



Miseries & Misfortunes: a roleplaying game set in 1648 France
by Luke Crane



MISERIES & MISFORTUNES BOOK I

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INDICIA

ISBN: 978-0-9976220-0-3 | © Copyright 2022 Luke Crane
Second edition revised | Second printing (5th overall) | Summer 2022

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This is a work of historical fiction. Everyone in here except us is dead. If we have misrepresented your ancestors or your culture, let us know. We want to learn.

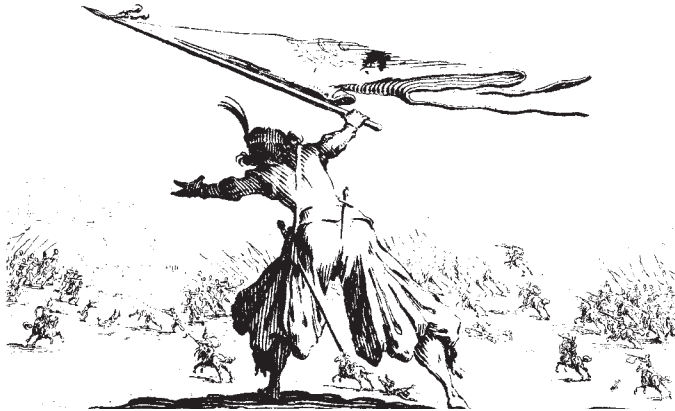
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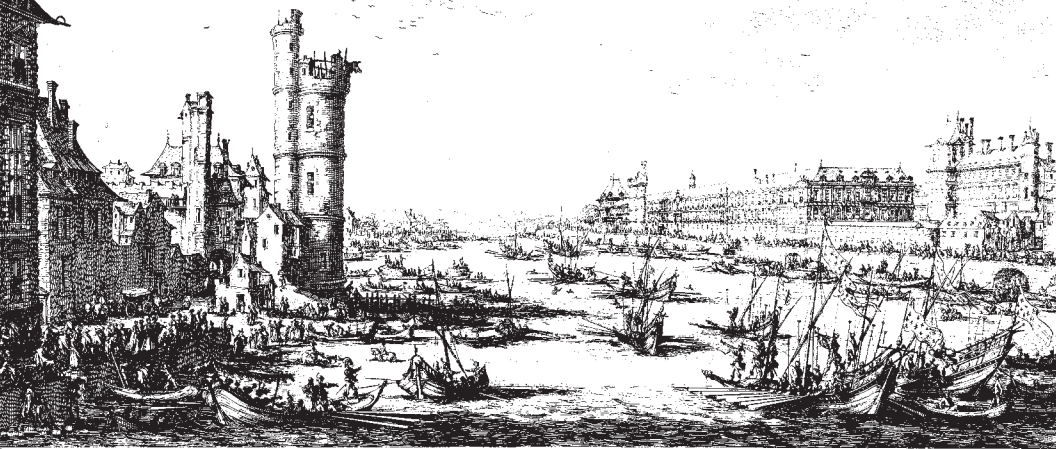
*Such are the marks of glory of antiquity, our new world can't help but smile at their remembrance
Having no other end than immortality, the Graces and Love have made a covenant*

Miseries & Misfortunes

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In France

Discontent had long pervaded the lower ranks of society in France. Crushed and impoverished by taxation—imposed by Mazarin, whose avarice impelled him to grind them down to the very dust—the people, as the Advocate-General Talon described it, had nothing left to them except their souls; and as those could not be sold by auction, they began to murmur.

—Alexander Dumas, *Twenty Years After*

Uprisings and tax revolts are common in the countryside and second cities of France. When the *partisans*¹ arrive in town with their armed guards to extract the *aides*, *tailles* and *gabelles*, the people mutter and threaten to drown these blood-sucking snakes in the river.

France in the midst of the seventeenth century is a kingdom of roughly 18 million. And while Paris is the largest, most populous city in Europe, the majority of the French live in the countryside as peasants, farmers, monks, manufacturers, traders and officials.

A small fraction of France's people—perhaps only 200,000—are styled as nobles. The elite of this ruling class are unimaginably wealthy, residing in opulent, crumbling manors, townhouses and castles. However most nobles live in genteel poverty, without land, income or title, unable to support themselves or their dependents.

1 *Partisan* is the term of the age for private individuals who buy tax collection contracts and then collect, keeping a percentage of the take. Also known as tax farmers.

Yet, these same nobles prosecute an endless, grinding war with Hapsburg Spain and the moribund Holy Roman Empire along the borders of France. The war has stretched more than a generation. Peace negotiations have stagnated. There is no end in sight.

Author's Introduction

As you might have guessed, I am fascinated with this time and place. In it, I see the two rivers of medievalism and modernity flowing together. Medievalism is in retreat, but it still mixes heavily with the dawn tides of the modern world. In this confluence: political philosophy takes a modern turn with humanism in the seventeenth century; chymistry inches toward scientific method while searching for a divine truth in angels and demons; Christian religion violently reforms itself into something more egalitarian than its former Catholic domination; warfare becomes a terrifying mix of evolving technology and brutal medieval tactics; climate change grips Europe, lengthening its winters; and famine and disease follow the long winter's cold tread, reaping humanity like so much wheat.

Yet it is also an age of brilliant art and thought. Shakespeare strides onto the stage at the dawn of the century. Velazquez paints in Madrid, Rembrandt in Amsterdam. Callot etches in Nancy. Allegri composes in Italy. Theater, painting, etching, music and nearly every other premodern art form flourishes, despite the despots, destruction and desolation that reign over the human heart.

As ships bring goods and gold from Japan to Amsterdam, we see a thriving global circulatory system—humanity in full stride across the seas and continents, sharing culture and commiseration. But these intrepid souls saw the future so very differently than we do. For them, there was no inexorable march of progress, no eradication of disease, no ever-expanding information network.

In 1648, there is no hope, no future of humanity. The dominant Christian sects believe that we are all corrupt, living in a fallen world. Our only option is to purify ourselves, our governments and our thoughts, and in so doing, bring about Heaven on Earth. The alternative is too much to bear, because if this blistered, bruised globe isn't Hell, then the Inferno is truly something to fear.

To my mind, *Miseries & Misfortunes* is the most difficult type of fantasy game to design and play. Rather than having the game act as wishful fulfillment or a metaphor for an issue of our own time, the game seeks to challenge the player to see the world through an alien lens and to act in a way foreign to their experience—that of the past. Do not look at this place through your contemporary eyes. View this landscape as one who must live in this world, without hope of escape or salvation. What will you make of your short life?

MISERIES & MISFORTUNES SECOND EDITION

This is the revised second edition of *Miseries & Misfortunes*. The first edition was a cheeky, poorly edited stab at converting *Basic Dungeons & Dragons* classes to a facsimile of seventeenth century tropes. It was fun, but it didn't quite work—especially the experience and skill systems.

This version represents my attempts to fix those systems. My design philosophy is holistic, so I could not simply tweak one system without adjusting and rebalancing other related systems. The result has taken a shape that surprises even me. While it uses the traditional *Dungeons & Dragons*-style core mechanisms, I have developed a new skill system, combat system, social combat system, experience system, mitigation system, lifepath system and magic system to better represent the setting.

That said, this is not what one would consider a contemporary roleplaying game. There are some counterintuitive systems—roll high combat vs roll low skills. And its philosophy is staunchly traditional: Your characters exist in a world that doesn't care about them. And while we will likely care about our characters in the end, despite our feelings, they will die in tragic moments of bad luck or ignominy.

I should warn you that you're reading a system book only. While the setting lives in the rules, there's little history to read. There are no scenarios, no monsters and no treasure. This book is for the few kindred souls out there who love seventeenth-century history or historical fiction well enough to paint a credible picture.

Bonne chance, mes amis. As Porthos so sagaciously reminds us:
“At this game, whoever does not kill is killed.”



Callot; or a note on the etchings

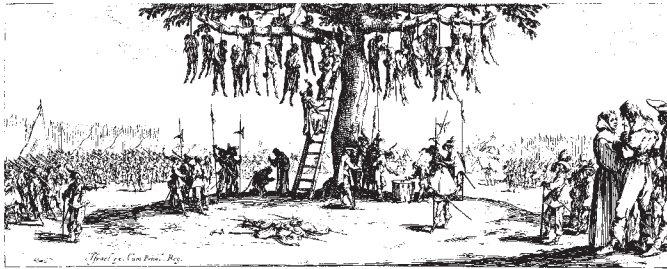
In 1633, a nobleman from Lorraine—an independent duchy neighboring northeastern France—petitioned the suspicious, preoccupied and powerful king of France, Louis XIII. As was customary, this noble—one Jacques Callot—asked the king if he may have his imprimatur to publish in Paris a folio of images depicting the horrors of war. At the time, all publications had to be licensed by the king. The king—or perhaps was it the great Cardinal Richelieu himself?—granted permission without hesitation. Despite their bellicose natures, both did love art and artists.

Callot was a master of his craft. In his work, he refined and developed new methods for etching and print-making. In 1633, his plates to date included bucolic hunts and comical dwarves, but here and now he had a will to tell a different story. Callot set about producing a series of 18 highly detailed images that told the story of soldiers going to war, soldiers fleeing from battle, soldiers looting, soldiers being hanged for desertion, soldiers being broken on the *l'estrapade* for their crimes...while in the end, a beneficent king rewards his generals for a war well fought. He titled the set *Les Misères et Les Mal-Heurs de la Guerre*—the miseries and misfortunes of war.

While these images hold a moral tone and seem to be more parable than real, they were not mere inventions of Callot's keen mind. On the contrary, these plates depicted horrors witnessed. Callot's home in Nancy, Lorraine sat at the confluence of three rivers of blood. Lorraine bordered France, the Spanish Netherlands and the Holy

Roman Empire. For 15 long years, these lumbering powers grappled with each other on Callot's doorstep. Their armies plowed through Lorraine, churning up fields, burning towns, displacing lives. He saw battles in the distance at Fribourg and beyond. He watched the wounded stagger back down the highways. He watched starving soldiers turn brigand to loot towns and put them to the torch.

All of these scenes seared themselves into his mind, and later, perhaps in an act of expiation, Callot burned them into metal plates. He captured sweeping vistas of terror and carnage with delicate lines and urgent poses that still speak to the viewer 400 years on.



And in the end, like unhappy fruit, they hang from the tree...

In the above etching, a priest climbs a ladder leaning against a tree to offer last rites to a soldier about to be hanged for desertion from a war he never wanted to fight. This damned soul's former comrades stand around the tree in a rigid semicircle, watching impassively as the hanged die.

Callot's plates were a sensation. Unlike paintings, etchings could be easily reproduced. Hundreds of prints were made from the plates and distributed in Paris and across Europe. He even discussed his techniques with his young friend in Amsterdam, Rembrandt van Rijn.

I chose Callot's etchings to represent this project, not only because they are beautiful works, but because they whisper secrets to our contemporary ear and beckon us to look deeper into the age we hope to revisit. These dark scenes aren't fantasy, but truth; these pleas for peace aren't performance, but the cries of souls drowning in a river of misery.



IACOBVS CALLOT

Essential Reading

These works are referenced directly and indirectly throughout:

Three Musketeers and *Twenty Years After*, Alexandre Dumas. *How Paris Became Paris*, Joan DeJean. *The Fronde*, Orest Ranum. *Giant of the Grand Siècle*, John A. Lynn. *Jacques Callot: Prints and Related Drawings*, H. Diane Russell et al. *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, Joseph H. Peterson, ed. *The Complete Magician's Tables*, Stephen Skinner. *Forbidden Rites*, Richard Kieckhefer. *Urban protest in seventeenth-century France*, William Beik. *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, William Shakespeare.

Structure of the Game

Miseries & Misfortunes is broken into two main texts: this book (Book 1) and **Book 2: Les Fruits Malheureux**. This book contains the key moving parts of the game and the world of 1648: *Système*, *Mentalités*, *Precedence*, *Fortune*, *Réputation*, *Mortal Coil*, *The Soul of Wit* and *Combat*.

Les Fruits Malheureux contains *Character Creation*, *Lifepaths*, *Advancement*, *Virtues & Flaws* and *Items & Equipment*. It also contains a *People* chapter compiling tables from other chapters, providing a quick method for generating personalities. Lastly, it holds a brief *Language* chapter so one can properly curse in French while playing.

Additional texts for the game include **Book 3: The Sacred & the Profane**, a treatise on knowledge, magic and science in the world of *Miseries & Misfortunes*. Its chapters include: *Gnosis*, *Codex Librorum*, *To Cast a Deadly Spell*, *Chymistry*, *Goëtia*, *Necromancy*, *Theology* and *Theurgy*.

And **Book 4—More Miseries** includes the following chapters: *Moments*, *Plots*, *Preparation*, *Modernity*, *Favor*, *Duello*, *Chevaux*, *Nouvel Équipement*, *Ordnance*, and *Disease*.

Our introductory scenarios are contained in **1648, Catalonia** and **1648, Paris**, each available as separate booklets.

Character sheets and other play sheets are freely available in our store at burningwheel.com.

I hope you are able to make some sense of the text, and I hope you enjoy playing.





Systeme

Miseries & Misfortunes uses an unforgiving, stark, probabilistic system in an attempt to simulate the harsh life, hard choices and rigid society of the age it seeks to represent.

Protagonists & Antagonists

While we love history, in this game we seek to emulate the tone of the adventurous fiction of Alexander Dumas and Arturo Pérez-Reverte. Therefore, we call the characters controlled by the players *protagonists*. The enemies, opponents and rivals of these protagonists are *antagonists*.

& SUPPORTING CAST

The other minor characters who support and oppose the protagonists and antagonists are referred to as the supporting cast.

Bien Sûr

The fundamental interaction of *Miseries & Misfortunes* is the description of a protagonist's actions by a player and the description of a scene by the game master. The players relay in glorious detail the words and actions of their protagonists within the scene: interacting with the space, moving from place to place, calling on other characters to speak with them or initiating confrontations. During their elocution, the game master's role is to say yes, of course—*Bien sûr!*—or perhaps to offer embellishment or further details.

Only when the game master cannot say yes to an action do we declare our intents and go to the dice to resolve the uncertain outcome. What would cause a game master to stop and say “No, go no further”? When there is a clear and substantial obstacle in the path of the protagonists—like an enemy patrol, a barricade blocking the route or an importunate prelate withholding information—then we roll the dice!

Dice

The system relies on a panoply of dice, from d2s to d100s, in order to generate credible, nuanced results.

- ☉ d20s are used for combat—martial and social.
- ☉ d2s, d3s and d4s are used for generating hit points, damage and other small-range results.
- ☉ d6s, d8s, d10s, d12s and d20s are used for rolling for damage and for making skill checks.
- ☉ d30s and d100s are used in the magic and Wealth rules.

DICE CODES

In general, a dice code works like this: the first number is the amount of dice you roll and the second number—after the *d*—indicates what type of dice you roll: two-sided, three-sided, four-sided, etc. Occasionally, that code will be followed by a + or – modifier. You add or subtract that number from the final result.

For example: 1d2-1, 1d3-1, 1d4-1, 1d2, 1d3, 1d4, 2d2, 1d4+1, 1d6, 2d3, 1d6+1, 1d8, 2d4, 1d8+1, 2d6, 3d4 and 3d6.

Governing Abilities

Each character possesses six governing abilities: Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution and Charisma.

Strength is used for lifting, pushing and pulling. It influences your effectiveness in melee combat.

Intelligence is used for reading, remembering, learning and searching. It determines how many languages you know.

Wisdom is used for intuiting, listening and improvising. It modifies your interpretation of magical texts.

Dexterity is used for avoiding, leaping and hand-eye coordination. It affects your initiative and effectiveness with firearms.

Constitution is used for carrying, withstanding and enduring. It affects your inventory, nerves and hit points.

Charisma is used for convincing, negotiating and intimidating. It affects the reactions of your opponents and characters whom you wish to hire.

TESTING GOVERNING ABILITIES

On occasion you will be called on to roll back a boulder, notice an obscure detail or endure a swim through freezing water. In primal circumstances like these, you test a governing ability, not a skill.

☞ To test a governing ability, roll 1d20. A result equal to or less than your governing ability's rating is a success.

OMEGA Ω

Some among us may suffer such slings and arrows that their ability scores fall into a dreadful state—rated 0-2. The Ω symbol indicates the character is incapable of directly testing this ability—they are confined to a wheelchair, bed-ridden, hospitalized, etc. They may still use skills governed by this ability, but with a -3 modifier.

STRENGTH SCORES AND MODIFIERS

Score	0-2	3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	18	19
Mod	Ω	-3	-2	-1	±0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Effects	Melee to-hit, melee damage, Break skill rating								

INTELLIGENCE SCORES AND MODIFIERS

Score	0-2	3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	18	19
Mod	Ω	-3	-2	-1	±0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Effects	Press to-hit and damage, Search skill rating								
Lang.	Ω	0*	1 [†]	1	2	3	4	5	6

A character's first language is always their native tongue.

☉ *At Intelligence 3, the character has trouble speaking, but may communicate in other ways.

☉ †At Intelligence 4-5, the character is illiterate.

WISDOM SCORES AND MODIFIERS

Score	0-2	3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	18	19
Mod	Ω	-3	-2	-1	±0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Effects	Save vs terror, focus steps for grimoires, Improvise and Listen skill ratings								

DEXTERITY SCORES AND MODIFIERS

Score	0-2	3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	18	19
Mod	Ω	-3	-2	-1	±0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Effects	Missiles to-hit; initiative step penalty, Traverse and Sneak skill ratings								

CONSTITUTION SCORES AND MODIFIERS

Score	0-2	3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	18	19
Mod	Ω	-3	-2	-1	±0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Effects	Hit points per level, save vs poison & plague, Sang Froid skill rating								
Items	Ω	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+3

CHARISMA SCORES AND MODIFIERS

Score	0-2	3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	18	19
Mod	Ω	-3	-2	-1	±0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Effects	Duel of wits to-hit and damage, Parley skill rating, Morale								
Morale	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10

Skill Ratings

This game uses a skill system to represent the characters' areas of expertise, training, study and experience.

Most skills are rated as a number on a die—X/Y. To pass a skill test, one must roll equal to or lower than its rating on the die.

DIE STEPS

Rated skills start at 1/6, meaning you must roll a 1 on 1d6 to succeed on a skill test.



As skills improve, they climb in rating—2/6, 3/6, 4/6, etc. When an improvement would cause a skill rating to equal the number of sides on that die type, we instead step up to the next die type and use the penultimate rating on that die (i.e., die type minus one). Like so:

- ☪ 5/6 improves to 7/8.
- ☪ 7/8 improves to 9/10.
- ☪ 9/10 improves to 11/12.
- ☪ 11/12 improves to 19/20.



Skills can't be improved past 19/20.

UNSKILLED

As a general rule, unskilled attempts automatically fail. However, you may attempt something for which you have no skill if and the game master and other players approve the circumstances as appropriate. Your chance of success is 1/10.

