshelves (at c). Two windows look out on the street below. One of these two has the shutters thrown wide (at d) while on the other, the shutters are nearly closed. Any character who inspects the window with the wide shutters will notice that a tiny bit of glass, near the bolt lock on the window, has been cut away. This allowed the thief to get into the Inner Apartments.

The final chamber of the Inner Apartments is the Inner Sanctum (C). Several clues are scattered around this room. In one corner (at e) lies a small pile of ashes. Close inspection will reveal that a number of papers or parchments were hastily burned and the remains swept into this corner (this is a red herring left by the thief to confuse the party). On the floor, on the way to the hearth, the thief dropped his glass cutter in his haste (at f). Any character will notice the cutter on a successful roll against $\frac{1}{2}$ his Luck (+2 for Espionage skill). At the hearth itself (g), any character who looks around and make a successful roll against his Wit (+1 for Rogues) will figure out how the thief escaped. Soot is sprinkled all over, and the flue has been opened. It is evident that the thief, after entering through the Ante-Chamber window and rifling the desk in the Study, came to the hearth, opened the way, and climbed up. A final puff of soot should come down the chimney as the player-characters inspect the hearth, to indicate that they are right on the thief's heels.

Daring characters may wish to climb up the chimney after the

thief to catch him on the rooftop. Characters with 'Stocky' Builds will never make it up the chimney. Other characters who try this feat must each make a roll against Dexterity (+2; +4 for Acrobatics skill) and Luck (+2; +2 for Acrobatics skill; +3 for a Thin Build). If the Dexterity roll is unsuccessful, the character falls back down the chimney, taking 1D6 points of general damage. If other characters are climbing below him, they will each fall too (taking 1D3 points of general damage each). Each other person below a character when he falls will reduce the damage taken by 1 point (due to the cushioning effect). If the Luck roll is unsuccessful, the character becomes stuck in the chimney. Another Luck roll may be made every minute to see if the character can 'unstick' himself (+1 for each additional character pushing or pulling).

As soon as a character has managed to climb the chimney, the Gamemaster should refer to the Rooftop Chase map. The thief, a man cloaked and masked in black, will hop from the roof of the Ambassadorial Suite to a neighboring building. There he will hide behind a chimney (at the 'X') and draw a finely-made wheellock dueling pistol. He will fire at the first player-character to climb up, and then run. He has Expertise 17 (at Medium Range, this gives him a 14 or less chance to hit). If the character who is shot at survives, and can make a successful Luck roll, he will notice the moonlight glinting off the silver pommel of the thief's pistol.

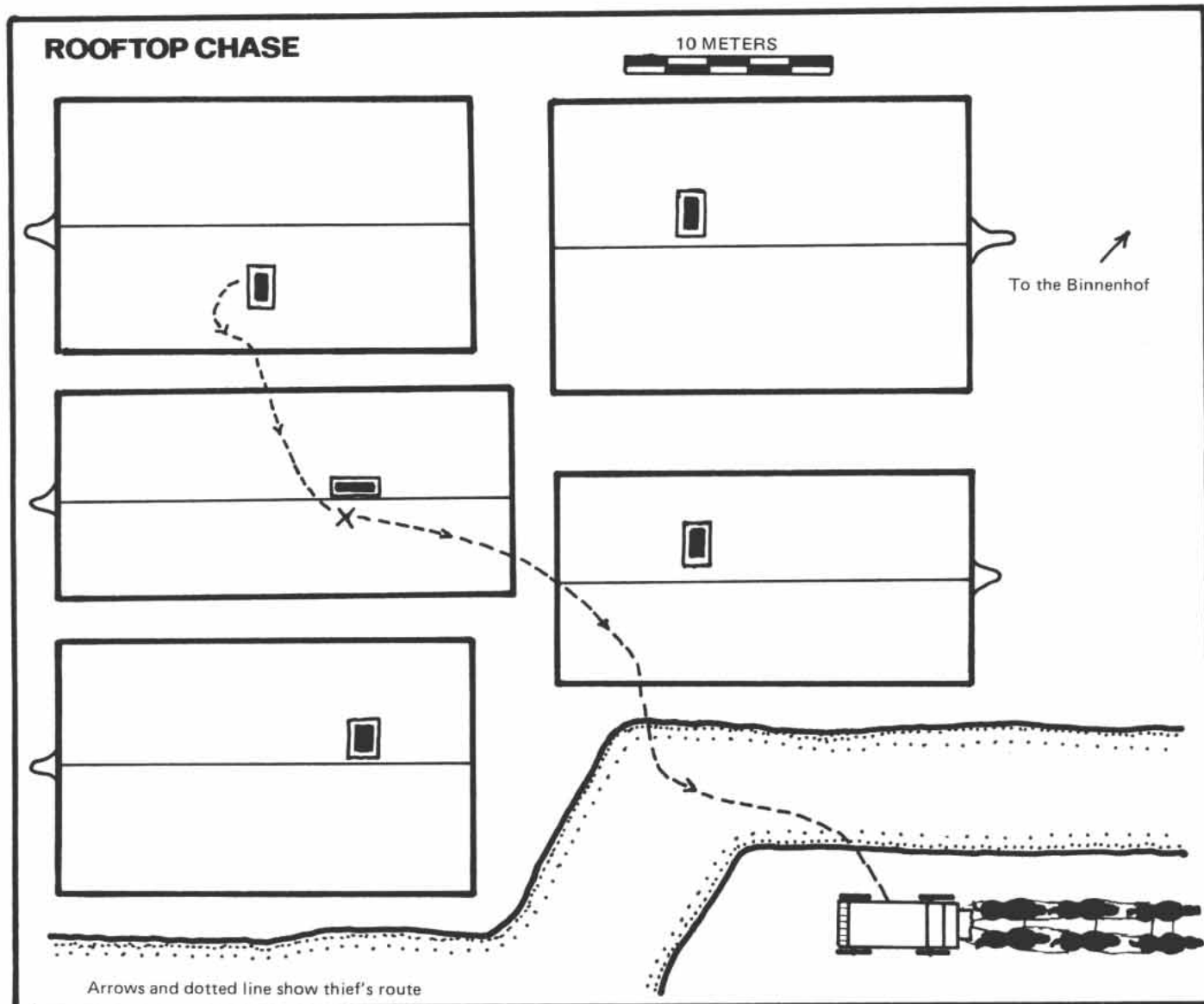
After one shot to hold his pursuers at bay, the thief will run and hop from roof to roof (as shown on the map), with the coordination and reflexes of a practiced acrobat. At the final roof, he will dive off, into a canal three stories below. He will quickly swim the canal, climb out of the water, and jump into a waiting carriage. It will be impossible for the player-characters to hit the thief as he escapes (the Gamemaster should allow him to escape). Jumping from one roof to another requires a successful Dexterity roll (+2; +3 for Acrobatics skill). A missed roll indicates a fall; in this case, a single Luck roll is allowed to see if the character has managed to catch the edge of the rooftop and hang on. A hanging character must be saved by his friends. A character can only hang on for $\frac{1}{2}$ his Strength in minutes. A fall from the roof would be fatal.

