

3 THE ROCKETEERS



PK SULLIVAN

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR

FATE
CORE SYSTEM

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The Three Rocketeers

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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible,
impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed
in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, royal
guardsmen, people real or fictional who do or do not swash around
with (laser-)swords and (plasma-)muskets, Star Popes, ape assassins,
or scheming cardinals is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

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HAIL, ROCKETEERS!

It is my pleasure to be the first to address you. Hail, Rocketeers, and welcome to our august company of heroes. Fewer than one in every ten thousand who apply make it to this day. Be proud of yourselves, and know I am proud of you as well.

The Rocketeers were formed more than nine hundred years ago when King Louis XXXIII established the company as his personal agents and bodyguards during the last years of the 'Thirty Systems' War. As the war came to a close, many a Rocketeer was honored for valor and courage. Indeed, it was the Rocketeers who flew beside the king in the final assault on the HMSS *Invincible*, rocketing through space to breach the hull and take King Philip prisoner. The war ended but our duty had just begun. In the intervening centuries, no reigning Gallian monarch has been assassinated, and the company has become a symbol of the Gallian throne. I expect you to uphold the tenets of the Rocketeers: honor, valor, and fidelity.

The *Compagnie des Rocketeers* has lost much of its influence since the death of King Henri IX twelve years ago. Queen Marie-Hélène has only recently come of age and her regency was not kind to us. Many of the duties and privileges we have historically enjoyed have been curtailed or assigned to other units but our duty remains: protect the queen and act as her faithful agents in all things. It is to this sacred task that you have sworn today.

Go forth and do us proud, as Rocketeers have done for centuries.

It gives me great pleasure so please allow me to say it again. Hail, Rocketeers!

Major Astrid de Treville, induction speech for the 943rd class of Rocketeers

Three Rocketeers is a game of high adventure and the shadowy intrigues of interstellar empires. You and your friends take the role of Rocketeers in the service of the Gallian throne as a cabal of cowardly traitors and scheming Church officials plot to depose Her Majesty the Queen Marie-Hélène. Only you and your compatriots can save Gallia from becoming a puppet state of the Church.

In *Three Rocketeers* we blend the adventure and Age of Enlightenment intrigue of Alexandre Dumas' *Three Musketeers* with the pulp action and grandeur of space opera and planetary romance.

INTERSTELLAR IMPERIA

Imagine the Age of Enlightenment scattered across the stars. What if France (Gallia), England (Britannica Solaria), Spain (Arastilla), and what would become Germany (The Holy Roman Stellar Empire) controlled hundreds of star systems and explored the galaxy instead of colonizing the New World?

These four great powers are known as the Interstellar Imperia. Each Imperia has a homeworld, a local cluster of systems known as principalities, and scores of colonies further afield. Contested systems lie along the borders of the great powers and have been the battlegrounds of countless wars through the centuries.

Known space consists of the local spiral arm of the galaxy. None of the remotest colonies even approach the galactic disc and it takes more than a year to reach them from the heart of known space. Fear not, intrepid explorers! Hundreds of thousands of stars in this arm of the galaxy await you. Interstellar exploration and expansion is a slow process. Explorers follow the path of the spiral arm, inching in toward the galactic center star by star. The vast void between stars remains largely uncharted as ships take straight-line paths between systems.