- ☪ Unskilled tests do not benefit from governing ability modifiers.
- ☪ You may not spend Mortal Coil on unskilled rolls.

Skill Types

CORE SKILLS

There are eight skills that all characters possess, regardless of lifepath: Break, Improvise, Listen, Parley, Sang Froid, Search, Sneak and Traverse.

Break is a skill of strength and stubbornness for smashing through doors, breaking locks and prying open chests. Breaking is a loud activity. It always causes damage to the container and will often damage anything fragile within. Break is governed by Strength.

Improvise is a skill of ingenuity. When you need to jury rig a solution—a ladder, a trap, a hook to retrieve something in a hole—you test your improvisation. Improvise is governed by Wisdom.

Listen is a skill of patience and sensitivity. You roll your Listen skill to overhear a conversation in the next room, to detect quiet footfalls approaching from behind or to hear distant sounds on a quiet night. Listen is governed by Wisdom. Since listening often requires silence, loud conditions penalize your chances to listen.

Parley is a skill for quick negotiations, deals and bargains common to daily life in 1648. Parley always involves a quid pro quo, even if just an exchange of information or a temporary truce. Parley is governed by Charisma. For more elaborate social situations, see the Soul of Wit chapter.

Sang Froid, or cold blood, is necessary for survival in 1648. Test Sang Froid when confronted with violence, when working up the nerve to commit violence and when in the chaos of battle. Sang Froid is governed by Constitution.

Search is the skill for finding secret compartments, hidden doors or lost items. Search is governed by Intelligence.

Sneak about if you are a skulker, eavesdropper or robber looking to get the drop on someone. Sneak is governed by Dexterity.

Traverse is used when clambering over roofs, across chasms or even shimmying through tight squeezes. Traverse is governed by Dexterity.

LIFEPATH SKILLS

Each lifepath grants access to a set of skills. At first level for that lifepath, you open these skills at their first rank—usually 1/6. As you increase your level in a particular lifepath, you will have the option to increase the ratings of your selected skills.

Governing modifiers are applied to your lifepath skill rating and the total is marked on your character sheet.

If you have not taken the lifepath, you cannot access its skills. If a previous lifepath shares skills with a new lifepath, you may increase your skill ranks using the new lifepath, provided you do not exceed any listed limitations or maxima.

Some lifepath skills grant to-hit and damage bonuses. Some lifepath skills grant access to a special ability. Note your special ability with the aspect of the system it modifies on your character sheet.

La Gloire, for example, is unique. It adds 1d6 to your reputation. Roll the die and add to your current total reputation when you take that ability as you level as an officer.

MARTIAL SKILLS

Certain skills provide bonuses or special conditions for martial combat. Log those abilities in the area provided on the character sheet.

MENTALITÉS

There are three special skills that all characters possess: Nationality, Religion and Politics. Each of these skills represents how knowledgeable the character is about these areas. A high rank does not make one more French or more religious or more politically committed. Your rank simply represents your depth of experience and study in this area.

Skill Tests

Life is difficult in 1648. Obstacles such as recalcitrant servants, indecipherable texts and sturdily locked doors all stand in the way of glory.

When you wish to make your mark on the world or change some small thing for the better, describe the actions of a character to the group by answering the following questions:

- ☛ What task do they undertake?
- ☛ How do they position themselves?
- ☛ What leverage do they use?

INTENT

Once you have adequately described how your character acts, then answer two more questions for the group:

- ☛ What do you hope to accomplish?
- ☛ What skill do you think applies?

The group—game master and players together—discuss the situation. If your actions seem appropriate to the moment, the game master sets a difficulty and you test your protagonist's rating. If something feels amiss, the group should discuss:

- ☛ Is this the right time for this action?
- ☛ Should the group or another player take a different action first to help build credibility for the plan?

REFINEMENT

Refine your plan until it feels right. Perhaps you delay a moment to better set up. Perhaps you're using the wrong skill to get what you're after. It is perfectly normal and acceptable to back off and rethink. It is not acceptable to charge ahead despite protests from the group.

However, no one player should veto the group's momentum. Part of the game master's role is to make a judgement call about whether it is better to hold off on a roll or go forward. Act as an arbiter or tie-breaker; don't overrule or shut down the group.

HISTORICAL REFINEMENTS

Miseries & Misfortunes is a game of historical fiction. Contemporary players have a great sense of drama and conflict, but might lack the details for making their actions feel credible to 1648. One of the game master's responsibilities is to make historical refinements for the players—to add context and interpretation.¹

When a player describes an anachronistic action or affectation during a skill test, the game master makes suggestions and minor corrections during the refinement phase of the skill test.

- ☪ Refinements add historical context, credibility and tension.
- ☪ Refinements never counteract a player's intent.
- ☪ Do not use refinement to say no; use refinement to say yes in a better, more credible context.

Mary's character, Laura, is wanted as a suspect in a murder case. Just now she has been cornered by an intendant outside of her inn in Drancy. Not expecting to find her in the courtyard, the intendant is as surprised as she is, honestly. Mary is quite vexed and, feeling trapped, she exclaims, "I shoulder my rifle and shoot him!"

The table falls quiet for a moment. Her declaration was a drastic escalation to the situation—and a capital offense. The game master, Luke, pauses to get clarification:

"You can shoot him, but if you do, this situation is going to turn into a hunt for Laura, murderer of royal intendants. The Council of State takes offense at having its agents murdered."

This explanation doesn't seem to help Mary's nerves.

So Luke asks, "Well, why do you want to shoot him?"

"To get away!"

"Ah, in that case, why not simply run or clamber up the side of the inn onto the roof? The royal official can't follow you."

The cloud over Mary's brow clears. "Yes, of course! Ah! I'll climb up and flee across the rooftops."

"Perfect. Very historical! Test Traverse."

¹ This rule imagines that the historical expert and game master are one and the same. If your group contains a bona fide historical expert, the game master can devolve this responsibility to them. Use this power lightly, friend!

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MODIFIERS

Positive modifiers increase ratings and die steps. Negative modifiers reduce ratings. Apply positive modifiers and then negative.

- ☞ Positive modifiers for skills rated 1/6 to 4/6 increase the rating number on the six-sided skill die.

A +1 modifier increases a 1/6 skill rating to 2/6.

- ☞ Positive modifiers that increase a rating to 6/6, 8/8, 10/10 or 12/12 step to the next higher die type. A skill cannot rate higher than 19/20.

A +1 modifier to a 5/6 skill steps its rating to 7/8.

- ☞ Negative modifiers applied to skill ratings reduce the rating on that die, not the die type—except if the modifier reduces the rating to 0/X.

A -1 modifier to a skill rated 7/8 makes its rating 6/8.

- ☞ Negative modifiers that reduce a skill to 0/6, 0/8, 0/10 etc. reduce the rating to 1/10. The character becomes unmoored.

A -1 modifier to a skill rated 1/6 steps it down to 1/10.

APPLYING GOVERNING MODIFIERS

Skills listed with a governing ability are permanently modified by that ability's modifier in the manner described above.

For example, the Break skill lists Strength as its governing ability. If your Strength is 13 (+1 modifier), increase your Break skill rating by one from 1/6 to 2/6.

If you have Charisma 8 (-1 modifier), at first level, your Parley skill is 0/6. If you increase your level or acquire a lifepath skill that affects Parley, you can increase that rating to 1/6.

SET DIFFICULTY

Before a player rolls a skill test, the game master may apply a modifier to the roll based on the difficulty of the task at hand. Difficulty modifiers temporarily affect your skill rating for the purposes of this roll. They most often range from -4 to +4.

- ☞ A typical roll has no difficulty modifier applied
- ☞ Apply difficulty modifiers after governing, lifepath and martial skill modifiers.

Dro's occultist Cornelius Israel has a Latin skill of 7/8. He's attempting to read an inscription on a tomb. The letters were damaged by tomb robbers, he's reading by flickering candlelight and the Latin is rather poor. The game master assesses a -3 penalty to the test. To pass, Dro needs to roll a 4/8 (four or lower on 1d8).

UNMOORED

If a modifier should reduce your skill rating to 0 on the die, your chance becomes a flat 1/10. We call this state becoming unmoored.

If you're saddled with a 0/6 Parley skill, your actual rating becomes 1/10 for test purposes.

When unmoored, any positive modifiers added to the roll must offset the negative modifiers that drove the rating to 0.

Adding +5 to a 0/6 Parley test does not jump the rating to 5/6. Instead, first subtract the negative modifier (-1 from Charisma in this case). Then add the remaining positive modifier, if any (+4 in this case). Roll the net on 1d10 (5/10) in this case.

SUCCESS

If you roll equal to or lower than your modified skill rating, you pass this test.

- ☪ You accomplish your task and achieve your intent.
- ☪ Describe the result.
- ☪ The game master may offer additional small historical refinements to help blend the results into the narrative.

FAILURE

If you roll greater than your modified skill rating, something goes amiss. The game master decides:

- ☪ You accomplish the task but not the intent or...
- ☪ You accomplish your intent but botch or miss the task.

You fail your Chymistry test to create a recipe. The game master could say, "You boil the recipe to perfection, but something is amiss with the mercury you acquired." The game master decides that the philosopher creates a chemical with a different effect. The player accomplished the task but the intended result changed.

Or “Due to a bad seal, you inhale some vapors of mercury during the operation. You have a crushing headache for 1d6 days and suffer a -1 to all rolls for the duration.” The player creates the recipe they were after, but at a cost to themselves.

Never make a protagonist look like a fool or incompetent with a failure result. Failure arises from unintended circumstances interfering, not from bumbling.

☪ If you wish to reroll using your Mortal Coil, you must do so when the die comes up a miss, but before hearing the failure result. Mortal Coil is discussed in the Mortal Coil chapter further in the book. Apologies for the forward reference.

HELP

Players may help one another with skill tests. A character with a higher skill rating in the same skill can help a character with a lower skill rating. Help grants +1 to the character’s skill rating for the test.

Help must be offered, and the helping player must describe their contributions to the situation. The helped player may decline the assistance.

APPRENTICE-MASTER

If two characters have a master-apprentice, teacher-student or commander-subordinate relationship, the junior character may help the senior by performing manual labor, scut work or tedious research related to the problem at hand. The junior player describes their desire to help. The senior player then assigns them a task—“Boil water and clean my instruments.” The junior player must pass a skill test to perform said task. If successful, the master player gains a +1 bonus to their skill rating for the main test. If failed, the senior player is welcome to sigh, roll their eyes, berate the apprentice’s incompetence or be a good mentor and guide them to right action.

Opposed Tests

On occasion, two characters will compete for the same goal or strive to directly overcome one another. In cases like these, the game master instructs both players to roll their relevant ability or skill (or rolls for one side if the supporting cast is involved).

PASS AND FAIL

When one character passes and the other fails, the successful character wins the contest.

BOTH SUCCEED

If both characters pass their ability or skill test, the character who rolls the highest (without exceeding their ability or skill rating) wins the contest. In this case, since both characters have technically succeeded, the game master may adjudicate a marginal success. One character achieves their original intent, while the other gets some lesser prize.

BOTH FAIL

If both characters fail their ability or skill test, then neither side wins and the game master introduces a new complication or obstacle: their fighting has attracted the watch, their arguing has roused the neighbors, their chase has exhausted them both, etc.

TIE

If both sides roll the same number on their die, describe how the conflict has escalated. Make a second opposed test using an ability instead of a skill (or vice versa). If this second test is also tied, the tie goes to the character who is morally in the right in this moment (using the morals of 1648).

FREE FOR ALL

You may use these rules for one-versus-one moments as well as for moments when many struggle against each other for a common goal. For free-for-all situations, all participants roll the relevant skill or ability. If one character rolls highest overall, they quickly gain their objective. If the highest result is a tie, these glorious combatants struggle for another exchange and must roll their relevant skills or abilities again to break the tie.

Saves

Characters may resist forces beyond their control with their instinct, experience and luck. We call these resistances saves and there are four types: artillery, chance, poison & plague and terror.

Saves are rolled on a 1d20. High results are desired.

- ☪ All save target numbers begin at 16 (equal to or greater than 16 on a 1d20; a 25% chance).
- ☪ Your lifepaths improve your saves: each save listed with a lifepath improves by one for each level of that lifepath you achieve (i.e., lowers the target number by one).
- ☪ Saves travel with you from lifepath to lifepath.

EFFECTS

The simplest use of a saving throw is black and white. If you pass, you escape harm. If you fail, you are murdered or mangled. However, some effects will be listed with more nuanced pass and fail conditions.

For example, if you are hit with a ball from a minion drake, you make a save vs artillery. If you pass, you are maimed. If you fail, you are killed. Seems fair.

ARTILLERY

Barrages of shells, fusillades of shot and a hail of balls pepper the field. Artillery is the final argument of kings—and the king of the battlefield itself. It is a wonder that anyone survives whole. Use this save when under fire from artillery, great and small.

CHANCE

Luck plays a part in our success in life. Chance is a catch-all category for moments of great importance that don't fall into the other categories: surviving a shipwreck, being trampled by a crowd, struck by lightning or having the wedding bouquet tossed your way.

POISON & PLAGUE

Plagues run rampant through the cities and countryside of 1648. And, on occasion, an assassin or jealous spouse may wish to hasten death's scythe with a drop of hemlock. Use this save to resist poisons and diseases. Your Constitution modifier affects your poison & plague save.

TERROR

Make saves against terror when confronting the mob, when incurring the queen's wrath or if one should encounter the supernatural or divine. Your Wisdom modifier affects your terror save.

Defense & Dodge

In combat, one does one's best to avoid harm. The defense and dodge scores represent how difficult it is for an enemy to land a blow in melee. Each value sets the target number to hit for melee attacks.

There is no maximum defense or dodge rating, but a rolled 20 always hits. Seriously, just shoot the guy.

DEFENSE

One's defense score is equal to their Strength rating plus modifiers from lifepath skills. Use this value when one is on the attack, on guard or in the fight.

If my Strength is 13, my defense is 13. If I have one level of the Parry skill, my defense increases to 14.

DODGE

One's dodge score is equal to one's Dexterity rating plus modifiers from lifepath skills. Use this value when one is attacked by surprise, on the run, unarmed or while discharging a firearm.

If my Dexterity is 9, my dodge is 9.

Hit Points

All characters possess an allotment of points accrued from the lifepaths and Constitution modifiers that measure their character's fighting condition.

- ☞ Subtract hit points when a character takes damage from a weapon, fall, poison or something similar.
- ☞ Characters recover 1d3 hit points per day of complete rest.
- ☞ If hit points are reduced to 0, the character is knocked out of the fight until they recover at least one hit point. In addition, protagonists and antagonists immediately roll on the Mortal Coil table (as described in the Mortal Coil chapter).
- ☞ For supporting cast reduced to 0 hit points, use the *Hors de Combat* rules described in the Combat chapter.

Will

Mental resilience, or Will, is measured in a similar fashion to hit points. Will is reduced by attacks in a duel of wits, losing a fight, supernatural effects and by being lambasted in the press.

- ☞ Will rebounds quickly. After a scene has concluded, characters immediately regain 1d4 Will plus their Wisdom modifier. After that, they recover 1d4 Will per day. No bed rest necessary.
- ☞ If reduced to 0 Will, characters are unable to speak until they recover at least one point of Will. Perhaps they reflect or contemplate, or maybe fulminate over what they've heard.
- ☞ A character reduced to 0 Will has been stunned, agreed to do something or been tricked. The Soul of Wit chapter details social combat and its effects.

Damage

Implements of war, hazards of the natural world and the poisons of Chymistry can all do grievous bodily harm to your character. When one of these forces impacts your character, the game master will determine its effects with a damage roll. The results of a damage roll are subtracted from a character's current hit point total.

DAMAGE MODIFIERS

Positive modifiers increase damage. Negative modifiers decrease it. Add the modifier after a damage roll. Minimum damage from a successful hit is 1, regardless of negative modifiers.

- ☞ Strength modifies damage in melee combat.
- ☞ Charisma acts in a similar fashion during a duel of wits as does Intelligence when dueling in the press.
- ☞ Constitution, Dexterity and Wisdom modifiers do not affect the amount of damage suffered.

The Die of Fate

The single six-sided die, tumbling slowly out over the table, everyone leaning in, watching it settle. What will our fate be?

- ☞ The term *die of fate* refers to a throw of a single d6 for a result.

YOUR FATE IS 1 IN 6

If a player makes a reasonable, but unexpected request, or makes a good case for something unforeseen in the world—something that is beyond the control of their character—the game master may opt to invoke the die of fate. The game master rolls 1d6:

- ☞ With a 1 result, the player gets what they were asking for. No other result counts.

Is that door unlocked? Is there a window into that tower? Is Monsieur at home? If the game master doesn't have a ready answer for this question, they may opt to roll the die of fate.

DISPUTE AND DISAGREEMENT

Disputes over minor historical details absent from or contradictory in the record of the age can be resolved with the die of fate. These disputes center on the invisible details that the distance of history omits: people outside of the historical record, the weather of the day, the contents of someone's pockets, the reaction of an unnamed faction or even the unlikely presence of a figure of note.

WHAT THE DIE OF FATE DOESN'T COVER

Any roll that falls under the province of an ability or skill should be resolved with an appropriate test, not a die of fate roll. When unskilled or unmoored, you use a 1/10 skill rating to test.

The die of fate does not provide for outlandish claims.

A street urchin cannot make a stand for being admitted to the queen's privy council and hope to get a die of fate roll. It's simply never going to happen. It breaks fundamental setting conceits.

And you cannot spend mortal coil on a die of fate roll.

ALWAYS IN THE OPEN

Always make die of fate rolls in the open, in front of all the players, with the conditions clearly stated for all to hear before the roll.

Time

In a game of historical fiction, tracking the passage of time maintains a believable setting. However, we do not need to track each minute.

MOMENTS

The action of our protagonists' lives happens in what we refer to as "moments." These are bursts of frenetic activity lasting a day or maybe a week or two—secret errands, battles and intrigues. They decide the fate of the characters, their factions and, perhaps, even their country. We divide these moments into two overall types: novel and historical.

Novel Moments: These are stories of our own invention that stand adjacent to history but do not interfere with it.

Historical Moments: These are stories that transpire in the penumbra of documented history. Our characters will be pulled by the tidal forces of fate, even if they are not steering the ship. And they may or may not change its course depending on the outcome of their actions.

HISTOIRES TRAGIQUES

The activity of a moment is usually so vigorous and taxing, our characters will require time to recuperate and contemplate their fates. Between moments there is space and opportunity to play *les histoires tragiques*—tragic stories. During these quiet interstices, we play vignettes that feature our dependents or other characters secondary to the lives of our protagonists, not in high stakes scenarios, but in the calamitous circumstances of daily life.

SEASONS

We use seasons to represent the larger gears of the cosmic clock in a simple and efficient manner. Time may jump forward for our characters one or more seasons as they travel, rest and study.

YEARS

Play *Miseries & Misfortunes* long enough and the years will begin to slide by for the characters, the world changing around them.

If you are following the time line that begins on January 1, 1648, the best practice is to track time on a calendar, marking events as they happen to your characters and the world.