The carriage will drive off before the party can stop it, but a character chasing close after the thief may notice the insignia on the side: a glove and scroll (the symbol of the Geheimebond).

When the characters have returned to the Ambassadorial Suite, after the thief's escape, M. de Bienvenu will once again impress upon them the importance of recovering the document. If the characters do not think of it themselves, M. de Bienvenu will suggest that they go see Van Rijsweg, the Cardinal's agent, in the morning.

THE GOOSE CHASE

As mentioned earlier, Van Rijsweg is secretly an agent of the Geheimebond, and is not really loyal to the Cardinal. He organized the theft of the document from M. de Bienvenu, with orders from Hertog Van Almsvelt. Van Rijsweg's special servant, Wilhelm Haarlemmer, was the actual thief.



When the player-characters come to Van Rijsweg for help, he will send them on a wild goose chase, to buy time for the Geheimebond and lead them into a deadly trap. He will meet them in the Binnenhof. When the characters explain the situation to him, he will lead them to an isolated tower chamber, to discuss what is to be done.

Van Rijsweg will say that he thinks he knows someone who can help the party. Hastily, he will write 'letters of introduction' for the player characters for a country squire named Heer Jacob Van Zoetermeer. Van Rijsweg will direct the player-characters to the road they must take, and wish them luck in recovering the missing document.

The 'letters of introduction' are, in fact, instructions, written in Dutch. Heer Van Zoetermeer is a member of the Geheimebond. He is instructed simply to delay the party as long as possible.

The player-characters may rent horses or a carriage from local stables. The ride out to Van Zoetermeer's estate should take about an hour. Once there, the party will be announced by servants, and allowed in. The characters will be shown into a large reception hall. At first, Van Zoetermeer will take twenty minutes coming to meet the characters. Then, once he arrives, he will take another fifteen minutes inspecting the 'letters of introduction' and holding them up to the light. After this, he will invite the party to share some wine with him in his drawing room.

Van Zoetermeer is a fat, middle-aged man with a huge mustache and short hair. He has a naturally warm and friendly manner. He will attempt to discuss numerous topics with the player-characters; from hunting in France, to horses, to the weather. Depending upon how quickly and resolutely the characters question him about the stolen documents, it will gradually become clear that Van Zoetermeer knows nothing about the whole affair, and that he is purposely wasting time. The only possible conclusion is that Van Rijsweg sent the party off on the wrong track. Even after the characters realize this, Van Zoeter-

meer's servants will delay in bringing the party's horses for another twenty minutes.

Realizing that they have been somehow double-crossed, the characters will ride back to the Hague. This is where Van Rijsweg's trap comes in. He has sent Wilhelm Haarlemmer and a group of thugs to ambush the party on the road leading to the Hague. This band of cutthroats will wait in the brush on either side of the road, in a deserted area, just after the road crosses a little bridge over a canal.

There will be one cutthroat for each player-character (plus Haarlemmer, as their leader). Each cutthroat has 12 Hit Points, and wears a leather jerkin, gauntlets and boots. Two have pikes (Expertise 15) and the rest are armed with longswords (Expertise 12). Wilhelm Haarlemmer is a worthy opponent. His full statistics are shown below:

Wilhelm Haarlemmer

Strength 15
Dexterity 18
Endurance 13
Wit 17
Charm 13
Luck 14

Hit Points 17

Armor:

Leather Jerkin (2 on Chest and Flank)
Gauntlets & Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Boots & Breeches (2 on Legs)

Attacks:

Finely-made Wheellock Dueling Pistol (Expertise 17)
Rapier (Expertise 18)

Chance to Hit: 16

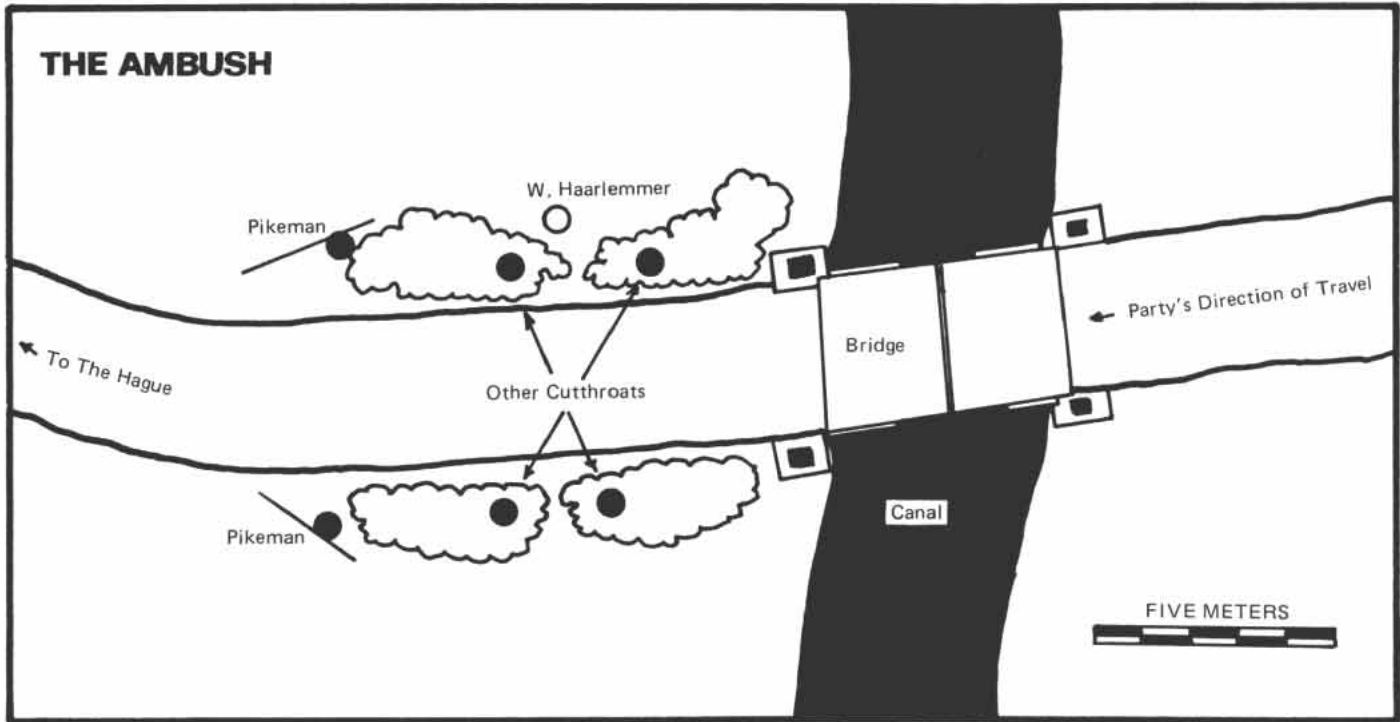
Chance to Hit: 15

Chance to Parry: 15

with Main Gauche: 18

Skills:

Acrobatics, Cut Purse, Disguise, Espionage, Fine Manipulation, Languages (Dutch, French), Stealth (Master), Tracking.