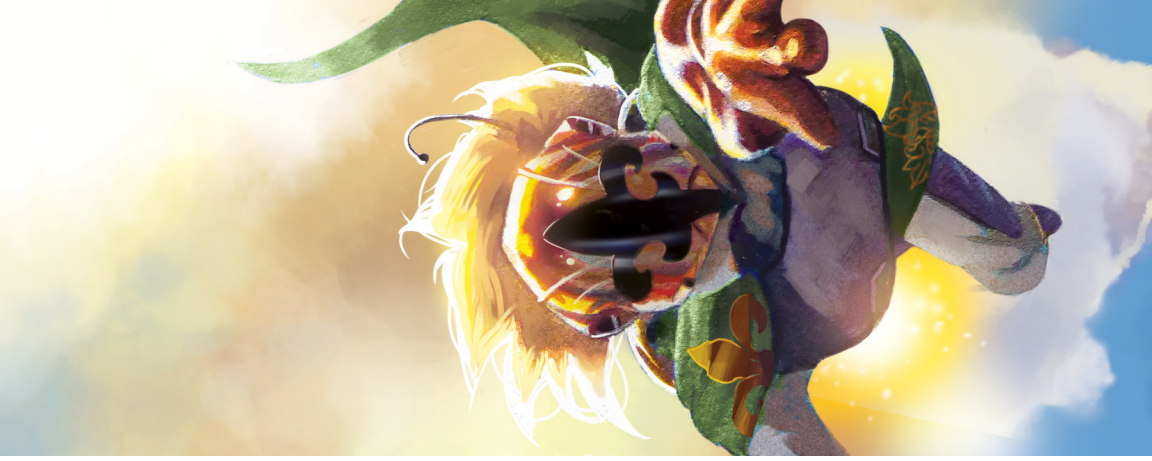
Gallia

The bright center of culture in known space, Gallia is and has been for a thousand years a bastion of advancing civilization. Artists, composers, and philosophers flock to Gallia and vie for attention from the gentry. Gallian sophistication extends even to architecture, an art famously described by Jean-Paul Reynault as “painting with steel and glass.”

The majority of the population lives on a single massive continent that has been entirely urbanized—shining towers and beautiful cathedrals stretch from coast to coast. Numerous rivers, lakes, and public parks dapple the city. As such, La Capitale is widely regarded as the most beautiful city in known space.

The core of Gallian space is a sector of space more than a hundred lightyears across, consisting of 23 planetary systems named for ancient provinces that have since been unified into La Capitale. Some 300 Gallian colonies exist outside this region and stretch along the spiral arm toward the galactic disc. Though the colonies vastly outnumber the core worlds their population is a modest fraction of the Gallian provinces. Traveling from Gallia to the furthest of her colonies is a nearly two year journey.

Queen Marie-Hélène has sat the Gallian throne since the age of seven. Now nineteen, she struggles to rein in corrupt regents who have grown richer and comfortable as the power behind the throne. She is protected by a legion of guards, the most famous of which are her Rocketeers: an elite company of expert fencers equipped with rocket packs and force blades.



The Rocketeers

Founded as an honor guard for King Louis XXXIII in the Thirty Systems War the better part of a millennium ago, the Compagnie des Rocketeers has been the standard for elite rocket troopers ever since. Their skill with a force blade is legendary and the tales of Rocketeer bravery are countless.

Their official duties include acting as bodyguards and personal agents of the crown. Unofficially the Rocketeers are the most reliable counter-intelligence force available to the Gallian throne. Their status as crown operatives gives them great leeway in resolving matters of state security, though it is hardly given blanket immunity.

The Rocketeers are organized as a light company of troopers with no more than 64 Rocketeers at a time. Commanded by a major, the company is split into four platoons of sixteen Rocketeers commanded by a captain. Each platoon is further split into four patrols, most often three troopers with a lieutenant.

To even apply to join the company, a recruit must have served in the Gallian armed forces—including the Gallian Foreign Legion—and distinguished oneself in valor and as a fencer. The intense training program culls all but the best candidates from the program. All Rocketeers personally swear fealty to the Gallian monarch upon graduation.

A Rocketeer's gear includes body armor, helmet, force blade, rocket pack, and tabard bearing the Gallian fleur-de-lis. The body armor starts with boots and continues with plates up the legs, chest, and arms. It is light enough to be worn under clothing but will stop a bullet or blast from an anti-personnel particle cannon. A force blade will still get through but typically won't cleave through—which really demonstrates the efficacy of the armor. The helmet is similarly armored and includes an environmental seal for space travel, communications array, and HUD. Rocketeers choose their force blades based on their fencing style. The rocket pack carries enough fuel for eight hours of powered flight in gravity, more in space.

The company is currently facing a personnel shortage. The regents made moves to reduce the size of the company during the queen's minority and nearly a third of the Rocketeers have been killed in the line of duty in the last year. Major de Treville, the current head of the Rocketeers, worries that the shadows are drawing close around the throne.