EXCHANGES

Within a skirmish or combat, time moves in exchanges. During an exchange, participants on each side make an attack or take an action.





Mentalités

The people of 1648 were passionately divided along national, political and religious perspectives. In *Miseries & Misfortunes*, we call these aspects mentalities. They are equivalent to skills; they possess ratings and are testable and advanceable.

Nationality

The France of 1648 is close in size to the France we know today. It is ruled by a family called the Bourbon, though they are linked through marriage to their rivals in the Hapsburg dynasty of Spain and Austria. France contains an obstreperous nobility, unafraid to demonstrate their power and importance to the Queen Regent. It also contains a wealth of roads, farmland, ports and cities. It is a country rich in food, people and ideas, but it is challenged by the priorities of its leadership. They are a bloodthirsty, power-hungry and vain lot. To fuel their ambitions and their endless wars, they mercilessly tax the country through an unjust, inefficient system of treasurers, intendants and tax farmers.

Thus, to be French is to brag about the food (especially the bread) and to complain about the taxes. It is to love the king, but hate his agents. It is to go to church to confess your sins, and to hide your assets from the tax collectors. It is to know the Channel is disagreeable, the Atlantic

formidable and the Mediterranean mercurial; that winters are long, but summers sweet and fair; to love Paris as the jewel of Europe, but to curse at the filth and shit caking your new stockings and shoes.

In this version of *Miseries & Misfortunes*, characters are of French nationality. Our other books provide alternative nationalities.

Politics

In France in 1648, there were five major political opinions: Royalist, Frondeur, Noblist, Hapsburg and Cardinalist.

ROYALIST

The royalists believe simply that the king and the royal family are ordained by God to rule. It is in their very blood. And their laws and decrees, however unpopular, are the best option out of many poor alternatives. In 1648 in particular, the royalist faction supports Queen Anne and her 10 year old son, King Louis Dieudonné Bourbon with a passion. However, the royalists are disappointed by Queen Anne's close association with the Cardinal Mazarin. Why would such a God-gifted family need to rely on such a corrupt, poisonous minister?

The royalists are popular, but they do not make a majority.

FRONDEUR

A new political faction emerges in France in 1648. An unlikely coalition between the judges, the bourgeoisie and the common people, they believed that wars, taxation and royal expense had become too much to bear and that royal power needed to be checked. The ministers of Parlement used their legal procedures to block Anne and Mazarin's attempts to increase taxes. They claimed they were protecting the common people, the life-blood of Paris. They also happened to be deeply concerned with stopping Mazarin, the Chief Minister of State, from creating new offices and packing the courts and other ministries with his cronies, thereby diluting the judges' power.

These rebels and resisters captured the imagination of many Parisians who took to the streets in support of their aims. In their enthusiasm, their supporters slung fusillades of rocks to demonstrate their displeasure. Thus they were called “the Slingers” or Frondeurs.

NOBLIST

There are perhaps a half dozen powerful noble families in France who possess the wealth and will to resist the crown—Condé, Conti, Vendôme and Bourbon d’Orleans among them. These dynasties are supported by vassals, cadets and allies, and together they form a well funded, militarized independent group within the kingdom.

Not unlike the Frondeurs, many of the nobles resist the power of Queen Anne and Cardinal Mazarin. In the queen they see a scheming regent born of their enemy’s blood, working with her foreign ally to undermine their power. While they were deferential to her charming but unfortunate boy king, they saw him as a puppet to her will. Even her deceased husband, King Louis XIII, didn’t trust her to rule. He wrote into his will that she should not be regent, but she forced Parlement to annul the will. And so the nobles opposed her out of a sense of honor and duty to their noble blood and the crown itself. Of course, should they gain power, they would roll back reforms that unjustly stripped them of the ability to rule on legal cases and collect taxes in the provinces. These powers were, *naturellement*, rendered to the King, but no matter. The nobles fight for what is true and right—the continuance of their ancient and independent rule!

HAPSBURG

The Hapsburg faction could be considered realists. They know who is the true power in Europe. Despite France’s bluster, protestation and desperate forays, that power is the Hapsburg line. This noble lineage sits on the thrones of Spain, Austria, Bohemia and Hungary. And, in truth, they rule France even now. Queen Anne herself is the eldest daughter of Philip III of Spain—the most potent of sovereigns, may he rest in peace—and sister to Philip IV. Further, the Hapsburg allies in the Spanish Netherlands, Franche-Comté and Milan have France and their *petits*-Bourbons surrounded. One must be honest: The Hapsburg dynasty is the true power in Europe, and it is best to be on the side of God.

CARDINALISTS

Last and most decidedly least are the Cardinalists. The cardinal to which the faction is allied refers to His Eminence Cardinal Jules Mazarin (née Giulio Raimondo Mazarino). He was a protégé to the Great Man, Cardinal Richelieu, and an advisor to the now-deceased king, Louis XIII. He is a close confidant of Queen Anne and, at 46 years old, the Chief Minister of France. Together, Anne and Mazarin govern the unruly mass of French polity: Anne through sheer will and cleverness, and Mazarin through guile and subterfuge.

Mazarin is also the most reviled man in Paris—perhaps in all of France—though he does not seem to mind terribly. His enemies initially described him as “gentle, benevolent...” and said “he has...a certain laziness.” They could not have underestimated him more. Firmly devoted to Anne, to France and even to his deceased mentor’s will, Mazarin was a stubborn administrator and the most cunning negotiator. In 1644, to fund the wars he and Richelieu believed were necessary to keep the Hapsburgs at bay, he dug up an old law from Henry IV’s time that forbade houses being built outside of city limits. Paris had grown considerably beyond her limits since that time. So Mazarin informed all those who had built outside those limits that they would have to pay substantial fines. This one maneuver transformed him from a curious figure at court to a publicly hated, blood-drinking serpent in the eyes of the Parisians. He didn’t stop there. He imposed duties on all merchandise imported into Paris. And, in a most shocking display of impropriety, imposed a tax on the nobles who had purchased positions in the royal courts and councils. Everyone hates Mazarin.

However, Mazarin is a diplomat *nonpareil*: He had negotiated treaties in Italy, France and the Holy Roman Empire; he had powerful friends in the Vatican; and he was the queen’s closest ally. Some of the more clear-eyed Parisians both inside and outside of the royal court see where the real power lies and quietly support the cardinal in all of his aims.

Changing Politics

You may change your political affiliation should you suffer a crisis of conscience or witness a moment of opportunity. To do so, you must publicly declare your intention to your friends and allies, as well as to the leader of the faction you wish to join.

- ☞ Take your new political mentality at 1/6. You can advance it as per the standard procedures.
- ☞ You can test your former mentality, but you cannot advance it.
- ☞ Your choice also affects your reputation—positively for joining a popular faction, negatively for joining an unpopular faction. The Reputation chapter details the amounts.

Religion

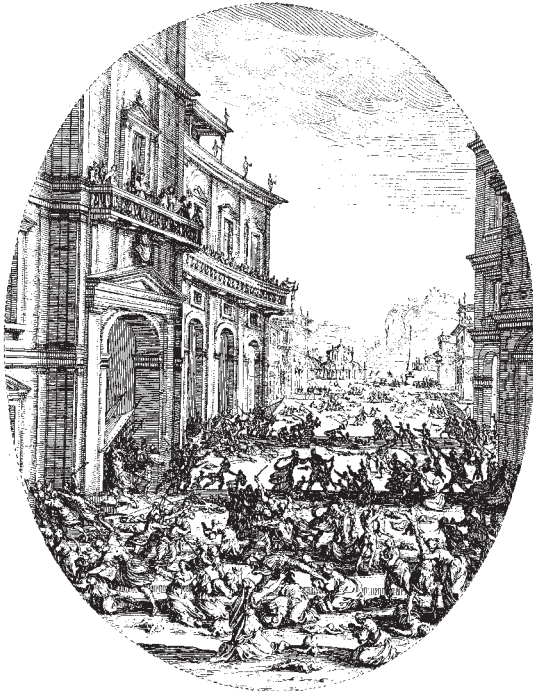
The past long century—beginning when Martin Luther nailed his thesis to the church door in 1517—can be characterized as an era of continuous religious violence. Certainly people of different faiths murdered each other in a fruitless war for primacy as they always had, but so did millions who shared the same faith slide their blades across the throats of their co-religionists to express their theological disagreements.

Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation of the 16th century sparked a series of bloody uprisings, revolts and massacres. Eventually the redoubtable Protestants won their rights at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, though that peace was relatively short-lived. In Paris, in August 1582, in an upwelling of Christian brotherly love, the Catholics pounced on their Huguenot brothers and sisters and murdered them in the streets, in their homes, in their churches. Thousands were massacred on St Bartholomew's Day. The killing spread from the cities into the countryside and lasted for days. And it only triggered more revolts, more retaliations, more killings until the Huguenots finally won the Edict of Nantes from Henry IV in 1598, 16 years later. The Edict granted the Protestants religious liberty and stopped the cycle of violence. In those three decades of unrest, countless French citizens were murdered by their neighbors and friends—millions died from the violence, famine and disease.

But the calm was short lived. Henry IV, a pragmatic and almost progressive ruler who began the long process of modernizing the capital and the state, converted from Huguenot Calvinism to Catholicism before taking the French throne. In 1610, he was assassinated by a Catholic zealot, François Ravaillac, who stabbed him to death as Henry's royal coach was stuck in traffic in Paris. This act triggered more violence and more uprisings by the Protestants who saw themselves under even more threat.

In 1608, in Bohemia to the east, a "Catholic League" formed to put down a Protestant revolt. This act triggered a movement called the Counter-Reformation—a continent-spanning religious war between the Catholics and Lutherans. Still ongoing, this destructive conflict has destroyed the Holy Roman Empire, shattering it into a thousand shards. In 1648, the war grinds into its thirtieth year. While in France, the Huguenots and the Catholics hold a wary, uneasy truce—each side looking for the slightest provocation for bloodshed to erupt once more.

There are four major religions in France in 1648: Catholic, Huguenot, Lutheran and Jewish. You roll randomly when creating a character's religion.



CATHOLIC

The king, queen and princes of France are Catholics, therefore she is a Catholic nation. Or so the Catholics believe. Catholics belong to a church they believe was founded by a prophet they call Jesus Christ. They are strict monotheists, yet they believe in a Holy Trinity of God, Jesus Christ and a Holy Spirit, none of whom came before the other. Catholics believe they are the original Christian faith and are therefore infallible in religion. Their leader, the pope, sits in a palace called the Vatican in Rome, the capital of the Papal States. They believe that their bishops are the successors to Christ's original 12 apostles (yet there are far more than 12 bishops).

In Catholicism, people are born sinners. They must be baptized and catechized, go to mass, perform good deeds and live a life of Christian values if they wish their soul to be saved from damnation. Catholics also believe that during their religious rituals, priests can turn special bread to the flesh of their martyred god, Jesus Christ, and wine into his blood.

And in puzzling contradiction of their questionable monotheism, they venerate Jesus Christ's mother, Mary, to a special god-like status as the Mother of God. They also believe in the powers of myriad saints, angels, spirits and devils.

LUTHERAN

Lutherans are Christians who follow the teachings of the fiery monk, Martin Luther, the progenitor of the Protestant Reformation. In 1648, Lutherans are a Reformed Christian minority living in Eastern France on the border with the Holy Roman Empire. Like other Reformed Christians, they have suffered oppression and victimization at the hands of the Catholic majority in France.

Martin Luther taught that all were born predestined for Heaven, and only faith, the grace of God and scripture in life were required to walk that path. He taught that sacraments of the Eucharist are not transubstantiated into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, but that they contain his essence, and that baptism is an act of grace and can save one from the fires of Hell.

☪ *Solam Fidem* (Faith Alone) — Faith alone in the Christian god is enough for salvation.

Our churches by common consent...teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

— Article IV, "Of Justification", Augsburg Confession, 1530

- ☞ *Sola Gratia* (Grace Alone) — Only God's grace can save one. Not the pope or priests, and especially not Satan.
- ☞ *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone) — The only interpretation of God's will is in the Bible and Scriptures. Anyone can read the Bible and learn the path of salvation.

Therefore, they do not believe in a need for a pope, bishop, Vatican, etc. In fact, they believe the whole Catholic edifice to be rotten, corrupt and tyrannical. As an act of further defiance, they preach their mass in the vernacular rather than Latin.

HUGUENOTS

Huguenots are French Christians who adhere to the tenets of the Protestant Christian Reformation of the 16th century as espoused by Jehan Calvin. It's unclear how they earned their name. It seems it was once a term of derision, but is now a badge of honor. They are the most numerous reformed Christian sect in France. Primarily living in the west and south of France, the Huguenots have fought through harassment, torture, suppression and massacre for their ability to practice their version of the Christian religion. Politically, they cling to their rights as bestowed in the Edict of Nantes of Henry IV (the young king's grandfather).

Similar to the Lutherans, Huguenots believe that Christian religion should be taught in the vernacular and that the Catholic pope is a tyrant at the head of a corrupt earthly kingdom. Calvin writes: "For anyone to arrive at God the Creator he needs Scripture as his Guide and Teacher." And

By his Power, God cherishes and guards the World which he made and by his Providence rules its individual Parts. Humans

are unable to fully comprehend why God performs any particular action, but whatever good or evil people may practice, their efforts always result in the execution of God's will and judgments.

Huguenots believe that one's fate is predestined at birth: Some are born good and just, and destined to go to Heaven; others are born evil and false, and destined from birth for the fires of Hell. Regarding the sacraments, Huguenots do not believe that the Eucharist or the wine are Christ's body or blood, but that he is present in the sacrament in a spiritual way. Neither do they believe that baptism equates salvation; for them it is only an earthly ritual.

Christ can exert his energy wherever he pleases, in earth and heaven, can manifest his presence by the exercise of his power, can always be present with his people, breathing into them his own life, can live in them, sustain, confirm, and invigorate them, and preserve them safe, just as if he were with them in the body; in fine, can feed them with his own body, communion with which he transfuses into them. After this manner, the body and blood of Christ are exhibited to us in the sacrament.

— Cauvin, *Institutes*, vi.xviii, 17.

JEWISH

People of Jewish faith are an oppressed minority in France. Technically, there is an order from 1615 in effect forbidding Christians and Jews from conversing, but it isn't enforced. Jewish people live in relative peace in Paris, Alsace and Lorraine. They participate in all walks of life—military, bourgeois, government—but most live in fear of the next wave of intolerance and violence that will drive them from their homes. One of the best evocations of their faith was written by Maimonides in the mid-12th century.

MAIMONIDES' 13 PRINCIPLES OF FAITH:

- ☪ I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is the Creator and Guide of everything that has been created; He alone has made, does make, and will make all things.
- ☪ I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is One, and that there is no unity in any manner like His, and that He alone is our God, who was, and is, and will be.

- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, has no body, and that He is free from all the properties of matter, and that there can be no (physical) comparison to Him whatsoever.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is the first and the last.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that to the Creator, Blessed be His Name, and to Him alone, it is right to pray, and that it is not right to pray to any being besides Him.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that the words of the prophets are true.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, was true, and that he was the chief of the prophets, both those who preceded him and those who followed him.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that the entire Torah that is now in our possession is the same that was given to Moses our teacher, peace be upon him.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be exchanged, and that there will never be any other Torah from the Creator, Blessed be His Name.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, knows all the deeds of human beings and all their thoughts, as it is written, "Who fashioned the hearts of them all, Who comprehends all their actions" (Psalms 33:15).
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, rewards those who keep His commandments and punishes those that transgress them.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and even though he may tarry, nonetheless, I wait every day for his coming.
- Ⓒ I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator, Blessed be His name, and His mention shall be exalted for ever and ever.

HEBREW

Characters who follow the Jewish religion may take Hebrew as an additional language for free at the player's discretion.

Changing Religions

You may convert to another religion should you suffer a crisis of conscience or witness a moment of opportunity. To do so, you must publicly declare your intention to your friends and allies and undertake official religious conversion with a priest or rabbi.

Conversion from Catholicism to any other religion is considered a high crime—resulting in the confiscation of property or even a death sentence. Calvin had a more nuanced view of apostasy, believing that the “true elect” only temporarily move away from the Christian god, and thus did not consider apostasy quite the crime. In Judaism, Deuteronomy inveighs death for apostates, but Jewish life in seventeenth-century Europe is fraught with challenges, including forced conversion. This type of conversion was seen in a more forgiving manner of necessity, rather than rejection of religion.

- ☪ Take your new religion mentality at 1/6. You can advance it as per the standard procedure.
- ☪ You can test your previous mentality, but you cannot advance it.
- ☪ Your choice also affects your reputation—positively for joining a popular religion, negatively for joining an unpopular religion. The Reputation chapter details the amounts.

DISGUISE VS CONVERSION

If forced to disguise oneself temporarily as an adherent to another religion, make a Fashion test with a -3 penalty. If the disguise is fleetingly temporary—to cross a street at night, to move briefly through a crowd—test Sub Rosa with a -1 penalty instead.





Precedence

French society divides itself into three tiers or estates. In the first estate sit the clergy, in the second estate the nobility, and everyone else—the *menu peuple*—fall into the third estate. The king and queen, ordained by God and natural law to rule, sit atop the entire structure.

Your estate determines your rights in society: if you pay taxes, if you carry a sword and if you can speak before you are spoken to.

LES ÉTATS

- ☞ The first estate is closest to God, pays no taxes and may speak first in all matters.
- ☞ The second estate are the defenders of the realm. They carry swords, pay few taxes and may speak before the commoners and rabble.
- ☞ The third estate pays taxes and otherwise does as they're told, whether it be carrying a musket, farming a field or financing a war, since even the wealthy bourgeois financiers are considered part of the third estate.
- ☞ In truth, there is also an invisible, silent fourth estate called *les marginaux*. These poor people have no rights in society whatsoever.

PRECEDENCE

Within each estate there is a small hierarchy, a higher and lower station. In the game, we've ranked the estates from 0-10 to help paint a clearer picture of the structure of society.

Precedence plays heavily into the Soul of Wit rules.

Station	Estate	Precedence
King, queen	None	10
Cardinal, bishop, abbé	1st	9
Priest, canon	1st	8
<i>Noblesse d'épée</i> with title	2nd	7
<i>Noblesse d'épée</i> without title	2nd	6
<i>Noblesse de robe</i> —minister, judge	2nd	5
<i>Bourgeois</i> —merchant, financier, architect, famous artist	3rd	4
Artisans—smith, carpenter, clothier	3rd	3
Commoner—printer, fish monger, passeur	3rd	2
Peasant—laborer, villein	3rd	1
<i>Marginaux</i> —actor, prostitute, urchin, soldier, filou, sailor	None	0

NOBILITY

In character creation, if you roll a 16-18 on the Quality of Birth table, you begin the game as a noble and have a patent of nobility to prove it. If your character is ennobled during the course of their adventures, their Precedence increases to match.

ORDINATION

A character ordained in the faith gains the Precedence to match.