When the player-characters ride over the bridge, the two characters in the lead will have a chance to notice something suspicious (one of the cutthroats hiding perhaps, or a pike sticking out of the brush). This requires a successful roll against Wit (+2 for Espionage skill; +3 if the character has ever been ambushed on a road before or is expecting trouble on the road). It will be the only warning the party gets.

As shown on the Ambush Diagram, the two pikemen lurk in back. As soon as the player-characters cross the bridge, they will jump out to block the path. It is almost impossible to trample them down, due to the reach of their pikes. Next, Haarlemmer will give the signal for the other cutthroats to jump out of the brush, and to attack the party on both sides. Haarlemmer himself will slip behind the player-characters, to cut off their escape route to the bridge.

Of course, the continuation of the adventure assumes that the player-characters win the ensuing battle. The cutthroats will flee if their side is outnumbered by two or more through losses. Haarlemmer will only run if it becomes apparent that victory is impossible. At any rate, Haarlemmer should be either killed in the fight or captured as he tries to escape in the end. He carries three important clues, which should allow the party to outwit the Geheimebond. First, Haarlemmer's pistol (which is a beautiful prize in itself) has a silver pommel. This should identify Haarlemmer as the mysterious thief of the previous evening. Second, Haarlemmer carries a scrap of parchment in his pocket. It bears the glove and scroll symbol of the Geheimebond, and an address in the Hague. Third, tied on a cord about his neck, Haarlemmer carries a silver key.

The address is indeed a secret headquarters building for the Dutch Geheimebond (the scrap was ripped from Haarlemmer's instructions for where to take the stolen documents). The key is to Haarlemmer's secret entrance at the back of the building. These two items should allow the party to infiltrate the Geheimebond, and steal back the Rhine Military Clause documents from the Dutch.

RECOVERING THE SECRET DOCUMENT

The address in Haarlemmer's pocket will lead the characters to a tall, thin townhouse, located on a narrow street in a poor area of the Hague. It would appear to be a tenement, were it not for a fancy carriage parked in front. The arms on the side of the carriage are those of the Hertog Van Almsvelt. The front entrance is guarded by the coachman and two cavaliers in civilian dress (although they are actually soldiers from the Dutch Civil Guard). Two alleyways, lead to the back of the townhouse.

In back of the townhouse is a little cobblestone cul-de-sac where local women do their washing. At first, there will be no apparent entrance to the house. Each player-character may attempt a roll against Luck $\times \frac{1}{2}$ or Wit $\times \frac{1}{2}$ (player's choice; +3 for Espionage skill) to notice a low doorway hidden behind a stack of beer-barrels. The door has a tiny silver lock (matching Haarlemmer's key) and the symbol of a glove and a scroll has been lightly etched into the wood, just above the door

handle. The washer women are used to seeing cavaliers go in and out of this door at all hours and they will not notice the player-characters unless they act peculiar. If the women do become suspicious, and none of the player-characters can explain in Dutch, the women will raise the alarm, and call for the city guards.

Behind the rear door is a spiral staircase leading straight up for three stories. At the top, the characters will hear muffled voices from beyond a small metal door. Any character who can make a Wit roll will recognize the voices as those of the Hertog Van Almsvelt and Jan Van Rijsweg. They are discussing the trap laid by Van Rijsweg for the party, in Dutch. Characters who look through the keyhole of the door will see the pair of Dutch agents, standing by a desk covered with papers and documents, in a little garret room. After a short time, the Hertog will hand Van Rijsweg a purse full of coins, and leave through a door opposite the one by which the party waits. Van Rijsweg will hide the purse in his boot, and then sit down at the desk (preparing to make the stolen document legible . . .).

At this point, the player-characters have an excellent opportunity to surprise Van Rijsweg and to recover the stolen papers. The door to the garret is locked, but it opens with the silver key. When Van Rijsweg hears the bolt turn, he will assume that it is his servant, Haarlemmer, returning from assassinating the party. He will start giving more orders, over his shoulder, without turning around. His surprise will be great when he discovers that he is trapped with the player-characters!

Van Rijsweg will be caught red-handed. He has just started to heat the documents and to decode them. The player-characters will quickly recognize the Rhine Military Clause among the papers on the desk. Among the other papers on the desk, there is one other of great importance. Any character carefully watching Van Rijsweg may make a Luck roll (+3 for Espionage skill) to notice him trying to cover another document up on the desk before the player-characters can inspect it. This document is a list of various Dutch agents of the secret Geheimebond, stationed in many branches of the French government. It is in Dutch, but characters reading it will notice Dutch names, French code-names, and the names of French cities and organizations. These clues should be sufficient to reveal the nature of the document. Such a list would be priceless to the Cardinal.

In addition to the two documents, the player-characters know that Van Rijsweg stuffed a purse of money in his boot. This purse contains 500 Guilders (approximately 250 Livres). It is blood money, paid to insure the deaths of the player-characters.

After either killing or tying up Van Rijsweg, the player-characters may quickly escape from the Geheimebond townhouse by the way they came in.

CONCLUSION

Once he is informed that the stolen document has been recovered, M. de Bienvenu will prepare to leave the Hague. The Netherlands will

become a very dangerous place for the player-characters after they discover the lists of Geheimebond agents in France. It will be even more dangerous if they killed Van Rijsweg. The Ambassador will inform the Dutch Civil Guardsmen protecting him that he is preparing to take a brief carriage ride around the town. When the carriage is brought, he will smuggle the player-characters inside, and ride off for the Hook of Holland, followed later by the rest of his entourage. This should give the troupe a jump on the Geheimebond, who still assume that M. de Bienvenu will stay for a few more days of negotiations. At the Hook of Holland, the Ambassador will meet an English sloop, the *Swift*, scheduled to take him to Harwich. He and the party should escape Holland before the Geheimebond is able to organize a chase.