Fortune

16⁴⁸ is an inequitable age. The lives of the wealthy are unimaginably distant from the lives of the poor. While France is infused with Christian ideals of charity, the state mercilessly taxes its regular people to fund its endless wars and opulent lifestyles. In this age, to be preoccupied with money isn't vanity or greed; it is a necessity for survival.

The Fortune chapter tours you through this inequality and misfortune, illuminating for you the social strata—how one earns money, how one spends it and, most critically, how one borrows it. We shall also make small mention of your odious financial obligations to your dependents and the state.

Your wealth grants access to a lifestyle. If you can maintain your wealth above your obligations, you can keep afloat in the river of miseries that is life in 1648. If your obligations exceed your wealth, you begin to sink and may drown.

Born into Wealth

Society in France and, indeed, most of the world is divided into a rigid caste system in which one's place is determined by the circumstances of one's birth. More than just a hierarchy of estates as we discussed in the Precedence chapter, these castes determine your wealth, quality of life and, ultimately, life expectancy. Your humble author has divided the masses of humanity into seven tiers: *marginaux*, peasants, commoners, artisans, *bourgeoisie*, robe nobles, sword nobles without title and sword nobles with title.

MARGINAUX

Those who live on the margins of society have few comforts to keep them safe and whole. Beggars, prostitutes, most actors, thieves and soldiers. When they do find work, it is the most menial of labor, degrading or criminal.

PEASANT

Composing 80-90% of the populace, peasants are divided into two classes themselves, villeins who are serfs and tied to the land with few rights, and free peasants who have in the past purchased their freedom and own their land. Thus there can be great disparities of wealth in the peasantry. However, the peasants are the most heavily taxed caste, a burden which they do not bear happily.

COMMONER

Commoners are the great mass of people who live in villages, towns and cities and perform menial labor or own shops or other small businesses. Their lot is marginally better than peasants because the cities in which they live protect many of their rights and provide them some relief from the *partisans*.

ARTISAN

People who work skilled trades like carpenters, smiths or clothiers are technically commoners of the Third Estate, but they have banded together to protect themselves from exploitation by forming guilds. Some artisans command high fees for their labors and are even famous for the quality of their work.

BOURGEOISIE

The bourgeoisie are also members of the Third Estate, but you would not know it by looking at them. They are city dwellers, one and all, but they differentiate themselves from their commoner and artisan brothers and sisters with their ostentatious wealth and persistent influence in the affairs of the government and the economy. They count among their ranks doctors, lawyers, architects, financiers and even a famous artist or two.

NOBLESSE DE ROBE

Robe nobles are a special class of nobility whose duty is not to defend the realm with blood and steel, but to strengthen it with law and judgment. These learned souls are appointed as magistrates, ministers, judges and intendants and earn annuities (*rentes*) from the government. Of course, those appointments cost them a sizable sum, so they are always keen to protect their rights.

NOBLESSE D'ÉPÉE SANS TITRE

You are born of an illustrious line of nobles stretching back to antiquity, to the day you won a patent through your heroics on the field of battle...or to the date your parents purchased a title from a desperate noble.¹

Sadly, your particular breed of nobility comes with few amenities. You have the right and duty to bear the sword to defend the realm, but lack the land and wealth that would make such a task a trifle easier. Thus, without such cushions, you must use your wit, cleverness and courage to grasp Fate by the toe and claim your glorious destiny.

NOBLESSE D'ÉPÉE AVEC TITRE

You are born of a bloodline bestowed with a hereditary title, and with that title comes land and, typically, wealth. The titles available to our protagonists are limited in rank to lord, baron, count and marquis. The ranks of duke and prince are reserved for fairy tales or, perhaps, to be earned through your service to the crown.

¹ Hereditary nobles look down their noses at those who have purchased rank, calling them *roturiers* or commoners.

Titled nobles may roll 1d6 for their title or choose what is appropriate with their game master:

1: Sieur, Dame

2: Seigneur, Seigneuresse

3: Baron, Baronne

4: Vicomte, Vicomtesse

5: Comte, Comtesse

6: Marquis, Marquise

Income

The circumstances of one's birth create a set of opportunities for one in life. However, birth alone is not enough. One's family must have income.

INCOME SOURCE

Auction: You sell art, rarities and other valuable items at auctions to wealthy collectors like Monsieur Le Cardinal, taking a small commission for yourself.

Benefice: The Church pays you a modest stipend according to the needs of your holy offices.

Business: You operate a business like an inn, tavern, theater or similar service.

Charge: You are commissioned to lead a unit in the army, and this commission comes with a small stipend. You also are authorized to sell commissions to officers in the army or navy.

Droit Annuel: You are officially commissioned to an office in the government—a judge of Parlement or something similar. You are paid an annual salary by the Crown.

Labor: You work for a living: digging ditches, building houses, making shoes or doing something similar.

Logeur: You collect rent from the tenants of your property.

None: You are in the unfortunate position of having no means at the present moment.

Produce: You till the soil and produce the fruits of the land, some of which you sell at market and the rest you split with your overlord.

Sale Boulot: To make your bread, you undertake a bit of dirty work: pulling cloaks, ransacking houses, cutting purses or working from your back.

Tax: You collect taxes from tenants or sell tax farming contracts, taking a portion of the proceeds for yourself.

Usury & Zinskauf: You lend money and charge interest on the loan or you rent your tools for a fixed fee.

Property

Property is a useful and valuable asset, but it does require upkeep, servants and other expenses. Or at the very least, you must pay rent to a landlord who tolerates your presence.

Castle: A castle, or *chateau*, is a fortified dwelling designed to be self-sufficient and defensible when under siege. There is a central donjon, inner and outer baileys and a multitude of towers. It all looks rather intimidating, but lately castles have proved better prisons than fortifications. Modern artillery is of sufficient power to reduce these ancient structures to rubble.

City Home: You own a house in the city, perhaps situated next to some pleasant park with a stream, or crushed shoulder to shoulder between two towering townhouses or bordering a festering graveyard or abattoir.

Country Home: You own a house in the country. The home is part of a village or is on the land of your overlord, to whom you pay a small convenience for the lease. It is common to operate a small business from the home.

Estate: In our terms, an estate is a property that contains a manor or villa, in addition to forest for hunting, streams for fishing and milling and fields for planting. Estates include facilities and housing for the villeins and peasants who manage them.

Fortress: A modern fortress is a sight to behold—star-shaped with bastions at each point that provide the defenders interlocking fields of fire. The walls are designed with slopes

and glacis surfaces to deflect the energy of incoming artillery fire. Your fortress has a garrison of lazy, ill-trained soldiers and is staffed by spies and local flunkies who steal or overcharge for everything. It contains an empty arsenal and a few batteries of poorly maintained artillery pieces. The crown expects you to be ready to withstand a siege at a moment's notice.

Homeless: You live as a hermit in the forest, in the ruins of some castle or in an abandoned building in the city.

Manor: Your family owns a manor in the country. It consists of a main house, servant's quarters, stables, gardens and a pond or stream, as well as a parcel of arable land.

Rented Flat: You rent one of the thousands of apartments available in Paris. The apartment comes free with a suspicious landlord.

Townhouse: In France, the townhouse is often called *une hôtel*. These stately domiciles stand at three and four stories, with spacious interiors punctuated with many tall windows to let in light and air. Capable of housing a family of 10 to 15 and their servants, *hôtels* are the favored abodes of the bourgeoisie and wealthy aristocrats looking for a *piéd-à-terre* in the city.

Villa: Originating in ancient Rome, this style of country house is the center of a semi-fortified, self-sufficient farm. They are the province of wealthy nobles, especially in southern France.

Village: Your noble family is overlord to a village in the country. The village pays its taxes to you (perhaps directly, or perhaps indirectly through a tax farmer). The village includes services like a blacksmith, farrier, miller, baker, hosteler and butcher.

PROPERTY IS AN ASSET

Property carries an asset value. This is the equivalent amount of income for which one can sell or trade the property. Asset value is represented by a die type: 1d2, 1d3, 1d4, etc. See the Assets heading deeper in this chapter for more.

Wealth Rating

Your Wealth is rated like a skill: 4/6, 5/6, 7/8, etc. When it's time to purchase assets, pay taxes or improve your lifestyle, you'll roll this die as you would any other skill.

Income describes potential revenues over the course of a year, rather than coins in your pocket or money in the bank. The income level is used to measure the impact of expenses and boons on your lifestyle.

Income Total	Wealth Rating	Income in Livres	Social Strata
13	99/100	£t 1,000,000,000s	VOC ²
12	98/100	£t 100,000,000s	The state
11	97/100	£t 50,000,000s	M. Le Cardinal
10	96/100	£t 10,000,000s	Ministers of State
9	19/20	£t 5,000,000s	Financiers
8	11/12	£t 1,000,000s	Princes & Dukes
7	9/10	£t 100,000s	Merchants
6	7/8	£t 10,000s	Marquis & Barons
5	5/6	£t 1000s	Artisans
4	4/6	£t 500s	Tradesmen
3	3/6	£t 200s	Peasants
2	2/6	£t 100s	Laborers
1	1/6	£t 10s	Beggars
0	0	£t 0	Hermits

INCREASING WEALTH

If you add an additional source of income, you may increase your Wealth. If the income source's value is equal to or greater than your current Income Source, increase your Wealth rating by one.

MARRIAGE

If two spouses have sources of income, they may combine them so long as the less-well-off spouse's Wealth rating is only one lower than the richer spouse's. If this is the case, both of their Wealth ratings improve to the new value.

If the married couple have disparately valued sources of income, then they retain their separate Wealth ratings.

2 VOC: *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*—Dutch East India Company

WEALTH AND TRAVEL

If you travel, your Wealth rating drops by one per 100 miles traveled from your home. Your Wealth rating restores itself by one per 100 miles traveled home. If your Wealth is damaged while on the road, those points are not restored. If you wish to set up a new home, you must purchase property suitable to your station in your new country.



Purchasing

To make a purchase, roll your Wealth as you would a skill. If you succeed, you make the purchase without further complication. You can afford the purchase.

Fail and you've bitten off more than you can chew. The game master chooses one of the following options:

- ☪ The item in question is not what it seemed—it is shoddy, broken or of dubious provenance.
- ☪ Go into debt by an amount equivalent to the margin of failure. Add this debt to your obligations.
- ☪ Trigger an unfortunate event for one of your dependents.
- ☪ Liquidate an asset to make up the difference.
- ☪ Reduce your Wealth rating by one.
- ☪ Back out of the deal (and lose 1d4 reputation).

EXPENSE

When you wish to purchase an item or asset, consult the price of the item (in livres if at all possible). Compare the price to your Income in Livres found in the Wealth Rating table.

- ☪ If the price is lower than your Income in Livres amount, test Wealth as per the standard procedure to make the purchase.
- ☪ If the price is equivalent to your Income in Livres but less than the next higher tier, test Wealth with a -1 or -2 penalty as determined by the game master.
- ☪ If the price of the item or asset in question is equal to or greater than the next higher Income in Livres tier, it is too expensive for you to purchase at this moment. You must borrow money or find another source of livres.

LIFESTYLE

Do not make purchases for food, clothing and outings within your chosen lifestyle. See Obligations for more on lifestyle.

DECLINING INCOME

If your Wealth rating drops, add one exertion to your next Mortal Coil roll and subtract 1d2 from your reputation per tier dropped.

Obligations

Rich or poor, wealth only has meaning when set against the countervailing forces of taxation, dependents, property and debt. We bundle these elements together in a rating that indicates who or what your wealth supports: yourself, members of your family who cannot fend for themselves, dues, livery, property, debts and taxes.

If obligations feel burdensome or unfair, you are now attuned to the life of Parisians in 1648. Taxes were crushing, in a way that is difficult for the contemporary reader to imagine. And their weight fell especially hard on the poor and working class—nobility and clergy were exempt from most taxes. When the tax farmers came round, they knocked on the doors of peasants, laborers and artisans. People who were already struggling to buy bread and wine were then squeezed even harder to fulfill the tax farmer's contract.

BASE OBLIGATIONS

The quality of your birth determines your core obligations: namely the taxes and fees which are extracted from you by the government.

YOUR LIFESTYLE

Your first obligation is to the state, but the second is to yourself! Choose your lifestyle for the next season. The indicated value is your obligation to yourself.

Natural: 0. You spend your time hunting and fishing, living in the rough outdoors. Your clothes are made from that which you've killed or scavenged.

Bread Alone: 1. You are frugal and eat a bit of bread dipped in wine to keep you going. Your unfashionable clothes were handed down from an elder sibling or parent.

Respectable: 2. You have enough to eat in bread, cheese and meat. And you savor a good bottle of Bordeaux now and then. Your clothing gives no offense nor draws any compliment.

Fashionable: 3. You wear fashionable suits of velvet and lace, gamble at fashionable parlors and eat at fashionable restaurants.

Lavish: 5. You eat game and fresh fruits every day and follow them with ices for dessert. You drink only the best wines, while you wear the richest velvets and laces.

DEPENDENTS

Everyone depends on someone, and our protagonists are no exception. They have people who rely on them for survival. While these characters do not represent everyone a character knows or loves, they are those who are dependent on them for their daily bread. In character creation, protagonists will have 0-3 dependents. Each dependent counts as an obligation. For good or for ill, this person relies on you for shelter, bread and comfort.

PROPERTY OBLIGATIONS

Your property is listed with its obligation burden as found in Book 2: Les Fruits Malheureux. The number represents its upkeep and staff.

Managing Your Affairs

BETWEEN MOMENTS

Between moments of frenetic activity, we must find time to manage our financial affairs.

- ☪ If your Wealth die denominator (6, 8, 10, etc.) is equal to or greater than your outstanding obligations, then your affairs are in order. No further attention is needed.
- ☪ If your Wealth die denominator is lower than your obligations, your affairs are disordered. You must take action to remedy the situation.

REMEDIES

You may bring your affairs in order by doing any of the following:

- ☪ Reduce your lifestyle to make up the difference.
- ☪ Reduce your dependent's lifestyle to make up the difference. They may not approve, but surely they will understand.
- ☪ Liquidate an asset to make up the difference.
- ☪ Take out a loan to make up the difference. The debt for this loan is added to your obligations only after you have settled your affairs in this moment.



INSUFFICIENT REMEDIES

If your remedies are insufficient to bring your affairs in order (or perhaps you are reluctant to make certain remedies for sentimental reasons), then do the following:

- ❶ First, test your Wealth with a penalty equal to the difference between your Wealth rating denominator and your current obligations. If you pass, all is well. If you fail, reduce your Wealth rating by one step.
- ❷ Second, select one of your obligations that distresses you and that makes the difference between your affairs being disordered or ordered. It can be a piece of property, a dependent, a debt or taxes. And choose an appropriate option below:

Dodge Taxes: You may “forget” to pay your taxes. If you do so, remove your base obligations from your current total but increase your future tax obligations by one. If you are discovered to have dodged the tax farmers, you may be fined or imprisoned.

Neglect Debts: You may neglect to make payments on a debt. Increase its obligation value by one. Your benefactor will inquire about your repayment plan.

Disregard Property: You neglect a piece of property. Reduce its asset value by one step: from 1d6 to 1d4, 1d4 to 1d3, or 1d3 to 1d2, for example. If reduced from 1d2, the old pile can take no more abuse and it finally collapses with a mournful sigh.

Deny Dependent: Perhaps you are lax with your dependent’s allowance. If so, roll on the table below.

Roll DENIED DEPENDENTS TABLE

8	Birth: One of your dependents gives birth to a child. That child is added to your list of dependents. +1 dependent.
7	Marriage: One of your dependents finds love and marries. Roll 1d6: 1-3: They leave your household (-1 dependent) or 4-6: the spouse temporarily moves in until they can get themselves set up. +1 dependent.
6	Death: Your youngest dependent gives up the ghost, either through accident or illness. -1 dependent.
5	Row: Your dependents fight and feud, giving you no peace. You are forced to move out, start drinking or attend mass more regularly.
4	Misery: One of your friends or relatives falls ill or is severely injured. They come to you seeking help. +1 dependent.
3	Adoption: One of your dependents adopts another poor soul and brings them into the family. Roll on the dependents table for this new addition. +1 dependent.
2	Disappearance: One of your dependents disappears one day. You're unsure if they are dead, drunk or deranged. -1 dependent.
1	Apprenticed: One of your dependents shows some unlikely aptitude and is apprenticed to a local master or takes a position as a domestic servant in another house. They're no longer your burden -1 dependent.

When using the Denied Dependents Table:

- ☪ Roll 1d8 if your dependents include adult women.
- ☪ Roll 1d6+1 if your dependents are only adult men or elderly men and women.
- ☪ Or roll 1d6 if your dependents are solely children.

Assets

Assets are tangible things like property, horses, carriages, jewelry, silver & gold plate and so on. Asset value is listed as a die type. When you trade or sell the asset, roll that die and consult the Income Total table. The result indicates an equivalent, temporary Wealth rating.

For example, I wish to sell my manor which is listed with a 1d6 asset value. I roll the die and the result is a 4. The manor grants me the equivalent of 4/6 Wealth for one roll.

NEGOTIATING VALUE

One may negotiate the sale price of an asset if one finds the roll disagreeable. Make a Parley test against your prospective buyer. Success indicates you raise the value result by one. If you wish to raise the value by more than one, you may engage your prospective buyer in a duel of wits over the value. Winning the duel sets the value to maximum.

500 livres is far too little for my manor! I demand more for my family's patrimony and thus test my Parley. I pass and increase the sale price from 4 to 5. A few thousand livres is a price I am prepared to settle for.

FINANCING ASSETS

Rather than selling an asset outright, one may borrow against its value. Test your Finance skill. Success indicates you may take a loan of any amount in the asset's value range.

Gifts, Loans & Debts

Even kings borrow money. Well, especially kings.

GIFTS

You may gift another character an amount of money.

- ☞ Determine the amount of the gift in livres.
- ☞ Assess the amount as if the giver was making a purchase. Make a Wealth test as per those rules.
- ☞ The recipient receives the money and is granted a temporary Wealth rating equivalent to the livres given.

LINE OF CREDIT

A creditor may extend to one of their dependents or friends a line of credit. A line of credit allows the recipient to use the creditor's Wealth rating to make purchases, pay debts and settle obligations. Creditors may fix a limit in livres, a limit in time or they may extend their full credit.

- ☞ A credit limit in livres indicates that we must track the price of the expenditures. When the designated amount of livres is met, the bank, treasury or other lender ends the line of credit.

LOANING MONEY

You may loan money to another character. A loan differs from a gift in that it must be repaid. A loan is made in a similar manner to a gift:

- ☞ Determine the amount of the loan in livres.
- ☞ Assess the amount as if the loaner was making a purchase.
Make a Wealth test as per those rules.
- ☞ The recipient receives the money and is granted a temporary Wealth rating equivalent to the livres loaned.

DEBTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- ☞ A borrower incurs debt. They increase their obligations by an amount agreed upon when taking the loan: typically, 1-3.
- ☞ The debts value is equivalent to the first number of its Wealth rating. $1/6=1$, $2/6=2$, etc.
- ☞ Each time the borrower meets their obligations between moments, they pay down a bit of their debt. Reduce the debt value by one.
- ☞ When they pay the debt to zero, they are free and may reduce their obligations accordingly.

REPUTATION

Most creditors require their clients to have 5 points of reputation per Wealth rating for them to make a loan.

To make a loan equivalent to Wealth 5/6 requires Reputation 25.

LENDERS

If necessary, the game master may create a personality for the lender or debtor using the Dependents table and the Attitude and Motivation table in **Book 2: Les Fruits Malheureux** to generate a new relation or invent a character on your own.

TIGHT CREDIT

If your obligations should outnumber your Wealth die denominator (6, 8, 10, etc), you are in a financial predicament. First, you cannot get easy credit. Creditors will see you as a high risk and either refuse to grant you a loan or increase the terms (+1 debt obligation per two points of obligation over wealth). Second, compounding the first problem, anyone to whom you owe money comes looking for you. The debt, they claim, must be paid immediately.

Charity

If one is so buried by debt and poverty that one suffocates, one can seek aid of a charity or hospital. Unfortunately, the world is overrun with beggars, the sick and the infirm, all of whom need help more than you do. So they are certain to turn you away.

ORA ET LABORA ET CONTVRBAVIT

You might consider joining a holy order, but to do so you'd need to convince the abbot of your piety or your wealth. Neither seem likely for you.

Test Wealth or Religion to join a convent as a monk or nun. Forfeit your possessions, donate your property and income sources to the order. You are then shielded from your debts by ecclesiastical law.

Bankruptcy

You may find yourself overwhelmed and in need of extreme financial unction. To declare bankruptcy, test Finance, Accounting or Law with a -1 penalty. If you succeed, forfeit one piece of property or one income source, reduce your Wealth rating by one and clear all debts.

If you fail, you are imprisoned for two weeks (or one moment). Forfeit all of your income sources and property. Reduce your Wealth rating to 1/6. And, at last, clear all of your debts.





Réputation

In this faded age, to measure against the great heroes and heroines of antiquity, one must strive to maintain an unblemished reputation. Everything you do is watched and judged against the social standards of the time. Your reputation—your honor, your standing, your fame, your renown—could be said to be your greatest asset.

You must maintain good behavior and good appearance so as to honor your mother and father, your spouse, your guild, your master, your colonel and your noble superior. Ultimately, your behavior reflects in the eyes of the king and queen. By doing evil, you dishonor them; by doing great and honorable work, you honor them.

And who among us does not live to have their glory reflected in the eyes of those ordained by God to justly rule over the French? Perhaps we should not indulge in rhetorical flourishes with such pithy answers so readily available.

Reputation Society

There is a misapprehension about French society in 1648 that only noble men of the sword valued their honor and reputation—and that only they defended it. In truth, every member of the realm coveted their reputation: men, women, nobles, beggars, captains and criminals. To have a great reputation meant one could rise in society, whereas to have a poor reputation meant that certain doors were shut against you, that certain individuals would whisper against you or even that rocks would be hurled down upon you from windows above when you walked the streets. While not every member of society wished to be noble, to be loved or to do good, they all yearned for a reputation that painted such a picture.

The society of reputation is a cruel one, subject to dynamics of favor, popularity and an insular society that associates only with its own out of fear of tarnishing their own reputation. It is a society that values wealth, birth rank, title and martial prowess. While it espouses Christian values of humility and chastity, in practice it is a realm of ostentatious wealth and vain peacocks who strut about flaunting what they pretend to have. If you are not one of the lucky few born into that rank, it is likely your fondest dream to climb the golden ladder and ascend into their number.

Reputation brings with it fame, renown and recognition. What follows is a rough guide to how your reputation can be translated into recognition.

Reputation	Fame
150	Known throughout the world
90	Known throughout Europe
75	Known throughout France
50	Known throughout the province
20	Known throughout the city
10	Known throughout the neighborhood or organization
5	Known on the street
3	Known in the house

Calculating Reputation

Reputation is the sum of the following ratings:

Base	Quality of birth
+	Station
+	Military Rank
+	Wealth die denominator (6, 8, 10, etc.)
+	Deeds
±	Reputation of the moment
-	Unacknowledged deeds
-	Damage done to one's reputation

QUALITY OF BIRTH

Quality of Birth	Reputation
<i>Marginaux</i>	0
Peasant	2
Commoner	3
Artisan	4
Bourgeois	5
<i>Noblesse de robe</i>	5
<i>Noblesse d'épée</i> without title	7
<i>Noblesse d'épée</i> with title	10

STATION

First Estate	Reputation
Monk or nun	1
Porter	2
Deacon	3
Priest	4
Canon	5
Curate	6
Abbé	8
Bishop	10
Cardinal	12

Miseries & Misfortunes; or roleplaying in a certain mode of 1648 France

Second Estate	Entitlement	Reputation
<i>Le Roi</i> (king)	<i>Titre</i>	26
<i>La Reine</i> (queen)	<i>Titre</i>	22
<i>Dauphin</i> (eldest son of king, queen)	<i>Titre</i>	18
<i>Prince, princesse du sang</i> (...of the blood)	<i>Titre</i>	16
<i>Duc et pair</i> (duke and peer)	<i>Titre</i>	15
<i>Duc, duchesse</i> (duke, duchesse)	<i>Titre</i>	14
<i>Marquis, Marquise</i>	<i>Titre</i>	11
<i>Comte, comtesse</i> (count, countess)	<i>Titre</i>	8
<i>Baron, baronne</i>	<i>Titre</i>	6
<i>Seigneur, dame</i> (lord, lady)	<i>Sans Titre</i>	4
<i>Chevalier, sieur</i> (knight, sir)	<i>Sans Titre</i>	3
<i>Écuyer</i> (squire)	<i>Sans Titre</i>	2
<i>Gentilhomme, dame gentile</i>	<i>Sans Titre</i>	1

Third Estate	Reputation
Financier	3
Merchant Venturer, Vintner	2
Artisan	1
All Else	0
Laborer, Vagabond, Beggar	-1

RANK

Officer's Rank	Reputation
Subaltern	1
Lieutenant	2
Captain	4
Major	5
Colonel	8
Lieutenant general (appointed by general)	9
General	15
Lieutenant general (appointed by king)	20
Marshal	25

ENTITLED

If your rank or title increases, increase your reputation by the difference in value of your new rank or title to your old.

Deeds

If a protagonist accomplishes some small or great deed, add the amount indicated to their reputation according to the Deeds Great and Small table. However, these increases are temporary and do not automatically increase maximum reputation. The amount earned fades away between this moment and the next unless the deed is acknowledged.

Deeds Great and Small	Reputation Modifier
Public Behavior	
Perform a discreet favor for your superior	+1
Perform your role or job flawlessly	+1
Appear fashionably dressed at an important event	+1
Keep your word	+1
Public Events	
Host a small gathering	+1
Host an intimate salon	+2
Host a grande fête	+3
Win a contest	+1
Win a lawsuit	+1d2
Win a public debate	+1d3
War and Feats of Arms	
Participate in a skirmish	+1
Participate in a battle	+2
Win a skirmish	+2
Win a small battle	+4
Win a large battle	+7
Criminal Accusations	
Be accused of superfluity of dress	+1
Publishing	
Publish a pamphlet	+1d2-1
Publish an article	+1d2
Publish a manuscript or treatise	+1d3
Mercantilism	
Found a company	+1d3
Secure a monopoly	+1d4

Deeds Great and Small	Reputation Modifier
Thievery	
Steal something valuable	+1
Steal a fancy cloak on the Pont Neuf	+2
Noblesse de Robe	
Pass a law	+1
Negotiate a treaty	+1d3
Strike down a tax law	+1d6
Dueling	
Fight a duel	See Remedies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & THANKS

In order for reputation to rise, deeds must be acknowledged with gratuity or veneration. If your protagonist receives a gratuity from a person of higher reputation for their deed, if you are complimented for your accomplishment by a person of higher reputation or your deed is venerated in poetry or a pamphlet, your maximum reputation increases by the amount of the deed.

Damaged Reputation

It is possible to have your pristine reputation damaged by villainous attacks by your rivals or by unthinking bastards who fail to see your importance in this world.

DAMAGE TO REPUTATION

Damage to reputation is applied first to your current deeds and then to your reputation.

Inadvisable Circumstances	Reputation Modifier
Public Behavior	
Behave talk in an unconventional manner	-1d6
Be disrespected by one's children, inferiors or juniors	-1d4
Break parole	-1d3
War and Feats of Arms	
Lose a battle or skirmish	-2d4
Retreat from the enemy	-1
Cowardice or flight from an engagement	-2d6

Inadvisable Circumstances	Reputation Modifier
Criminal Accusations	
Accused of misdemeanor	-1d4
Accused of venality	-1d8
Accused of capital offense	-1d10
Occultism	
Discovered owning a magical grimoire	-1d6
Accused of necromancy or witchcraft	-2d6
Dueling	
Decline a duel	-1d4

ATTACKS

Your reputation is damaged if you are insulted, if you are implicated in a crime, if you associate with people of mean reputation or if you are attacked in the press.

Attack	Reputation Damage
Insulted in the press	-1d6
Insulted in person	Intimate: -1d2-1; Spoken: -1d2; Shouted: -1d3
Accused in the press	-1d6
Tried for a crime	Civil: -1d4; Criminal: -1d8
Tried for a capital offense	-1d10
Accused of necromancy	-2d6
Confess in the press	-1d8
Decline a duel	-1d4
Poisoned in the press	-1d6+1
Rioting	-1d3
Associate with low characters	-1d2-1

REMEDIES

If your enemies damage your reputation, you may attempt to remedy the fault. If you fail to remedy the damage before the end of the moment, your reputation decreases by the damage amount. You can remedy the situation by doing the following:

- ☞ Track who damaged your reputation and how.
- ☞ Address the slight to them directly.
- ☞ Ask them to apologize or to take back their words.
 - ♦ Take revenge on them if they do not recant or apologize
 - ♦ Or instead challenge them to a duel
- ☞ Go to court to remedy criminal accusations

Remedy	Effect
Court	Recover 1d4/1d8/1d10 respective to accusation
Attacker Recants	Recover all but 1d3-1 lost reputation
Apology Accepted	Recover all lost reputation plus 1d2-1 reputation
Revenge	Recover 1d6 of lost reputation up to maximum rep
Lose a Duel	-1d3 reputation
Win a Duel	Recover all lost reputation plus +1d3 reputation

Revenge allows a character to recoup some or all of what they lost, while dueling and apologies have the potential to earn reputation.

REPUTATION AND RANK

If reputation drops beneath the amount for your estate or rank (as listed in the tables for Factoring Reputation), your superior will call you to account for your actions. Unless you provide them a convincing narrative for your current state of public humiliation, they will make excuses and relieve you of your rank or send you into exile (if it is impossible or inconvenient to break you). Your friends will abandon you: Friends using you to attain rank will move on; friends of your former rank will look to more suitable peers.

REPUTATION LOSS AND WEALTH

If your reputation drops beneath the base set by your Quality of Birth, you must dissimulate to keep up appearances (see Dissimulation later in this chapter). If you fail, your creditors come calling and begin to hound you over your obligations.

REPUTATION ZERO

If your reputation temporarily drops to 0 due to damage, reduce your maximum reputation by one.

If your reputation drops to 0 and there is no hope of addressing the grievances against you (or your max is at 1 and your rep hits 0 from some slight), you lose everything. Your spouse divorces you, your children go to live with their cousins, your friends stop responding to your letters or pretend they're not at home when you call. Your superiors remove your privileges and your subordinates slip away in the night. You become *marginiaux*, an outcast. You can only be a soldier, prostitute, criminal or actor. No other path is open to you.

Momentary Reputation

At the conclusion of each moment, review your current circumstances and modify your core reputation by the factors below. These modifications are applied to your current reputation and do not require gratitude or recognition.

Reputation Events	Modifier
Lifestyle	
Natural	-2d3
Bread Alone	-1d3
Respectable	±0
Fashionable	+1d2
Lavish	+1d4
Mentalities	
Change political affiliation to the most influential faction	+1d4
Change political affiliation to the disfavored faction	-1d6
Change religious affiliation to the most influential faction	+1d6
Change religious affiliation to the unpopular faction	-5d4
Wealth	
Increase Wealth rating	+1
Decrease Wealth rating	-1d2
Good Reputation	
High reputation (≥ 30)*	+1d2
Low reputation (≤ 10)*	-1d2-1
Failing to defend a challenge to your reputation	-1 per 10 Rep
Successfully defending a challenge to your reputation	+1d6
Associating with individual of higher reputation	+2
Associating with individual of lower reputation	-1
Patronage	
Disappointing a patron	-1d3
Betraying a patron	-2d4
Prestigious Service	
Musketeer	+1
King's Guard	+1d2
Swiss	+1

* A reputation of 30, 40 or 50 and so on grants even more reputation—like accruing interest on an investment. While reputation of less than 10 may degrade even further (by 0 to 1 points).

Entrée

Your reputation grants access to Parisian society. Should you be among the shining lights of the fashionable set—and have the reputation to match—you will be invited to soirees, salons, perhaps even to court. But should your reputation not meet the standards of those present, you will be politely declined admission.

Access	Recommended Reputation
Entrée into court	25
Entrée into a fashionable salon	20
Entrée into King's Guard	20
Entrée into the Musketeers	15
Entrée into the Hôtel de Ville	10
Custom at a fashionable shop	10
Acceptance into subaltern position under a prince	10
Custom at neighborhood establishments	5
Entrée into Paris	3

If you do not meet the recommended reputation for entrance, the establishments' servants, lackeys or guards will deny you. You'll have to plead your case or find another way in.

Should you be lacking in recognition, you might induce a friend to make a recommendation or petition the host directly so that they might make a special dispensation or perhaps even redistribute some wealth to aid you in demonstrating your worthiness.

Fame

If your reputation is higher than another character's, you can attempt to leverage your standing to influence them. You may use reputation in this manner to ask for someone to stand aside, grant an audience or forget their duty.

- ☪ When using fame to influence, +1 to Parley and Leadership tests.
- ☪ Should you fail the test, subtract one from your current reputation as you are denied by your inferior.

These varlets have insulted you with their impertinence. You must demand that they apologize.

HIGHEST REPUTATION

People will turn to those with the highest reputation and seek their opinions and offer them sinecures and brave missions before turning to others. This practice may create some awkward situations for those who do not wish to be recognized or volunteer for duty.

THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT

If your reputation is lower than another character's, you may use your standing to beg for mercy, surcease or succor.

- ☪ Take +1 to Parley, Rook and Sub Rosa tests when begging for mercy or attempting to escape notice by being meek or lowly.
- ☪ If successful, increase your deeds reputation by one.
- ☪ If failed, decrease your reputation by one as you debase yourself.

You may of course take revenge on those who caused you to demean yourself in such a petty manner.

Appearances

Reputation requires a certain investment in your appearance.

- ☪ To keep up appearances at court, you must maintain a fashionable or lavish lifestyle.
- ☪ To keep up appearances in the military, one must maintain a respectable or fashionable lifestyle.
- ☪ To keep up appearances in the salons, one must maintain a fashionable lifestyle.
- ☪ To keep up appearances as an artisan, merchant or financier, one must maintain a respectable lifestyle or better.

If your outfit is soiled, damaged or been recently seen at a public event, you must purchase another to keep up appearances.

FAILURE TO KEEP UP APPEARANCES

If you fail to keep up appearances, you lose 1d3 points of reputation per incident. You can apologize to your hosts or you can remedy this particular fault by exceeding expectations at the next public event with a more magnificent outfit.

Reputation Reactions

If your appearance or reputation is inadequate, flawed or inappropriate, you may provoke certain reactions from those you meet. You might be...

- ☞ Shunned by your peers
- ☞ Scolded by your elders
- ☞ Reproached by the authorities
- ☞ Laughed at by the crowd

And lastly, if your position is pitiable enough, you might receive charity and succor from a kind-hearted soul.

Dissimulation

It is possible to conceal one's station through artful use of a cloak, mask or even a whole outfit.

- ☞ Wearing clothing to appear above or below your station requires one to test their Fashion skill.
- ☞ Wearing clothes to disguise your identity requires you to test Fashion (for an outfit) or Sub Rosa (for a cloak for men or a mask for women).

Failure indicates that you are discovered at an inopportune moment and your reputation is put at risk.





Mortal Coil

Life in 1648 is a tale of one thousand shocks. Wars, revolts, famines and plagues stalk the land like the Four Horsemen. Even the sun is dim and cold, providing little comfort throughout long, bleak winters. Few survive the journey out of childhood. Death is a sweet release from a burden of oppression and wrongs, a chance at last to sleep peacefully and dream of a better world.

To survive in this world, one must exert oneself to the utmost.

In order to represent the supreme effort and will required to navigate the Sea of Troubles that is 1648, players may spend their characters' very life.

Your quality of birth determines your base allotment of years. During character creation, the game master rolls the life expectancy of each character and keeps the total private.

The difference between your starting age and your life expectancy becomes your mortal coil—your capacity to withstand the shocks and grievances of your life. The game master privately tracks this total for each player as they spend it.

The Native Hue of Resolution

EXERTION

When under duress, you may exert yourself in an extraordinary way to avoid death or misfortune. When you exert yourself in this manner, you reroll with a substantial bonus or force an opponent to act with a significant penalty.

Each exertion subtracts one from your mortal coil. The game master privately tracks the total years spent and does not reveal the character's status to the players until they reach 0 mortal coil.

You may exert yourself only after a roll. However, you may exert yourself whether or not you were successful in the initial endeavor.

REROLL SKILLS

You may exert yourself to reroll a skill test with a bonus. Once the improvement hits the maximum number for a die type, improve to the next die type.

- ☪ The first point of exertion spent allows a reroll at +5.

A skill of 1/6 will improve to 7/8 after spending one point of exertion.

If I have a 3/6 skill and I take a +5 reroll, I would take two points of the bonus to 5/6. I have +3 of the bonus remaining. The next point to 7/8, the next to 9/10 and the final point to 11/12.

A skill of 4/6 will improve to 19/20.

- ☪ If you take a second reroll for the same task, increase your rating by +10. Effectively, all skill ratings improve to 19/20.
- ☪ After achieving 19/20, apply remaining positive modifiers as offsets against negative modifiers.

Apply negative modifiers to skill rolls after spending exertion and calculating its improvements.

When testing a 4/6 skill with -2 modifier, do the following: For the first point of exertion, improve the die type to 19/20. Then apply the -2 modifier. The final skill rating for the test is 17/20.

Still trying to summon Bael with his 4/6 Goëtia skill, Dro's initial test would be at 1/10 due to the -12 difficulty modifier. Spending a point of exertion, on his 4/6 Goëtia, he increases the skill rating to 19/20. However, the negative modifier drags him down to 7/20. If he fails this roll, he may spend a second point of exertion to gain a +10 modifier to the roll. This would improve the philosopher's chances to 12/20. Not great odds. Perhaps one shouldn't tamper with the dark arts unschooled.