M. de Bienvenu will be very pleased to hear that the player-characters have not only recovered the stolen document, but also revealed a false agent of the Cardinal, and discovered a list of Dutch agents in France. The Cardinal, he will assure the party, will pay very highly for such valuable information.

The Geheimebond will undoubtedly become an implacable enemy of the player-characters in future adventures. The Hertog Van Almsvelt and Van Rijsweg (and Wilhelm Haarlemmer if still alive) may return to hound the party. The Cardinal could also assign the player-characters to help weed out Dutch spies on the list when they return to France, bringing them into direct conflict again with the Geheimebond.



- 1: Royal Palace
- 2: Town Hall
- 3: The Binnenhof
- 4: Stables
- 5: Ambassador's Townhouse
- 6: Secret Geheimebond Headquarters
- : Major Church

Diplomatic Immunity

INTRODUCTION

The final adventure of *An Ambassador's Tales* is *Diplomatic Immunity*. After escaping from a dangerous stay in the Netherlands, the player-characters will embark on the *Swift* for an even more dangerous stay in England, that ancient rival of France and bastion of Protestantism. The *Swift* will land at Harwich. From there, the party will accompany M. de Bienvenu to London, and then journey down southeast, to book reliable passage back across the Channel for the troupe's return to France.

Next, Sir Lawrence of Dorset, the English negotiator meeting with M. de Bienvenu, will send the party north to an estate in Norfolk, to pick up some important papers for the Ambassador. This is actually just a ruse. With orders from the King, Dorset plans to seize M. de Bienvenu and his documents and to incarcerate him in the Tower of London as a spy. According to Dorset's plans, the party will be sent to Norfolk, where they cannot protect their Ambassador, and where a trap has been laid. Lord Pepperbox, a tough old colonial, has been ordered to do away with the player-characters. Only a timely warning will save the characters from their dire fate.

Diplomatic Immunity must necessarily end with an escape from England. Pursued on all sides by the henchmen of Lord Pepperbox and Royal troops, the party must return to Dover, and slip across the Channel quickly.

THE CROSSING

Crossing the North Sea from the Hook of Holland to Harwich aboard the *Swift* should take two days. The sloop will be met at the harbor by a carriage and six horses (for the player-characters) and an escort of six Royal cavalry troopers. The party may open its final envelope of instructions as the carriage rolls out of the little port town towards London. The contents read as follows:

'Messieurs,

Accompany M. de Bienvenu to London, where he is to meet Sir Lawrence of Dorset. Leave him there, and travel to Dover. Hire a swift vessel there and order it to prepare to sail on a minute's notice. Then return to London and await M. de Bienvenu's further orders.

*By my own hand,
Richelieu'*

M. de Bienvenu's instructions, should the party have access to them, are as shown below:

'Monsieur,

Meet Sir Lawrence of Dorset at his manse in London and discuss the possible trade of the Catholic League Documents for the Parliamentary Armament Papers. Your situation during these delicate negotiations may become dangerous at any time. If this happens, return to France and report to me as quickly as possible.

*By my own hand,
Richelieu'*

LONDON AND DOVER

The greater part of the day will be spent traveling to London. The carriage and escort will approach the great city from the northeast, along the Whitechapel Road. They will journey through the heart of old London, through Cheapside, past St. Paul's, and along Fleet Street to the Strand and Covent Garden. Just beyond, in Mayfair, is the suburban manse of Sir Lawrence of Dorset, a splendid white classical building. As the player-characters approach, they will notice guards in the dress of fusiliers all around the estate. Dorset, the trusted representative and agent of King Charles I, will come out in a rich officer's uniform, to welcome the Ambassador and his entourage. He is a perfect

gentleman and he speaks excellent French.

After a formal greeting, Dorset will invite M. de Bienvenu and the party inside. Accommodations have been made for the troupe in the finest suite in the manse, and all of the luxuries of the house are at the Ambassador's command. Dorset will mention, in passing, that the manse is well-guarded by a detachment of pikemen from an Essex regiment.

When the player-characters announce that they must go to Dover independently, Dorset will be displeased. M. de Bienvenu will quickly cover for the characters, if necessary, explaining that it is necessary for his assistants to send word of his arrival back to the Cardinal. Dorset will allow the party to go, with an 'escort' of as many English cavaliers as there are player-characters. The party may leave whenever they wish (probably the next morning). Horses will be provided by Dorset.

The ride to Dover is one of nearly six hours through the countryside of Kent. At the end of the day, the party and its escort will come to a little Inn, just outside the town of Dover. Here, they will stop to make arrangements for the night. The horses will be taken to the stables and two cavaliers from the escort will go to tend to them. The rest of the escort will follow the party on foot into Dover.

Dover is a picturesque little port, famous for its white cliffs and smuggling trade. Due to the Channel trade, the player-characters will have no trouble finding ship captains who speak French. Due to the criminal nature of Dover's economy, they will also have no trouble finding captains who are willing to ferry them in dangerous circumstances, and able to keep a secret . . . for a price.

Problems will arise with the escort. If the party does not split up, members of the escort will follow it around everywhere, and the player-characters will be unable to keep their plans secret. Because two cavaliers stayed behind at the Inn, however, some of the party should be able to distract the remaining escort guards, while the others make a deal with a ship's captain.

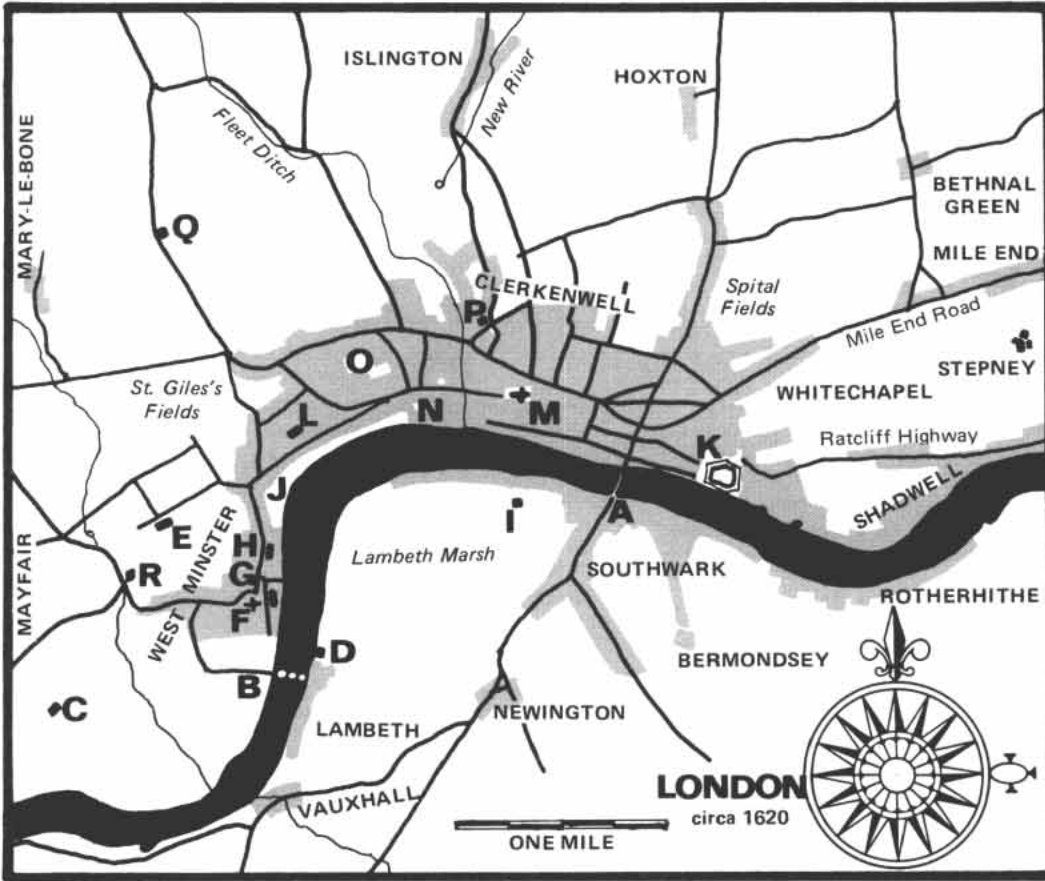
The characters who give the escort the slip will find a sleek little schooner, called the *Warwick Greyhound*, which will suit their purposes admirably. The captain has a mercenary mentality and is willing to do anything for a price. He will take the Ambassador and his troupe across the Channel to Calais on a minute's notice, for a fee of 100 Pounds (approximately 200 Livres). He will demand all of the money 'up front.' Any character with Bargaining or Bribery skill may get the captain to take half of the money as a deposit, and the balance upon arrival in Calais, if he can make a successful Charm roll (+2 if he has both Bargaining and Bribery skills; +1 for Captaincy skill). This will assure the party that the slippery fellow will keep his mouth shut about the whole affair.

Next, the party must walk back to the Inn. The escort of cavaliers will try to figure out what the player-characters did in Dover. They may try to get some of the party drunk, to pump them for information. Any character with Carousing skill who can make a successful roll against Endurance will drink all of the cavaliers under the table. This will give the party some free time in the evening to charter the *Warwick Greyhound*, if they were not able to do so earlier. If the cavaliers are left under the tables in the evening, they will look a bit green and under the weather the next morning, much to the party's amusement.

Once the *Warwick Greyhound* is booked, the party and its escort may ride back to Dorset's manse in London, the next day, to rejoin M. de Bienvenu and the rest of the Ambassador's entourage.

THE SECRET MISSION

When the player-characters arrive back at the Dorset manse, M. de Bienvenu will meet them and inform them that he has special instructions for them. Sir Lawrence of Dorset has agreed to certain negotiations with M. de Bienvenu. He wishes the Ambassador to send the party up to Norfolk with a secret message for another of the King's



- LONDON MAP KEY**
- A: London Bridge
 - B: Horse Ferry
 - C: Ebury Farm
 - D: Lambeth Palace
 - E: St. James's Palace
 - F: Westminster Abbey
 - G: Parliament
 - H: Whitehall
 - I: Globe Theatre
 - J: The Strand
 - K: The Tower of London
 - L: Covent Garden
 - M: St. Paul's Cathedral
 - N: Temple
 - O: Lincoln's Inn Fields
 - P: Gray's Inn
 - Q: Tottenham Court
 - R: Dorset's Manse

representatives, Lord Pepperbox. Dorset has written the secret message in code, and provided a travel visa for each player-character, allowing free passage through Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. M. de Bienvenu does not fully trust Dorset, and will warn the player-characters to be careful. He is, himself, prepared to flee at any moment to Dover, and he promises to send word quickly to the party if he does so.

The party will travel to Norfolk without escort. The players should begin to notice some inconsistencies in this secret mission. If the nature of the mission is so secret, why doesn't Dorset send a detachment of cavaliers or a trusted servant instead of a band of Frenchmen? If Dorset thought it necessary to have the player-characters 'escorted' to Dover, why doesn't he send an escort with them to Norfolk? If the players don't think of these questions themselves, the Gamemaster should mention them to a character with Espionage skill. The player-characters must still perform the mission (under the orders of M. de Bienvenu), but these suspicions should lead them to be wary of the treachery to come.

Any character who has History skill or has been to the West Indies will recognize the name of Pepperbox. Lord Pepperbox was, for many years, the Lieutenant Governor of Barbados. He had a cruel reputation, and specialized in breaking European convicts into tobacco slaves. Upon his return to England, he was rewarded by the King and made a peer of the Realm.

The visa papers for the player-characters appear legitimate (in fact, they are purposely falsified; any English Magistrate will recognize them as fakes). The 'secret message' supposedly instructing Lord Pepperbox to send the party back with new documents, is actually a death warrant for the player-characters. It is written in English and in code. If the player-characters wish to read it, they must first break Dorset's seal on the envelope (a character with Forgery skill who can make a successful Dexterity roll can replace it). Only if some party members have English and Espionage skills can the letter be decoded and translated (the same character need not have both skills, two characters can work together to decipher the letter). The character (or characters) working on deciphering the letter must make successful Wit rolls. The translated message is but a single sentence (a quote from Shakespeare's *King Henry V*):

'It is no English treason to cut French crowns, and to-morrow the King himself will be the clipper.'

This is all the prompting Lord Pepperbox will need to do away with the player-characters.





THE PEPPERBOX ESTATE

Each player-character will be provided with a riding horse for the journey to Norfolk. The Pepperbox estate is near Norwich, and the ride to it should take about a day and a half.

After the first day of riding, the party must stop for the evening at a small wayside Inn in Suffolk. It will cost 1 Pound (2 Livres) for each character. As (bad) luck would have it, a squad of Bedford Musketeers are also staying at the inn. They have no great love for Frenchmen. First, they will demand to see the party's visas. They are, however, too dimwitted to notice the forgery, and will begrudgingly return the visas and allow the party to stay in the Inn.