- ☪ A third reroll for the same task increases your rating by +15.
 - ☪ A fourth reroll for the same task increases your rating by +20.
- It is not possible to exert yourself any further.

One would only use a third or fourth reroll for a skill test if one were attempting to offset a formidable negative modifier.

UNSKILLED DESPAIR

If you are unskilled and rolling a 1/10 chance, you may not exert yourself to spend years to reroll with +5, etc.

REROLL COMBAT ROLLS AND SAVES

Combat rolls and saves are made using 1d20. Players need high rolls to score hits. Spending exertion uses the same basic scheme as described above, but there are no die steps involved:

- ☪ 1st point of exertion: reroll with a +5 bonus;
 - ♦ 2nd point: reroll with +10;
 - ♦ 3rd point: reroll with +15;
 - ♦ 4th point: reroll with +20.
- ☪ These bonuses can trigger critical hits with firearms and social attacks. A melee attack requires a rolled 20 to crit.
- ☪ There is no automatic hit or save result. A rolled 1 always fails (and a roll of 20 always hits).
- ☪ You cannot reroll damage results.

REROLL ABILITY TESTS

Ability tests require one to roll equal to or less than your ability rating on 1d20. Exertion spent for rerolls improves the ability score in this case. If a bonus improves a score to 20 or more, success is automatic unless the roll also carries a penalty. If the modified ability score is greater than 20, subtract the penalty from the total of the ability plus the bonus. If the total is less than 20, then roll.

For opposed rolls, the highest roll without going over wins. For abilities of 20+, add the amount in excess of 20 to your roll to win the contest.

FORCING REROLLS

You may force a player who is directly targeting your character with an action to reroll their skill, ability or to-hit die.

- ☪ If you spend mortal coil to force a reroll, your opponent suffers a -5 penalty to their skill or ability rating or to-hit roll.
- ☪ A second forced reroll for the same task suffers a -10 modifier.
- ☪ A third reroll for the same task suffers a -15 modifier.
- ☪ A fourth reroll for the same task suffers a -20 modifier! It is not possible to exert yourself any further.

You cannot reroll or force rerolls of damage or die of fate results.

The antagonist, Le Coq the robber, fires his pistol at John's soldier, Guiteau. The robber needs a 13 or higher to hit on a 1d20. The game master rolls a 20, a critical hit! Uninterested in witnessing Guiteau's demise, John spends a point of exertion and forces the game master to reroll with a -5 penalty. The game master rolls an 18 for Le Coq. Even with a -5 penalty, it's still a hit. Sweating, John spends another point to force a second reroll, this time at -10. The game master rolls a 13, which would be another hit, but for the -10 penalty. Le Coq misses and Guiteau lives. The game master privately notes that John spent two points of his mortal coil.

If a skill rating is reduced below 1/6 by modifiers, then roll 1d10 and success is only granted on a 1 (despite all other modifiers).

For example, I have a skill rated at 3/6. I am forced to reroll with a -5 penalty. That penalty reduces me below 1/6, so I succeed only on a 1/10 in this case.

To Grunt and Sweat Under a Weary Life

You pay the piper when you are reduced to 0 hit points and at the conclusion of the current moment if you spent at least one exertion.

- ☞ Total the amount of exertion spent during the current moment and subtract one.
- ☞ Roll 3d6 minus the above total and consult the Mortal Coil table for the result:

MORTAL COIL TABLE

3d6	Your exertion causes you to...
0-1	fail and die (Spend a few days slowly fading away)
2	diminish (Disappear for six seasons and return faded: -1 to Flawed (lowest) ability rating)
3	go mad (Spend four seasons wandering or raving: -1 Wisdom)
4	strain yourself beyond endurance (Spend three seasons convalescing: -1 Str)
5	addle your brain (Spend two seasons collecting wits: -1 Intelligence)
6	permanently injure yourself (Spend two seasons recovering: -1 Constitution)
7	lose a step (Spend one season limping painfully about: -1 Dexterity)
8	reopen an old wound or gain new permanent injury (Spend one season nursing the wound; permanently reduce HP max by 1d3—if reduced to zero, you waste away and die.)
9	drown yourself in drink for one season (Save vs poison or test Religion to survive—if failed, -1 Constitution)
10	fall into melancholia (Save vs terror every season to recover; otherwise remain shut in)
11	succumb to a fever (Save vs poison & plague every season to recover; otherwise remain bedridden)
12	require one season of quiet rest
13	inflate your carnal appetites (You must eat and drink continuously or pursue amour to the exclusion of other endeavors: increase your lifestyle obligation by one)
14	learn an important lesson (Spend one season reflecting: +1 max Will)
15	see a vision of the divine (Spend one season in prayer: +1 Religion)
16	gain bravado! (Spend one moment boasting: +1d2 to maximum hit points)
17	gain wisdom (Spend one moment contemplating: +1 Wisdom)
18	gain insight (Spend one moment pondering: +1 Intelligence)
19	embody your virtue (or flaw) (Spend one moment admiring yourself: increase your Virtue or Flaw ability rating by one, your choice)

- ☪ A *moment*: The next moment of action—historical or novel.
- ☪ A *season*: The remainder of the current season or the full duration of the subsequent seasons.

If you spent only one year to take one reroll during your mission, you roll on the Mortal Coil table without modification (1 exertion minus one). If you spent another year for a second reroll, and then another to force a reroll on return fire from a Huguenot, you take three years from your total and you would roll on the table with a -2 penalty.

Abilities affected by the results from the table are permanently modified. They can be further modified by additional exertion or supernatural forces.

If an ability is reduced to 2 or lower, your character is incapacitated in that area and can no longer fully function without assistance. Abilities may be increased up to a maximum of 19 (+4 governing modifier). Further increases are discarded.

WHIPS AND SCORNS OF TIME

Being forced to roll on the Mortal Coil table for any reason also reduces your overall Mortal Coil total by one.



Enterprises of Great Pitch and Moment

It is possible to rejuvenate your life so as to withstand a bit more of the Mortal Coil. Completing a lifepath—making it through all six levels—earns a small, random allotment of years, which the game master adds to your current total.

Lifepath	Completion
Américain	+2d10 years
Clerk	+1d6 years
Explorer	+1d4 years
Factotum	+1d6 years
Filou	+1d10 years
Gamin	+2d10 years
Infantry Officer	+1d4 years
Judge	+1d8 years
Merchant	+1d6 years
Musketeer	+1d4 years
Passeur	+1d8 years
Petty Noble	+1d4 years
Sailor	+1d8 years
Soldier	+1d6 years

Conscience Makes Cowards of Us All

If a character should spend all of their allotted Mortal Coil, they do not simply drop dead, but their hour approaches. They cannot reroll or force rerolls on dice. Their next encounter could be their last. Perhaps it is best to retire to a quiet place for the remainder of your days?

Once you have spent all of your years, each year you live (while at zero) calls for another roll on the Mortal Coil table at a -1 penalty per year after the first without any life expectancy. Should you rejuvenate yourself through some small accomplishment, this process is delayed until you once again burn your candle down.

Slings and Arrows of Outrageous Fortune

If an unfortunate blow reduces your character to 0 hit points, you are not quite done for. Should this dire event occur, roll immediately on the Mortal Coil table—modified by any outstanding exertion.

For example, a lieutenant of musketeers charges into battle and receives a ball to the abdomen from the musket of some unruly landsknecht who doesn't know his place. The musketeer chooses to brave the shot. Much to his surprise, the errant ball reduces our lieutenant to 0 hit points, forcing a roll on the Mortal Coil table. Luckily, it was early in the battle and the musketeer hadn't exerted himself otherwise. He rolls on the Mortal Coil table without penalty.

Motif

There is a force greater than politics, religion and nationality that binds us together—something unbreakable like friendship, family or love.

THE HEART-ACHE THAT FLESH IS HEIR TO

We create a motif for our group in character creation. Should that bond be tested—should the group come to heated words or even crossed swords—their destiny hangs in the balance.

- ☪ If one who shares your motif appeals to the bond that holds you together and thereby guides the group to cooler decisions, the other members of the group may remove one point of exertion. The one making the appeal does not benefit.
- ☪ *The crisis must be legitimate.* Disputes that are easily walked back are not subject to this force. The threat of violence, dissolution, exile or a similar high emotion must be present before such amelioration can begin.

Should you abnegate your motif, it is broken and lost forever.

Virtues & Flaws

If you activate your flaw and your companions activate your virtue during a moment, you gain a +1 modifier to your next roll on the Mortal Coil table. Add it to your final exertion modifier before rolling.

Virtues and flaws are discussed in their eponymous chapter in **Book 2: Les Fruits Malheureux**.





The Soul of Wit

If you come near me, I will plant this knife in your chest to provide myself with nourishment.

—Dijon, 1644, *Crimes et criminalites en France sous l'ancien regime.*

Before we draw swords—prior even to the first discharge of musketry—there are always words: insults, threats, accusations, confessions, apologies, seductions and bribes. In 1648, a charming or skillful speaker can be more deadly than a duelist, more accurate than a marksman.

A Duel of Wits

Weapons of wit can be used in nearly any context: to score points in court, to convince a reluctant ally, to precipitate a bloody brawl, to exchange witty quips during a hard-fought duel or even to humiliate your enemy with scandalous pamphlets distributed about town.

The duel of wits rules integrate with the physical combat rules. They use initiative, range, to-hit rolls, damage, armor and a measure of mental fortitude.

To convince your interlocutor of the import of your message, you must reduce their mental hit points—their Will—to 0. Doing so indicates that you have won some concession.

Will

Will measures your character's mental resilience. It operates in a manner similar to hit points.

GENERATING WILL

To measure your Will: Roll 1d3 per decade of age (round mathematically).

- ☛ Add your Wisdom modifier (once)
- ☛ Add 1d4 if the character has the Jesuit or Seminarian lifepath.

Thereafter, increase your Will by one for each lifepath you complete and by 1d3 for each decade you age.

DAMAGE TO WILL

Slander and flattery can damage Will just as muskets and swords can reduce your hit points.

- ☛ If Will is reduced to half or below during an exchange of words, subtract -1 Morale.
- ☛ If Will is reduced to 1 or 0, subtract an additional -1d2 Morale.

ZERO WILL

When your enemies and naysayers reduce your will to naught, your character is deeply affected.

- ☛ If Will is reduced to 0, you concede a point to your interlocutor.

You retire from this duel of wits. From the weapons your opponent damaged you with, choose an appropriate victory effect that takes hold of your character.

RECOVERING WILL

Your Will score rebounds quickly. After an exchange of words concludes, you regain 1d3 Will plus your Wisdom modifier. After that, you recover 1d3 Will per day.

- ☞ Damage from attacks in the press have a different impact, since they happen at a different scale. Characters gain 1d3 Will per day starting on the following day, not immediately after.
- ☞ Will can also be recovered through other means, like going to confession and doing penance.

Dueling Ranges

Dueling grounds for battles of wits are similar to those for combat. Participants can get close and slip the proverbial knife between the ribs or stand back and howl or lob ideological bombs. There are four ranges in a duel of wits: intimate, speaking, shouting and in the press.

INTIMATE SPACE

To be in an intimate space, you must be able to talk to your target in a low voice or whisper, and you must be able to touch.

- ☞ You may enter intimate space if invited, or uninvited if you possess higher Precedence.

If you enter an intimate space uninvited:

- ☞ Suffer damage to your reputation equal to your target's Precedence \times 1d3 and 1d6 damage to your Will (+1d6, if your target has a higher reputation).

SPEAKING DISTANCE

To enter speaking distance, you must be close to your target and able to communicate with them without raising your voice. You can speak from behind a screen, curtain or window, but generally you must be able to see your target at this distance.

- ☞ You may enter speaking distance if you have a higher Precedence, you're invited or you meet by chance in disguise.

If your Precedence is lower and you force your way into speaking distance:

- ☪ Suffer damage to your reputation equal to your target's Precedence, and suffer damage to your Will equal to the difference in Precedence. You can remedy your reputation with an apology.

SHOUTING DISTANCE

You may shout at someone whenever you have the opportunity, but it is considered bad form unless the situation calls for it: a riot, battle, protest or other moment of high drama.

- ☪ To be considered within shouting distance, your target must be able to hear the full force of your projected voice. It is possible to be too far away to shout.
- ☪ Shouting at someone outside of the appropriate conditions damages your reputation by -1d3. This loss may be remedied with an apology.

PRESS

It is possible to publish a pamphlet, article or book about someone in an effort to convince your target to heed your words.

- ☪ Attacks through the press must be directed at a specific group (Huguenots in Paris, for example) or at a known public figure (with at least 10 reputation).
- ☪ Rounds for press duels happen over a week, rather than a few moments.

PHYSICAL DISTANCE

The spaces and distances described in these rules are not figurative or metaphorical. They are intended to represent physical space. Just as one would close distance to engage in sword play, so must one get close to seduce your target in an impactful way. All dynamics and connotations of physical space are at play in these rules: If you see someone coming with whom you do not wish to speak, you may retire to a safe distance. If you present a physical barrier between you and your interlocutor—a locked door, for example—you force them to shout and thereby reduce the effectiveness of some of their tactics.

When you wish to have audience with the king or queen, they will let you within speaking distance only if you are one of their trusted advisors. Otherwise, you stand at a remove (and of course it's very rude to shout at a reigning monarch).

The danger of intimate space is absolutely at play using these rules. Your lover may confess that they have been unfaithful to you and you may plunge your poignard into their perfidious heart. They have damaged your Will, but you shall draw blood, and possibly claim their very life!

Announce Your Intentions

To begin a duel of wits, one must announce one's intentions to have words with another. The other character must accept. Regardless of one's station in life, this is a formal, verbal process made clear to all within earshot.

“Monsieur, a moment of your time. I believe we have some business to discuss.” Or,

“Madame, I wish to speak to you in private about the masquerade tonight. You know your brother the prince will attend...” or,

“Sieur, if you will but hear my case, I am certain you will see the matter of these unpaid taxes is a mirage.”

Once you announce your intent, the other side must assent. This formally begins the duel. If the other side does not wish to speak to you, they must either leave the physical space themselves or have you removed. Shouting at someone in the streets has no effect on them unless they engage. Rather, it makes you look mad.

HECTORING, BUTTONHOLING, BADGERING

If you back someone into a corner who does not wish to speak to you or speak out of turn, see the rules for forcing yourself on someone under the Intimate Space and Speaking Distance headings.

ESTABLISH THE PHYSICAL SPACE

Before beginning a duel of wits, establish the physical space. Where is everyone standing? Set their distances from one another: intimate, speaking and shouting. The tendency will be to draw closer to one another during the duel. Describe obstacles that hinder such progress—a locked door, a long table, a lackey blocking the way. These must be negotiated if you wish to close the distance or flee.

Initiative Order

Characters speak in order of Precedence, highest to lowest.

- ☪ If two characters have the same Precedence, then the character with the higher reputation speaks first.
- ☪ If that is also tied, then the character with the higher Wealth has the initiative.
- ☪ If that is also tied, the character with the higher Wisdom speaks. And then Charisma.

When beginning a duel of wits, note the initiative order, distance and the reputation armor available to individual participants.

AVEC PERMISSION, CHEVALIER

You may ask permission of a player higher in the initiative order to speak first. If they grant you such a favor, they increase their reputation by one (as a deed).

If you are of higher station, you may politely beg another character of lower station to speak ahead of you so that you may hear their case and address their concerns. Such nobility grants +1d2-1 reputation.

PRECEDENCE ADVANTAGE

- ☪ Higher Precedence also provides a +1 to-hit bonus at speaking and shouting distances.
- ☪ In the press or when intimate, your Precedence counts as initiative, but not as a to-hit bonus.

KNIVES OUT

If the knives come out during a duel of wits, use the above initiative rules. If the words come out during a combat, speakers act on initiative 20 and may not otherwise attack.

Turn Structure

After you have established the physical space and the initiative order, duelists take actions in a particular fashion:

- ☞ Declare your weapon for the turn—Accuse, Beg Pardon, etc. Check to make sure you meet the usage and rate of fire requirements (a truth or fact, and the cool down if used previously in the combat).
- ☞ Declare your target for the turn. You may change targets on your action, but getting everything in the clear at the start of the turn is important.
- ☞ On your initiative, check your distance to your target.
- ☞ Determine whether or not you will move closer or farther away, or stand at your current distance.
 - ♦ Generally, you can advance one range per exchange. If there is an obstacle in your path, you may need to test a skill to overcome it on your action. If there's ever a question about actual distance, use Combat Movement.
- ☞ Check your target number according to your weapon and the distance to your opponent, and roll to hit.
- ☞ If you hit, roll for damage to your opponent according to your weapon and distance. If you miss, there is no effect unless otherwise noted.
- ☞ If you reduce your target to half of their Will or less, they make a Sang Froid test. Failure indicates they miss their next action.

Once each character has taken their action, reassess the physical space. Has anyone been knocked out of the fight? Set them aside. Reassess initiative order and then declare actions. Continue until there is one side left in the fight.

Weapons of Wit

Verbal Weapon Usage

Accuse	Accuse someone of a crime or indiscretion.
Requirement	What heinous thing have they done?
Victory Effect	Your target angrily denies wrongdoing or bitterly admits the truth.
Beg Pardon	Humbly apologize to your target in order to avoid their wrath (also to exit uncomfortable tête-à-têtes).
Requirement	What do you apologize for? How have you wronged your friend?
Victory Effect	Your target forgives but does not forget or forgets but does not forgive.
Bribe	Make your target an offer of money, position or power that sways them to your cause.
Requirement	What do you offer?
Victory Effect	Your target accepts your offer.
Confess	Confess to your target a secret or truth about them or someone they love.
Requirement	What secret do you unburden?
Victory Effect	Your target believes your confession and thinks you brave for bringing it forward, or your target is scandalized by what you admit and refuses to associate with you any longer.
Educate	Elucidate a subject or point for your target.
Requirement	What knowledge or philosophy do you teach them?
Victory Effect	Your target learns.
Flatter	Compliment your target.
Requirement	What virtue do you praise?
Victory Effect	Your target is smitten with you.
Implore	Beseech your target for help regarding a personal problem.
Requirement	What do you ask?
Victory Effect	Your target will do as you ask.
Insult	Degrade your target with a hurtful untruth or ugly truth.
Requirement	What terrible, regrettable words do you utter?
Victory Effect	Your target is angry with you and either quietly vows revenge or openly challenges you.
Poison	Turn your interlocutor against another person with lies and slander.
Requirement	Whom do you denounce, and what lies or slander do you spit?
Victory Effect	Your target changes their opinion of the other person and either thinks less of you or pulls you into their confidence.