In the evening, the Musketeers will sit around the common room of the Inn, drinking beer. As they become more and more intoxicated, they will start to tell jokes about Frenchmen, and to loudly insult any party members present (in English, of course). If the player-characters get angry, a brawl could result. There are as many Bedford Musketeers in the common room as there are player-characters in the party. Each has 13 Hit Points, Brawling Expertise 14, and wears Musketeers' armor. They will not draw weapons unless the player-characters do. The best option for the player-characters is really just to ignore the insults and resist the temptation to fight. It will be difficult for a character with the Secret 'Duelist' (or perhaps an anti-Protestant 'Religious Fanatic') to keep from brawling.

The next day, the party will ride on to the Pepperbox estate, arriving in the early afternoon. It is a huge Tudor mansion surrounded by acres of choice countryside. A pale and lean servant, riding a fine grey horse, will ride out to the player-characters to ask their business. His name is Master Matthew Talant, and he is the overseer of the Pepperbox estate. He speaks reasonable French. When informed of the party's mission, he will flash the characters a sneer-like smile, revealing a livid scar on his chin, and invite the party into the mansion drawing room. The horses will be taken to the stables by other servants. Talant himself will go to tell his master about the arrival of the party.

While the characters wait, two beautiful young ladies, Lord Pepperbox's twin daughters, will descend on a flight of steps from the upper story. They are so absorbed in an argument that they will not at first notice the party. Both are thin, with fair, almost silvery hair and clear blue eyes. They wear neat, identical Elizabethan dresses, and small diamond necklaces. One appears to be aggressively intimidating her sister. She wears a red ribbon about her neck. The other, who is close to tears, wears a white ribbon. Otherwise, they appear so much alike that they are indistinguishable.

When they suddenly see the party, the twins will stop arguing, and will blush. They both speak fluent French. The aggressive sister will introduce herself, disdainfully, as Charlotte Pepperbox. The timid sister, who seems dazzled by the dashing French player-characters, will introduce herself as Amanda Pepperbox, and will politely welcome the party to her father's estate. It will appear that Amanda would like to sit down and speak further with the player-characters, but her sister, Charlotte, will drag her away, saying in English: 'Come, Amanda, we've no time for this nonsense!' As she leaves, Amanda will shoot a desperate glance over her shoulder at the player-character with the highest Charm.

Soon after the twins leave the drawing-room, Master Talant will return to conduct the party to Lord Pepperbox. The Lord sits behind a big desk in his spacious oak-paneled study. The walls are lined with various guns and swords, maps of the West Indies, commendations from the King, and even a few books. Lord Pepperbox himself closely resembles an old walrus. He is dressed simply, as a soldier. Talant will close the doors behind the party and will then take a position just behind Lord Pepperbox, on his right side.

First the Lord will demand to see the party's message, and their travel visas. Lord Pepperbox does not speak French. If none of the player-characters speak English, Master Talant will act as interpreter. After looking over the secret message, the Lord will turn slightly and give Talant a look. Then the Lord will proceed to carefully read the

party's visa papers. 'Ah! I see the problem!' he will exclaim, 'Your papers are not at all in order. Oh, it's alright, just a minor oversight. I'll be able to correct it quickly. In the meantime, however, I must extend my hospitality to you, gentlemen. It would be dangerous for you to travel with incorrect visas — you could be arrested as spies. No, I won't hear of it! you will stay at my mansion tonight, and I'll have new papers prepared for you in the morning.'

The Lord will not hear of any protestations. He will direct Master Talant to show the player-characters to a comfortable suite on the mansion's upper floor. By this time, it should be late afternoon, nearly sunset. Talant will inform the party that dinner will be served in the grand dining hall, in several hours.

THE WARNING

At dinner, the player-characters will sit at a long table with Lord Pepperbox, his two daughters, and Master Talant. The dinner conversation (all in English) will revolve around the Lord recounting his adventures a Lieutenant Governor of Barbados. Even for English speaking characters, it will be fairly dull. The meal itself, in the best old English tradition, will be leg of mutton, served on pieces of stale bread (in lieu of plates). Two huge goblets will be filled with powerful ale, and passed around the table. For more refined French palates, it will not be a pleasant meal.

In the middle of the dinner, Amanda will pass the character with the highest Charm the goblet of ale, and lightly pinch him on the wrist. He will notice that wrapped around the base of the goblet is a little strip of parchment. It is scented like roses, and the message written on it, in an elegant feminine hand, reads:

'My father plans to have you and your companions killed. I must talk to you privately. Sneak out of your suite tonight at midnight, and wait below my balcony.'

*With sincere affection,
Amanda Pepperbox'*

This should awaken the characters to the dangerous position they are in. After dinner, the various members of the household will retire to their chambers, and the player-characters will be expected to do so too. Two 'stewards' will be stationed outside the door to the party's suite, to 'attend' to the needs of the player-characters. They are, of course, stationed there as watch-dogs, to make sure the party stays put. Master Talant will leave the mansion after dinner, in the direction of the stables.

By midnight, the two stewards outside the suite will be sound asleep and snoring loudly. A character may sneak by them if he can make a successful roll against his Dexterity (+3, +3 more if he has Stealth skill). Once in the hall, it is a simple matter to sneak down the steps to the first floor. Next, the character must choose between

going outside through the front door or a window. Using the front door entails opening all the bolts and bars, and leaving it ajar for the character's return. The windows are unlocked, but are very fragile. Undue force used to open the sash could result in a broken pane of glass, which would surely attract household attendants. A roll against Dexterity or Luck (player's choice, +3; +3 more for Stealth skill; -2 for a Stocky character) is necessary to avoid breaking part of a window.

Outside, only one balcony is visible on the mansion: that of the room shared by Amanda and her sister, Charlotte. When the character sneaks below the balcony, he will notice Amanda's slim form slip out of her room. They will be able to have a quick, whispered conversation in French, in which Amanda will inform the character that he has been betrayed, and that Lord Pepperbox is preparing to kill the party. He has sent Matthew Talant to Norwich to bring some city guards to arrest the characters in the early morning, on the charge of espionage (their incorrect visas are to be used as evidence). If they resist in any way, Talant and the guards will murder them. Otherwise, they will receive a brief, unfair trial and summary execution in Norwich. Amanda accidentally overheard her father giving these instructions to Talant as she listened at his study door. She will blushing admit that she was listening to learn more about the dashing French messengers.