Verbal Weapon Usage

Seduce	Promise amour or sexual favors to your target.
Requirement	What impossible yet tempting things do you promise your target?
Victory Effect	Your target falls in love with you or your target attempts to be physically intimate with you.
Shame	Humiliate your target's actions or thoughts by comparing them to tradition, their parents, ancestors or accepted norms.
Requirement	What rule or tradition have they broken?
Victory Effect	Your target is humiliated and either bursts into tears or flies into a rage.
Threaten	Threaten bodily harm to your target if they do not accede to your demands.
Requirement	What harm will you visit on them if they don't do as you ask?
Victory Effect	Your target calls your bluff or is cowed and blubbers for mercy.

TRUTH REQUIREMENTS

You must have leverage, knowledge, bribes or real threats for your target. You cannot invent things about your target, their background or their history. You must speak truth or facts about your target.

You do not have to tell the truth about yourself or your motives. Nothing said is binding except the victory effect.

RUNNING YOUR MOUTH

Making an attack with weak leverage, failing to be truthful, using a weapon incorrectly or abusing victory conditions all reflect poorly on an individual.

- ☪ If you offer a weak verbal attack, the game master can apply a -4 to-hit penalty or a -1d of damage penalty.
- ☪ If you cannot fulfill the requirement for a weapon of wit you have armed for this exchange, you miss your action and do not attack this exchange, or you keep your action and grant your opponent a +5 to-hit for their own action. Your choice.

Target Distance

Weapon	Intimate	Speaking	Shouting	Press	Rate of Fire
Accuse	Target Int	12	16	12	1 every 3 rounds
Damage	1d6	2d4; 1 rep	1d4	2d6 Will; 1d6 rep	
Beg Pardon	Target Char	9	18	16	1 every other exchange
Damage	1d6	1d4	1d2	1d4 Will	
Bribe	Target Wis	14	19	20	Once per combat
Damage	xd4	xd3	xd2	1d6 Will	
Confess	Target Wis	14	20	16	Once per combat
Damage	2d4	1d6	1d3	1d6 Will; 1d8 Rep all	
Educate	Target Int	16	r20	18	1 every other exchange
Damage	2d3	1d6	1d2	1d3 Will	
Flatter	Target Wis	13	18	14	Once per exchange
Damage	1d6	1d4	1d2	1d4 Will	
Implore	Target Wis	15	20	r20	Once per exchange
Damage	2d3	1d6	1d2	1d8 Will	
Insult	Target Int	11	16	9	1 every other exchange
Damage	1d4; 1d2-1 Rep	1d8; 1d2R	1d6; 1d3R	1d6 Will; 1d6 Rep	
Poison	Target Int	15	20	10	1 every other exchange
Damage	1d8	1d6	1d2	1d6 Will; 1d6+1 Rep	
Seduce	Target Char	14	19	r20	1 every other exchange
Damage	2d4	1d4	1d2	1d2 Will	
Shame	Target Wis	12	17	16	Once per exchange
Damage	1d4	2d4	1d10	1d4 Will; 1d6 Rep	
Threaten	Target Int	15	20	15	1 every other exchange
Damage	1d8+1	1d6	1d4	1d6 Will	

ACCUSE

Accusations do reputation damage to both the accuser and the accused. The accuser may apologize afterwards.

BRIBE

Choose a bribe—an amount of money, an item of great value or a service. Damage dice rolled depends on the difference in the value of the bribe and the target’s Wealth rating. A difference of one tier does 1d4 damage, two tiers does 2d4 damage, etc. Non-monetary bribes that would fulfill an experience condition at the target’s current level are also valid. Each condition met does 1d4 damage.

CONFESS

Confessions in the press do reputation damage to both the confessor and everyone else named (or perhaps implied) in their confession.

INSULT

Insult is a particularly powerful attack that damages both the Will and reputation of your target.

Victory Effects

Each weapon is listed with a Victory Effect. The loser of a contest of wills must abide by the effect of the method used to break down their Will. If more than one method was used to convince them of the necessary course of action, the loser may choose which effect to embody.

For example, if your mother shames you mercilessly before imploring you to take action, you may choose to play the Shame or Implore effects as a result of your loss. You choose whether to burst into tears of humiliation, to fly into a rage or simply to do as she asks.

Verbal Combat

On your action, check your distance to your target and reference the action you're using to find the number you need to roll to hit.

- ☞ Attacks at intimate distance use your target's listed governing ability as the target number.
- ☞ At speaking, shouting and press ranges, the table lists the required target number to hit.

For example, Implore lists Wisdom under the intimacy column. If your opponent's Wisdom is 14, you'll need to roll a 14 or better on 1d20 to score a hit with this weapon.

DAMAGE

The damage for each weapon varies by range.

For example, Threaten—a very powerful attack—does 1d8+1 points of damage at Intimate range, 1d6 at Speaking, 1d4 at Shouting and 1d6 in the Press.

Attacks damage your opponent's Will or reputation.

PRESS DAMAGE

The press is a powerful, new weapon. The city streets are littered with satirical pamphlets attacking the queen, Mazarin and their allies.

- ☞ Press attacks can target an individual or political faction in a city or region. Press attacks do damage to the Will of all members who read the attack (or have the attack read to them).
- ☞ Press attacks can also incite the crowd of *menu peuple*.

You call out the Frondeurs of Paris in your pamphlet lambasting Mazarin. Using the press, you Implore these Frondeurs to come to your meeting: Right-minded people of Paris who wish to see the downfall of Mazarin, meet at the Place Royale at midnight on January 11th for instructions!

- ☞ Some press attacks damage both Will and reputation.
- ☞ Also note that Accuse and Confess press attacks do damage to both the attacker and the target.

CRITICAL HITS

On a rolled 20 or modified roll of 20 or higher, make a second to-hit roll. If you hit a second time, you roll for damage a second time.

There are two exceptions:

- ☞ Actions listed with a target number 20 requires a rolled 20 (rather than adjusted 20) for a crit.
- ☞ Actions requiring a rolled 20 (r20) to hit can't score crits.

Ken's passeur, Henri, has had a falling out with his dear friend Le Coq. They are engaged in a shouting match on the street. Finally, Ken decides to confess to Le Coq that it was him who had in fact robbed Le Coq of his ill-gotten gains and returned them to their owner. Shouting a confession requires a 20 to hit, including all modifiers, but if Ken rolls a natural 20, he scores a critical hit.

Dro's occultist pens a pamphlet imploring the Huguenot philosophers of Paris to come forward with their dissertations on alchemy. Implore in the press is listed as r20. He needs a 20 total to hit and cannot score a crit even if he rolls a 20.

RATE OF FIRE

Some verbal weapons have a slower rate of fire and cannot be used each exchange or can be used once per duel of wits.

CHARISMA IS STRENGTH

In the duel of wits, your Charisma acts in a way similar to Strength in combat. Apply your Charisma modifier to your to-hit and damage rolls for Intimate, Speaking and Shouting distance. If you suffer a penalty, the minimum damage you can offer is 1 point.

INTELLIGENCE IS DEXTERITY

When attacking someone through the press, use your Intelligence modifier for to-hit and damage rolls.



Reputation Armor

In a duel of wits, your reputation provides you with some protection.

- ☪ The character with the highest reputation can deflect 1d3 points of damage per attack, up to five points total.
- ☪ The character with the second-highest reputation can deflect 1d2 points of damage per attack, up to three points total.
- ☪ The character with the lowest reputation can deflect a single point of damage (for they are beneath our contempt).

Reputation	Reputation Proof
Highest reputation	1d3 per attack/5 pts total
Second-highest reputation	1d2 per attack/3 pts total
Lowest reputation	1 pt/1 pt total

Reputation Deflection

Reduce the reputation's total deflection by the amount absorbed on each attack. When the total reaches 0, your reputation will no longer protect you.

Punctuated by Violence

In place of your duel of wits action, you may instead slap, stab or shoot your interlocutor. Declare and execute the action as per the combat rules. Your proximity to your opponent will provide you with a range to your target.

Factor initiative according to the duel of wits rules—by Precedence, etc. Roll to hit as per the standard procedure for combat. Roll for damage on a hit. Factor morale loss or death as necessary.

Violence may seem an effective and efficient strategy but sadly, violence often begets violence, and what was briefly an exchange of words among citizens becomes a fracas perpetrated by murderers and cruel villains destined for the Bastille.

Salon Culture

In the years leading up to 1648, a new trend amongst the learned and the wealthy captured the imagination of Parisian society. The educated, the social climbers and the wise gathered nightly in select parlors, not to discuss the matters of the day, but to compose poetry and play games with one another.

The most prominent salon was held by Madame de Rambouillet in her palatial home on rue Saint Thomas du Louvre. There gathered generals, playwrights, actresses, authors, princes and princesses to enjoy the collective wit and grace of the company.

And if some furtive meetings transpired, with cryptic messages passed between conspirators, so much the better to add to the allure of the gathering.

- ☞ Gaining entree to a salon requires either a reputation of 20 or an introduction by one of the salon's members.





*Après plusieurs défaits par les soldats Commis
à la fin les Payans, qu'ils ont pour ennemis*

*Les quittent à l'écart par une surprise,
Les ayant mortés mément en charrisse,*

*Et se vengent aussi contre ces Malheureux
Des pertes de leurs biens, qui ne croient que*

Combat

Combat in 1648 is an elegant dance that happens at a slow, particular pace. Every participant has a role that they must execute with deliberate precision. If all of the pieces of your company, regiment and army act in coordination, victory is all but inevitable. When soldiers are forced out of step, are pressed by the enemy or panic, that is when the blood truly begins to flow.

These rules are designed to simulate skirmishes of small groups in combat—perhaps four to ten combatants per side. For one-on-one combat they're a bit blunt, and for larger skirmishes they're a bit cumbersome.

Range and Distance

Combat in *Miseries & Misfortunes* is intended to be played upon a map grid. In the rules, movement and ranges are given in squares for easy counting. To translate squares to distance: 1 sq is 3 *piéd du roi* (~3.2 ft or 97.44 cm). 6 *piéd du roi* equals one *toise* (~6.394 ft or ~1.949 m). One *toise carrée* is a square fathom in which four soldiers can stand in formation.

TARGETING

You may target with a firearm any figure in range. To determine range, count squares straight or diagonal until you reach the target.

Skirmish

Skirmishes are common among robbers and their prey, citizens and the tax collectors, and gentlemen resolving disagreements. Thus we must discuss them in detail, since you will most certainly find yourself in a similar scrape.

TERRAIN

Skirmishes take place in forests, along roads, on city streets and within the townhouses of the wealthy.

When determining the place of a skirmish, note the terrain: How wide is the street? What obstacles block line of sight? What ditches or barricades provide cover or defense?

Sketch the area on a piece of graph paper.

COMBATANTS

Place the combatants on the map. Each occupies one square.

- ☞ If prepared for combat, the participants may arrange themselves in whatever formation they see fit, so long as they do not encroach or surround their opponents.
- ☞ If one side is unprepared for combat, use the Ambuscade rules.

OPENING VOLLEY

Begin combat by offering all sides a chance to send a volley of shot into their opponents. Fire and resolve damage in initiative order for missiles. Melee weapons cannot attack.

In this first exchange, consider placement and arrangement on the field as the first exchange of movement, so no further movement is taken in the opening volley (muskets and artillery may fire).

CLOSE COMBAT

In the second and subsequent rounds, use combat movement, initiative, exchange blows and morale rules until one side or the other is killed, breaks or surrenders.

Ambuscade

Ambuscade is, sadly, a common occurrence in this faded age. A type of one-sided skirmish, an ambush allows the ambushers to begin combat in a formation and at a distance favorable to them. However, setting an ambush can be difficult.

The game master draws a map of the ambush location. The ambusher sets themselves in their desired location as appropriate.

AMBUSH SKILLS

To effect an ambush, the unit leader make skill test to set up their forces. Leaders may use Sneak to slink into position, Military Doctrine to dispose their troops, Nationality to find a suitable point along the road, Fashion to disguise themselves and their thugs in a crowd or Sub Rosa to follow a target when they turn down a blind alley.

AMBUSH FACTORS

Consult the ambush factors listed below and then test the appropriate skill. If successful, you have your opponent at your mercy. Announce yourself! If appropriate, the game master may call for the enemy to pass a Sang Froid test. If failed, the ambushed miss the opening volley.

- ☪ Ambush sprung at 50 *toises* (100 sq.): +1 skill modifier
- ☪ Ambush at night: +1 skill modifier
- ☪ Ambush in bad weather: +1 skill modifier
- ☪ Ambush using matchlocks: -1 skill modifier
- ☪ Ambush using artillery: -1 skill modifier
- ☪ Ambush at 25 *toises* (50 sq): ±0
- ☪ Ambush at 12 *toises* (25 sq): -1 skill modifier
- ☪ Ambush at 5 *toises* (10 sq) -2 skill modifier
- ☪ Ambush at sword point: -3 skill modifier

AMBUSER POSITION

- ☪ Front: ±0 skill modifier
- ☪ Flank: +1 skill modifier
- ☪ Rear: +1 skill modifier

Being flanked or surrounded affects morale. Position alone could have enough impact to break the enemy.

If you fail the ambush test, your enemy detects you and, suffice to say, they do not walk blindly into your trap or hesitate from loss of nerve.



ANNOUNCE YOUR NAME AND RANK

In all combats, it's customary to announce one's name and rank.

"Monsieur, please do me the honor of telling me with whom I have the pleasure of crossing swords today."

- ❶ Failing to identify yourself is extremely insulting to the other side. If you are to die, then it is only right you know who sends you to hell.
- ❷ Failing to identify oneself prevents any reputation from being earned from the engagement. Reputation is reduced if you lose the engagement and your identity is discovered (-1d3 for a small affair, -1d8 for a large skirmish).

Parley

It is customary for a bit of parley to take place between the opponents prior to a battle, skirmish or even an ambush. Allowing the damned to speak before you open fire does not negate your advantage. You may grant your enemy time to speak without risk to yourself. Perhaps you might learn something of value.

Combat Phases

Combat happens in four phases: declare, move, exchange and morale. During the movement phase, each character rolls to see how far they move according to the equipment they're carrying. During the exchange, each character acts in turn according to what weapon they're using. After the exchange of fire or blows, tally the fallen and check morale for each side and combatant.

DECLARE

Each player states which weapon or action they will use this exchange and if their character is moving.

MOVE

Roll as described in the Combat Movement section to advance or flee, or you may redress ranks or exploit. All characters from both sides move at the same time.

EXCHANGE

Act in initiative order according to weapon or action type.

- ☪ If attacking, roll to hit on 1d20.
- ☪ If you score a hit, roll for damage; in melee subtract 1 pt of damage for armor, or if hit by a missile, roll for armor.
- ☪ Apply final damage.

Abort Action: During the exchange, you may abort your action if you do not wish to act. If you abort a chemical recipe, invocation or prayer action, it's considered cast and expended.

Hold Action: You may hold your action and act on a later initiative interval. All held actions must be taken on interval 20 or released and aborted.

MORALE

Calculate impact on morale. If a combatant's Morale drops to 5 or lower, consult the Morale results later in this chapter.

Combat Movement

If charging into combat or maneuvering for position, the distance moved is determined by how much equipment your character carries plus a roll of a die. You may not move diagonally on the grid.

- ☪ Full cuirass, rassets, helmet and weapon: 2 squares+1d2 squares
- ☪ Light armor and weapons plus equipment: 3 squares+1d3 squares
- ☪ Weapon or equipment, but no armor: 4 squares+1d3 squares
- ☪ No weapons larger than a poignard, no armor, no equipment: 4 squares+1d4 squares

ON THE DOUBLE

You may forgo your attack action and roll a second movement die.

MOVE AND ATTACK OR FIRE

- ☪ When attacking with grenades, muskets, rifles, you cannot move and fire.
- ☪ When using harquebus, mousquetons, pistols may move and fire.
- ☪ While wielding melee weapons, you may move and attack
- ☪ You cannot move while reloading firearms.

RACING

When racing another character to overtake them or beat them to a square, roll your movement die and add it to your movement rate. The higher total wins. If the result is a tie, the higher Dexterity wins.

COLLISIONS

If two characters step into the same space, the character with the higher Strength bulls the other out of the way. If Strength is equal, the higher Constitution wins the shoving match.

FLEEING

When moving out of a zone of control, roll your movement die but do not add your base movement rate. If there are no opponents within two squares, you may move as normal.

- ☪ Moving backwards or away from an opponent within your movement range causes a -1 initiative penalty.
- ☪ Retreating (moving away from) or fleeing from an opponent imposes -1 reputation damage.

REDRESS RANKS

If adjacent to a friend during the movement phase, you may swap places without having to roll for movement. You step in to protect your friend or are pulled back to safety to shield you.

- ☪ Redressing ranks imposes a -1 initiative penalty for both characters for this exchange.
- ☪ You cannot move and redress during the same exchange.
- ☪ You may redress and attack in the exchange.

EXPLOIT

If you are within one square of an enemy at the start of the movement phase, you may step forward one square (even diagonally) provided there is a gap or opening in the enemy formation.

- ☪ Performing an exploit imposes a -1 initiative penalty for you this exchange.
- ☪ You cannot move and exploit during this exchange.
- ☪ You may exploit and attack in the exchange.

Engaging the Enemy

REACH

In melee combat, a character can attack anyone in the square to their front face and the square diagonal to their left hand.

- ☪ At a distance of one square, characters may attack their opponents with swords, pistols, cudgels, poignards and halberds if in close combat.

Weapons change the equation somewhat:

- ☪ Characters may form a second rank behind those in the front.
- ☪ Characters in this second rank may attack the opposing first rank with halberds and pistols if in close combat.



PIKES IN RANK

Pikes are formidable weapons when massed into ranks.

- ☞ Pikes in the front rank may attack opponents 3 squares distant.
- ☞ In close combat—when two front lines are in melee combat—pikes in the first rank may attack only the enemy second rank.
- ☞ In close combat, pikes in the second rank may attack the enemy first or second rank.
- ☞ In close combat, pikes in the third rank may attack only the enemy first rank.

ZONE OF CONTROL

If your move takes you into the zone of control of an opponent, you end your movement this round. You may move past or away again next round using the rules for fleeing.

- ☞ The default zone of control is one square (or the eight squares around the opponent).
 - ♦ If within a zone of control, you may attack with most melee weapons.
 - ♦ If within a zone of control (or engaged in melee), you may not use any firearms except pistols.
- ☞ Halberd and longsword zone of control is 2 squares.
- ☞ Pike zone of control is 3 squares from their front rank.
- ☞ Mounted combatants ignore zone of control for foot soldiers unless the soldiers are armed with bayoneted muskets or pikes.

Initiative

The order of the exchange of fire and blows is determined by the weapons the combatants wield.

Pistols fire on interval 1. Harquebuses on 2. Rifles on 3. Muskets on 4. Artillery on 5. Pikes on 6. And so on.

After all characters have made their desired movements and adjustments, the game master calls out each weapon or action type in order, from first to last. Each character acts on their declared interval. Thus pistols fire first, then harquebuses, then rifles, etc.

☞ Increase or decrease initiative rank by your Dexterity modifier.

With a musket and a 13 Dex, you act on initiative 3, not 4.