Amanda has fallen head-over-heels in love with the charming player-character. She suggests that he and his friends steal their horses from the stables and escape from the Pepperbox estate in the night. She begs the character to take her with him, back to France. Her identical twin, Charlotte, is always cruel to her, and her father plans to marry her off to a buck-toothed Earl. Amanda has nothing to keep her in England. She will get the character to agree to meet her in the drawing-room, in an hour's time, for the escape.

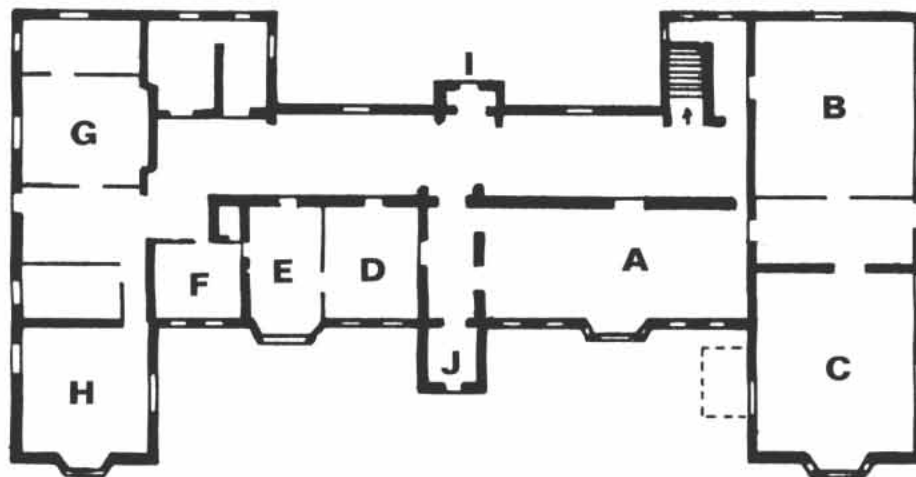
Just as the charming character and Amanda finish their conversation, a voice will be heard from inside, calling 'Amanda! Amanda, are you out on the balcony?' Quickly blowing a kiss to the player-character, Amanda will answer: 'Yes, sister, I couldn't sleep, and I decided to enjoy the night air.' Then she will reenter her chamber, and the player-character must sneak back to his companions inside.

TREACHERY

It will take the player-characters some time to prepare for the escape. First, they must prepare and load their weapons. Then, they have to get their horses from the stables. Pepperbox, to prevent any escape attempt, has stationed two stout grooms in the stables to watch over the horses. They are drowsy, but not asleep like the stewards. Each has 14 Hit Points and no armor. They are armed with clubs (Brawling Expertise 15). The party must overcome the grooms quietly (without gunfire or swordplay) to steal the horses without awakening the entire household.

Finally, before they make good their escape, the characters must

PEPPERBOX HALL



A: Main Hall, where the characters first wait
B: Drawing Room
C: Large Dining Room
D: Small Dining Room
E: Lord Pepperbox's Office/Library

F: Pantry
G: Kitchen
H: Servants' Hall
I: Front Door, Main Door
J: Rear Door

Amanda's room is above Room 'C' and the dotted line shows location of the balcony. The visiting characters are quartered above room 'G.'



meet Amanda in the drawing-room. Unbeknownst to the party, however, Charlotte heard most of Amanda's conversation with the charming player-character. When Amanda reentered her room, Charlotte surprised her, tied her up, and switched ribbons with her. It will be Charlotte, who remains loyal to her father, waiting for the party in the drawing room.

At first, Charlotte will play along with the masquerade, mimicking Amanda's mannerisms, and fawning over the charming character. He will only be able to detect that it is not really Amanda if he can make a successful Wit roll (-3) while speaking to her. A player who becomes suspicious, even if the roll is unsuccessful, may figure out some other way to detect the substitution (by quizzing her on the wording of her hidden message, for instance). If the player-characters don't figure out the switch, Charlotte will continue to play Amanda's part until she can really hurt the party (i.e. by giving them away later as they are being chased). If the characters figure out Charlotte's game quickly, they may have time to tie her up and rescue Amanda before leaving the Pepperbox estate.

THE ESCAPE

The player-characters should get a good head-start ahead of their enemies by leaving in the middle of the night. If the alarm is not sounded because of something the party does (firing shots, for instance, or waking the stewards stationed at their door), the escape will not be noticed until the early morning, when Master Talant returns from Norwich with twenty mounted guardsmen. At this time, Lord Pepperbox will send him off on the road south to hunt down and kill the player-characters.

The characters must follow the coastal road south (leading first to London, and then down to Dover). They may estimate that, riding night and day, and taking time out only to rest their horses, the journey should take just over a day to get to London, and another six hours to get to Dover. Talant and the guardsmen will be slightly faster, because they can ride in plain sight, and switch horses along the way.

Also, unbeknownst to the party, M. de Bienvenu has narrowly escaped capture and imprisonment in London, and has started to flee to Dover. He has sent one of his Non-Player guards north on a horse with a coded message for the party, reading: *'We are betrayed — Meet me in Dover'* Sir Lawrence of Dorset, infuriated by the Ambassador's

escape, has sent out several squads of royal troopers along the roads to Dover and the coastal road north. They have been given orders to kill M. de Bienvenu or any of the player-characters that they find.

The flight south to Dover must be divided into a thirty-two hour journey, with a pattern of seven hours of riding, one hour of rest, seven hours of riding, one more hour of rest, and eight more hours of riding. When the player-character rest their horses, they may hide in the brush or forested land by the wayside. For each hour of the flight, roll 1D6. A roll of 6 indicates an encounter of some kind. Roll another D6 to determine the exact nature of each encounter by consulting the table below:

Roll Encounter

- 1 or 2 Matthew Talant and twenty guardsmen from Norwich catch up with the party. The party has a 2 in 6 chance of seeing them first, and having time to hide. Talant and his posse have only a 2 in 6 chance of noticing signs of hidden characters as they pass.
- 3 Twenty royal troopers sent by Dorset come riding from the south. The party has a 2 in 6 chance of seeing them first, and having time to hide. The cavaliers have only a 2 in 6 chance of noticing signs of hidden characters as they pass. The royal cavaliers must be sure of the identities of the player-characters before they attack, and must thus close to short range to identify them before firing (they will, of course, fire back, if fired upon). They have been given detailed descriptions of the player-characters, and even if the characters are disguised, they should be able to spot the party's French-style clothing and equipment.
- The royal cavaliers are armed and armored as Carabiniers. Each has Expertise 14 with his sabre, Expertise 12 with his carbine, and 12 Hit Points. They are well-trained, and will not break or flee, unless obviously beaten.
- 4 or 5 The messenger from M. de Bienvenu rides up. He has been riding hard, and his horse is well-foamed. He keeps looking over his shoulder as he rides. The player-characters will quickly recognize him as one of M. de Bienvenu's NPC guards. He is armed and armored as a fusilier, and may help reinforce the player-characters as they continue their flight.

If the player-characters meet the messenger before reaching London, subtract one hour from the travel time necessary (due

to being able to bypass London by quicker roads). Once the messenger is met, later encounter rolls of 4 or 5 indicate squads of royal cavaliers.

6 By the side of the road, the player-characters spot three parti-colored tents and a group of people in outrageous costumes. They are the Thomas Willoughby Players, a traveling acting troupe. They will be practicing a comedy by the wayside as the party approaches. They invite all passers-by to stop and watch the performance for ten shillings (1 Livre). When the player-characters pass, there will be no other spectators.

The party may join the Players in a number of ways. The Gamemaster may force the player-characters to hide with the acting troupe (disguised in costumes) by having a squad of royal cavaliers pass along the road. Alternatively, the troupe's leading lady, a beautiful gypsy woman named Jaquenetta, may become interested in the most wealthy-looking character, and invite the party to stay with the Players.

Thomas Willoughby himself is a crafty, ferret-faced man. He speaks good French. He will be eager to take in French characters as it is his dream to take his company to Paris someday (he is sure it will be a great success). The Players are on their way south (towards Canterbury, near Dover) anyway, and will provide a perfect cover for the party. At the Gamemaster's discretion, Willoughby may sell the player-characters out to the authorities, or he may try to get influential characters to promise him passage to Paris with the party for his troupe. At any rate, the Gamemaster and the players should have fun with the whole masquerade.

Once the player-characters arrive in Dover, they may sneak down to the *Warwick Greyhound*, where M. de Bienvenu waits in disguise. As soon as they arrive, the schooner will slip out of the harbor, towards France.

If the Gamemaster is familiar with the *High Seas* ship combat rules, he may add tension to the Channel crossing by having the *Warwick Greyhound* encounter an English patrol ship. When the schooner attempts to evade, the patrol ship will bear down. The *Warwick Greyhound* counts as a heavily armed Corsair. The government vessel counts as a lightly armed Small Warship.

When the Ambassador and what remains of his entourage finally land at Calais, they will find three splendid red carriages and a detachment of thirty-two mounted troopers from the Cardinal's Guard waiting to take them back to Paris.

MASTER MATTHEW TALANT

Lean Matthew Talant is an enemy to be feared. He is a tenacious English bulldog, who never gives up. Talant was once a pirate, who was captured and sentenced to death, but pardoned by Lord Peppercorn, when he was Lieutenant Governor of Barbados. Now he is Peppercorn's trusted servant, agent, and overseer of estates. Once given a mission, he never stops until it succeeds.

Talant will arrive at Dover just an hour after the party. If a patrol ship is sent against the *Warwick Greyhound*, he will be aboard her. If the ship fails to capture or kill the player-characters, he will pursue them to France, and eventually track them down in Paris. The Gamemaster should devise ambushes by Talant for later adventures. Perhaps

he will even join forces with the party's other enemies to plot its downfall.

Talant's precise statistics are listed below:

Master Matthew Talant:

Strength 15
Dexterity 16
Endurance 15
Wit 17
Charm 13
Luck 16

Hit Points: 19

Armor:

Leather Jerkin (2 on Chest and Flank)
Gauntlets & Sleeves (2 on Arms)
Buckler (as parrying device)

Attacks:

Cutlass (Expertise 19)

Chance to Hit: 15
Chance to Parry: 14
with Buckler: 16

Throwing Dagger (Expertise 18)

Chance to Hit: 16

Flintlock Arquebus (Expertise 17)

Chance to Hit: 13

Skills:

Acrobatics, Captaincy, Carousing, Espionage, Gambling, Horsemanship, Languages (English, French, Pirate Patois), Seamanship, Tracking.

FINAL REWARDS

Upon returning to Paris, the surviving player-characters will receive their final rewards from the Cardinal. First, all characters will be paid normally, as agreed. As expenses paid by the characters (such as the fee for the Channel passage) will be reimbursed. A special bonus of 200 to 400 Livres will be paid to each character if the secret list of Geheimebond spies is given to the Cardinal (the Gamemaster should gauge the exact amount of this bonus for each character depending upon his participation in the theft). In addition, any character who performed a particularly heroic deed (in the Gamemaster's estimation) to further one of the five missions, will receive a bonus of up to 500 Livres (the exact amount is to be determined by the Gamemaster).

Second, each character of Social Rank 4 or above who participated in all five adventures of the campaign, and has successfully completed his mission in each, has performed a great service for the King and realm. If untitled, he will be given the rank of Chevalier. If he is already titled, he will advance by one rank (i.e. from Count to Marquis). Those characters of Social Rank 3 or below will be given a commendation of honor (which will increase their Social Rank by 2 points) and an extra 100 Livres.

Third, each character in the Military or Bureaucracy, or in a Club or Order, may make an immediate roll for opening. If there is an opening, the character will be promoted. Characters in the Cardinal's Guard Company, or in the Clergy will be automatically promoted one rank. Characters who are not associated with any particular branch of government will be allowed to join the Military (in the Cardinal's Guard, as a Sergeant), the Clergy (as a Student of Theology) or the Bureaucracy (as a Bureaucrat) if they wish. A special month must be spent in learning the required skills if the characters are unqualified.

Finally, those characters who wish to, may remain in the service of the Cardinal. This is equivalent to both the Advantage 'Contact' and the Secret 'Secret Loyalty.' Later missions for the Cardinal may be suggested by, or continued from *An Ambassador's Tales* (i.e. weeding out the Geheimebond spies in the French government).

FLASHING BLADES MINIATURES AVAILABLE

Frontier Miniatures has just been licensed to produce a line of 25mm scale miniatures for use with *Flashing Blades*. The first twelve figures in this line should be available by the time *An Ambassador's Tales* reaches final form.

Interested GMs and players should write to Frontier Miniatures at 7343 Branding Iron, Canutillo, Texas 79835. A listing of the available miniatures will be sent to you (you might also be interested in the many 19th Century lines of miniatures in production at Frontier).

Frontier Miniatures produces a truly excellent figure with excellent detail. These are truly 'state-of-the-art' miniatures and should satisfy the most demanding gamer.

The initial twelve figures have been created as a line to cover the major types of character backgrounds within *Flashing Blades*, as well as the most important NPC types (Cardinal Richelieu, women, etc.). This line will be expanded if the demand is anywhere near what is expected by both FGU and Frontier Miniatures.