INITIATIVE ORDER BY WEAPONS

Weapon or Action	Initiative	Fighting Rank
Pistol (at range)	1st	1 or 2
Mousqueton, harquebus	2nd	1 or 2
Rifle	3rd	1 or 2
Musket, Falconet	4th	1 or 2, 1
Artillery	5th	1
Pike	6th	1, 2 or 3
Halberd	7th	1, 2
Plug bayonet	8th	1, 2
Rapier	9th	1
Long sword	10th	1
Saber	11th	1
Poignard	12th	1
Pistol (in melee)	13th	1
Cutlass, hanger, messer	14th	1
Cudgel	15th	1
Thrown knife or stone	16th	1 or 2
Bare fist or kick	17th	1
Grenade, brick, Greek fire, etc.	18th	1, 2 or 3
Reload, open door, issue command, etc.	19th	—
Spell, prayer	20th	1 or 2

Exchange Fire

ATTACKING WITH MISSILES

Determine your range to your target.

- ☞ Your weapon type and your range to your target determine the number needed to hit on 1d20.
- ☞ Apply Dexterity bonuses/penalties and lifepath skill modifiers to this roll.

See the Weapon Type table for the appropriate target number.

Weapon Type	Short	Shot	TS	Medium	Shot	TS	Long	Shot	TS
Grenade, Greek Fire	3-5 sq	14	18	6-10 sq	16	20	11-20 sq	18	r20
Harquebus	2-25 sq	12	15	26-200 sq	15	19	201-300 sq	17	r20
Musket	3-20 sq	12	16	21-100 sq	16	19	101-400 sq	18	r20
Mousqueton ball	2-10 sq	14	16	11-50 sq	16	20	51-100 sq	20	r20
Mousqueton shot	2-5 sq	10	15	6-10 sq	15	17	11-25 sq	18	20
Pistol	2-5 sq	13	17	6-10 sq	15	19	11-20 sq	17	r20
Rifle	4-50 sq	12	14	51-200 sq	14	18	201-500 sq	16	20
Thrown weapon	3-5 sq	13	17	6-10 sq	15	19	11-20 sq	17	r20

MAXIMUM EFFECTIVE RANGE

The upper bound of long range indicates the maximum range for these weapons in our rules. Shots beyond this distance miss.

SHOTS, TOUGH SHOTS

- ☞ *Shot* indicates the number needed on 1d20 to hit under normal conditions (bad lighting, under pressure, rushed, wounded, etc).
- ☞ *TS* indicates a tough shot: the number to hit for a shot under extreme conditions (behind cover, small, awkwardly placed, in melee combat, while being dragged from your horse, etc.).
- ☞ *r20* = Rolled 20. Only a rolled 20 hits for these tough shots.
- ☞ A rolled 1 always misses (and may misfire), and a rolled 20 always hits.

CRITICAL HITS FOR FIREARMS

When discharging a firearm, a rolled 20 or an adjusted to-hit roll of 20 or more causes a critical hit, which deals additional damage.

- ☞ Exception: Tough shots that require rolled 20s cannot crit.

PELL-MELL: SHOOTING INTO A MELEE

Targeting someone who is in melee combat with another person (within one or two squares) counts as a tough shot. If you miss the tough shot target number, but roll higher than the standard shot target number, you hit your ally instead.

Exchange Blows

ATTACKING IN MELEE

Determine if your opponent is defending themselves or attempting to dodge your blow.

In melee, roll 1d20 and add your Strength and lifepath skill modifiers.

- ☞ If your total is equal to or greater than your target's defense or dodge (whichever is applicable), you hit. Roll for damage.

DEFENSE & DODGE

Your target's defense score is equal to their Strength rating plus modifiers from lifepath skills and armor. Use this value when they have a weapon in hand and are on the attack, on guard or in the fight.

Your target's dodge score is equal to their Dexterity rating plus modifiers from lifepath skills and armor. Use this value when attacking a surprised, hesitating, fleeing, unarmed or talking target. Also, use the dodge score target number to stab a target discharging a firearm.

There is no maximum defense or dodge rating, but a rolled 20 always hits.

CRITICAL HITS FOR MELEE WEAPONS

When using a rapier, pike, halberd, long sword or other melee weapon, on a *rolled 20*, you score a critical hit.

- ☞ After applying damage as normal, immediately make another attack. If that attack hits, do damage as normal.
- ☞ If you score a critical hit on the second attack, you may roll to hit for a third attack, and so on.

You may take these additional critical attacks against the same target or another in range.

Weapon Damage

If you hit with your weapon, roll for damage.

A musket does 2d4 points of damage.

Weapon Type	Weapon Damage
Brick	1d6
Cudgel	1d4
Cutlass	1d6
Fist	1d2
Grenade	1d8
Halberd	1d6
<i>Harquebus</i>	1d6
Long sword	1d8
Musket	2d4
<i>Mousqueton</i>	1d6+1 or 1d3 to 1d3 targets
Pike	1d6
Pistol	1d4
Plug bayonet	1d4
<i>Poignard</i>	1d4
Rapier	1d4
Rifle	1d8
Saber	2d3
Stone	1d2
Thrown knife	1d3

Armor can reduce damage. See the Armor Proof section for rules.

CRITICAL DAMAGE FOR FIREARMS

When discharging a firearm, on an adjusted to-hit roll of 20 or more, you score a critical hit. Roll an additional die for damage. This rule is different than the rule for critical hits in the duel of wits or melee.

A critical hit from a musket does 2d4 +1d4 damage.

Morale

An individual combatant's morale is rated from 0 to 10. Morale is derived primarily from Charisma. A combatant uses their own morale score, or the morale of a superior who commands the unit. Events before, during and after combat may affect morale.

MORALE EFFECTS

Effect	Morale Penalty
Casualty in unit	1d3-1
Leader down	1d3 + Char modifier ¹
Supporting cast flees or surrenders	1d2-1
Protagonist/Antagonist flees or surrenders	1d2
Unit appears outnumbered	1d3-1
Unit flanked	1d2
Unit surrounded	1d3
Beset by the supernatural	1d3-1
Individual at 1-2 hit points	1
Under artillery fire	1
0 Will	1
Hungry	1d2-1

MORALE THRESHOLDS

Morale	Effect
5	Test Sang Froid. Failure causes you to fall back one step (1 sq) or hesitate for your next action or turn if you cannot.
4	Test Sang Froid. Failure causes you to fall back one step (1 sq) or hesitate for your next action or turn if you cannot.
3	Step back one square <i>and</i> test Sang Froid. Failure indicates you hesitate.
2	Step back one square <i>and</i> test Sang Froid. Failure indicates you hesitate.
1	Step back one square <i>and</i> test Sang Froid for you and allies adjacent to you (even if their individual current morale is over 3). Failure indicates you flee or surrender.
0	Drop what you're holding and flee or fall to your knees and beg for mercy. Take 1d3 damage to your Will.

STALWART COMPANIONS

Combatants receive a +1 bonus to Sang Froid tests for each ally directly adjacent to them (max +3: left, right and behind).

¹ A fallen leader with a negative Charisma modifier may raise the morale of their unit.



ESPRIT DU CORPS

When a protagonist or antagonist passes their Sang Froid test, roll 2d6 and consult the table below:

2d6	Esprit	Effect
2-8	Soldier on	No effect
9	<i>Montjoie Saint Denis!</i>	Gain +1d2 Morale for the remainder of combat
10	Battle frenzy	Take a +1 bonus to hit and damage for the remainder of the combat
11	Hardened	Save vs chance: Save and permanently increase your morale score by one
12	In cold blood	Save vs terror: Save and permanently increase your Sang Froid rating by one

LEADERSHIP

In combat, officers may take command of troops (on initiative step 19). A successful Leadership test puts the unit under the command of the officer for the remainder of the combat. The unit then uses the officer's morale score.

- ☪ Each group may have one leader at a time.
- ☪ If your leader falls, other officers may spend an action to take command as described above.

EXHORTATION

An officer in command of a unit may spend their combat action (on initiative step 19) moving amongst their allies and inspiring them to greater deeds. A successful test increases morale by one.

- ☪ You may use your Leadership multiple times in a combat.
- ☪ You may not raise morale above 10.

Armor Proof

Armor provides a measure of improved defense and, depending on the range and type of attack, might absorb damage from a blow.

Armor Pieces	Armor Proof			Def & Ddg	Absorption	Armor HP
	S	M	L			
Almain rivet (full suit)	0	0-1	0-2	+1	1 pt melee	3
Breastplate (cuirass)	0-1	0-2	0-3	+2	1 pt melee	5
Buff coat	0	0	0	—	1 pt melee	10
Full harness	1	1-2	1-3	+4	1 pt melee	5
Helmet (morion, burgonet)	1	1	1	+1	1 pt melee	1
Helmet, cuirass	1	1	1-3	+3	1 pt melee	4
Mail shirt	0	0-1	1	+1	1 pt melee	4
Rusted cuirass	0	0-1	0-2	+1	1 pt melee	4
Shield	0	0	0	+1	—	—

Almain rivet: Almain is a manufactured battlefield armor of notoriously poor quality. One must be covered head to toe to gain any protection (2+1d2 movement).

Breastplate: Common battlefield dress for cavalry.

Buff coats and mail shirts: It's common to wear buff coats and mail shirts beneath one's cloak or doublet.

Full harness: A full harness refers to wearing gorget, tassets, gauntlets, cuirass and helmet. Wearer may use pistols as firearms only.

Helmets: Wearing a helmet imposes a -2 penalty to hit with all shoulder arms and a -1 Search penalty.

Rusted armor: Metal armor may rust and deteriorate. Rusted metal armor provides -1 proof, -1 defense and -1 hit point of protection.

Shield: A shield or buckler adds +1 to defense.



ARMOR PROOF

When targeted by firearms, you are no harder to hit wearing armor or not. The target numbers to hit you remain the same. However, the armor may redirect some energy from shot and bullets. Reduce incoming damage by the amount indicated according to the armor type and the range to target.

Shot at short range while wearing a breastplate, I roll 1d2-1 to determine if my armor absorbs 0 or 1 point of damage.

DEFLECTION

Most armor increases its bearer's defense and dodge ratings. When wearing the indicated pieces, modify your ratings accordingly.

ABSORBING THE BLOW

The glacial surface of metal armor is designed to deflect, thus attacks that do get home usually bite more flesh than metal.

☞ Against melee weapons, armor absorbs one point of damage and is damaged by one point itself.

Armor absorbs one point of damage from melee attacks, no matter how many pieces you pile on. They're only hitting you in one piece at a time anyway.

ARMOR HP

After armor has soaked damage from a firearm or melee weapon, reduce the armor's total damage protection by the amount absorbed on the attack. When the total reaches 0, the armor is ruined and useless, but still counts toward encumbrance until discarded.

Barricades

It is common for combatants to throw up impromptu barricades before a battle from which they can defend their street, their position or their room at the inn.

- ☞ To set up a barricade in haste (one turn) prior to a combat, make a successful *Improvise* or *Engineer* test. Failure indicates the barrier will last for the first exchange of combat and then collapse. Setting up a barricade overnight requires no test.
- ☞ Barricades increase the defense of defenders by +4.
- ☞ Shots at defenders behind barricades count as tough shots.
- ☞ Barricades count as the first rank in your formation. Anyone fighting directly behind (or on) a barricade fights from the second rank; those behind them fight from the third rank.
- ☞ In close combat, attackers may attempt to overthrow a barricade. Doing so requires three successful *Break* tests. Either all made at once, or made over multiple exchanges.
- ☞ Outside of combat, barricades can be torn down and cleared in one turn by a team of citizens or soldiers.
- ☞ Cavalry cannot take cover behind barricades.
- ☞ Clambering over barricades during combat requires a physical action (*Initiative 19*) and a successful *Traverse* test.

Special Firearms Rules

Firearms are powerful weapons, but they have their quirks and drawbacks. They benefit from special rules to hit by range and critical hits. They also suffer from misfires, cannot be fired when wet and must be reloaded after each shot.

RELOADING

Firearms cannot be reloaded on the move. If one is mounted, one may attempt to reload a pistol, *mousqueton* or harquebus by passing a *Soldiering* test.

FIRING WHEN WET

Firearms cannot be fired when wet. If they are ducked into water or soaked in the rain, they must be dried, cleared and cleaned before they can be fired again. And that is a process best undertaken in camp, not during battle.

That said, rain doesn't necessarily dampen your squib. Firearms may be shielded or covered until needed. Though it is important to remember that matchcord must be lit and smouldering to discharge muskets and artillery pieces.

FIREARM MISFIRES

When discharging a firearm, on an unmodified to-hit roll of a 1, roll 2d6 and apply the appropriate misfire result.

2d6	Type	Effect
2	<i>Ramrod shot</i>	Accidentally fire ramrod along with ball and powder: at long range, shot falls short and automatically misses; at medium range, make to-hit and damage rolls using the standard procedure; at short range, automatically hit for damage +1. In all cases: ramrod ruined and cannot reload until you acquire or borrow another ramrod.
3-4	<i>Pan flashes</i>	Powder in pan flashes but charge does not fire; reprime pan and fire as normal next exchange.
5	<i>Hang fire</i>	Pan flashes and smolders but does not fire. Gun goes off in 1d2 rounds.
6-7	<i>Powder fizzles</i>	Powder was improperly packed; clear the ball and wadding. Worm out ball and charge for one reload period and then reload.
8	<i>Match out</i>	Match doused. Must be relit or use other lit match.
9	<i>Misfire</i>	Weapon inexplicably fails to fire. You may recock and fire again next exchange.
10	<i>Bad lead</i>	Ball breaks up as it leaves the muzzle. No hit, no damage. Reload as per the standard procedure.
11-12	<i>Backfire</i>	Powder explodes in the chamber; take 1d3 damage. Gun ruined. May be rebuilt by gunsmith.



MUSKETS

A typical musket is a four-foot long, 13 pound shoulder-arm that requires 33 steps to reload.

- ☞ After being fired, it takes two exchanges to reload a musket.
- ☞ Those wielding muskets cannot move and fire.
- ☞ Matchlock muskets require a lit matchcord (or similar source of ignition) to touch off the priming pan to fire.
- ☞ Dog lock muskets or *fusils* are flintlocks that do not require a matchcord to fire.

HARQUEBUS

Harquebus is a light musket with a smaller bore designed to be fired on the move. Also called an arquebus or caliver.

- ☞ After being fired, it takes one exchange to reload a harquebus.
- ☞ Harquebuses use a flint lock and do not require a matchcord.

MOUSQUETON

A *mousqueton* is a shortened musket of a larger bore designed to fire shot or heavy balls. Its barrel is typically flared at the mouth to assist in loading. It is an ugly, brutal weapon.

- ☞ After being fired, it takes two exchanges to reload a mousqueton.
- ☞ If firing shot, roll 1d3 for the number of targets hit and then make one to-hit roll.
- ☞ Mousquetons do not require a matchcord.

RIFLE

The rifle is a musket with a rifled barrel firing a tighter-bore ball. They're more accurate at longer ranges, but they require considerable time to reload and clean before they can be fired again. They're ideal weapons for sharpshooters who prefer to shoot and move.

- ☞ After being fired, rifles require four exchanges to reload.
- ☞ Those wielding rifles cannot move and fire.
- ☞ Rifles use flintlock firing mechanisms and do not require a matchcord.

PISTOL

A pistol is a smaller wheel lock firearm with a 10" or longer barrel. They're smoothbore, using a ball similar to the harquebus. They're meant to be fired on the charge and then holstered for close combat. Usually a spare is kept to provide a covering shot for withdrawal.

- ☞ A pistol may be used as a missile or melee weapon. In melee, their initiative drops from 1 to 13. However, they always crit as a firearm.
- ☞ After being fired, a pistol requires four exchanges to reload.
- ☞ A pistol's wheel lock mechanism does not require a matchcord.

GRENADE

The grenades are hollow cast iron or glass balls containing a powder charge. All have fuses held in place by cylinder-like extensions of the spherical grenade.

- ☞ The fuse of a grenade must be lit before it will detonate. Typically, this is done before it's thrown.
- ☞ On a hit, a grenade affects a 2x2 square. Each character standing in the area of effect must save vs artillery. If successful, they take 1d4-1 damage. If failed, they take 1d8 damage. On a miss, the grenade will detonate harmlessly, unless there is a worse possible result, like a cook-off, fire or collateral damage.
- ☞ If a grenade gets wet, it must be cleaned, dried and repacked before it can be used.

GRENADE MISFIRES

On a to-hit roll of 1, roll 2d6 and apply the appropriate misfire result:

2d6	Misfire	Effect
2	<i>Flare up</i>	Grenade flares after it is thrown, creating a blinding light for the rest of the exchange. Does not detonate. Target -4 to next action.
3	<i>Flash</i>	Before you throw, grenade flashes and blinds you. You cannot attack next exchange.
4-8	<i>Dud</i>	Grenade does not detonate when thrown. Must be repacked before being reused.
9-10	<i>Match fails</i>	Slow match doused on the throw. Grenade inert. Can be relit and reused.
11	<i>Slow match</i>	The match burns agonizingly slowly. Grenade won't detonate until end of next exchange.
12	<i>Bad fuse</i>	Grenade detonates in hand and does 1d8 damage to you and everyone adjacent to you.

Hors de Combat

It is possible that combat causes injury to or the death of one or more participants.

FOR PROTAGONISTS & ANTAGONISTS

When a protagonist or antagonist is knocked to 0 hit points, they are out of the fight. Roll on the Mortal Coil table immediately, including any penalties pending from rerolls taken during this endeavor.

If the result is 3 or higher, the character lives but is deeply affected. Regardless of the specific result, the character will be out of action for days, weeks, months or even years. A friend or ally can drag them to a safe place, but if no one does, the character will rouse themselves from their stupor and stumble to a nearby cottage, inn or home to take refuge before they collapse.

Antagonists in these situations will ask for mercy or succor, according to their idiom. They will beg for confession, absolution and last rites.

FOR THE SUPPORTING CAST

When a member of the supporting cast is knocked to 0 hit points, they are out of the fight. Instead of rolling on the Mortal Coil table, use the following Hors de Combat table:

Hors de Combat

2d6	Result	Effect
2-4	<i>Cut down</i>	Killed instantly, unable to make a sound.
5-6	<i>Mortally wounded</i>	They die slowly, bubbling blood from their mouth for 2d4 hours.
7-8	<i>Pierced through</i>	They linger in agony for 1d6 days before expiring.
9	<i>Shattered</i>	They are knocked unconscious by a bloody wound and appear dead (they recover 1 HP in 1d2 turns).
10	<i>Mad with pain</i>	They are badly injured and cry out for salvation—Last Rites—in shrieks and gasps.
11-12	<i>Broken</i>	They are unconscious and maimed, but would survive if the bleeding was stopped.

MORS CICVRAT BELLVAS.



*In vnc, innocuo tua substrue sanguine regna ?
Vrna tua limes ambitionis erit.*



Vierge ne craignez rien , il n'y à plus d'orage :
Le calme laisse en paix la Mer , & le Dauphin.
Herode dont le cœur machinoit vostre fin ,
Estendu sur le bord est creué par sa rage.