Britannica Solaria

The youngest of the great powers of known space, Britannica Solaria only united under a single flag and throne a century ago. Queen Elizabeth rules the four kingdoms of the Solaria: Britannia, Albainn, Cymri, and Airlann. Until a century ago, each was a minor power in known space. Unification has brought them to the main galactic stage. The four kingdoms are neighboring systems, each no more than a lightyear from the furthest of its kin. Britannia is nominally chief of the Solaria, though the people of Albainn and Airlann chafe at the thought and murmur of independence.

Britannia itself is largely an aquatic world with twenty small continents. Large cities sit along the coasts with rustic interiors. The people of Britannia are known as the Tanns. The Tannish cities were built for industrialization, though most heavy manufacturing has moved off-world to the orbital shipyards.

Albainn's greatest exports for centuries have been cattle and infantry soldiers that are known to serve with uncommon distinction in foreign legions and mercenary companies. Severe tidal forces from the planet's four moons necessitate that the Bainn people live high in the mountains.

Airlann has nearly no axial tilt and experiences almost no change in seasons, resulting in a particularly wide temperate region with mild winters. The Airish are known for their tight knit pastoral communities.

Cymri is the smallest kingdom of the Solaria but the most technologically advanced. Every moon in the Cymri system has been terraformed or set up with contained colony habitats. The famous Solarian starships that hold back the Holy Roman Stellar Empire for generations are of Cymri design.

The four kingdoms of the Solaria and their combined principalities account for 71 systems—the largest core sector in known space—yet their population is scarcely larger than Gallia's. The 250 Solarian colonies are widespread and are the most self-sufficient of any in the far reaches of space. The Solarian navy is known to have the best ships and crew, though it is hardly the largest military force available. The Tanns and Cymri fly the magnificent space craft while the Airish and Bainn form the backbone of the ground troops.

Recent decades have seen Tannish playwrights, Bainn authors, and Airish poets that rival even the Gallian artists.



Holy Roman Stellar Empire

The Holy Roman Stellar Empire, commonly known as the Heilstern, has long been the military powerhouse of the four Imperia. Emperor Matthias XLII, the Kriegsprinz of Saxony, was elected emperor three years ago and has made numerous alliances. His nationalist policies and rhetoric make him popular with many of the lower houses. All that the rest of the galaxy hears is the rattling of sabers.

The armies of the Heilstern have won countless battles through the centuries but civil unrest and a series of politically weak emperors have curtailed expansion. The politicking leaves the Heilstern as the most fractious of the Interstellar Imperia. Each planet is ruled by a Kriegsprinz and is an independent kingdom unto itself. The Kriegsprinzen elect an emperor from among their number upon the death of the reigning emperor. Fearing that a strong emperor would remove their autonomy, the Kriegsprinzen have conspired to elect the weakest emperor. Many of the sitting Kriegsprinzen are lamenting Matthias' elevation and conspiracy runs thick among them.

The core of the Holy Roman Stellar Empire is only a dozen, highly industrialized, heavily populated planets. Four years of military service is mandatory throughout the Heilstern. Most of the 68 colonies began as military outposts, only converting to civilian colonies as the need arose. As a result, the colonies are more given to cooperation with neighboring systems, often bartering military protection for food and supplies from colonies of other great powers.

Once the home of the Church, the Holy Roman Stellar Empire remains politically close to the Star Pope. Even after the election by the Kriegsprinzen, the Star Pope must perform the coronation ceremony before the leader of the Holy Roman Stellar Empire is declared emperor.



Arastilla

The last of the Interstellar Imperia is also the most expansive and populous: Arastilla. The core of Arastillan space is 57 systems known for their large, bustling cities and enormous haciendas. Famed as explorers, the Arastillans have settled more colonies than the rest of the Interstellar Imperia combined, some 1,200 and counting.

Queen Caroleña rules Arastilla and is the longest-serving sitting monarch of the Interstellar Imperia. Her three decades on the throne have seen great growth and stabilization of the Arastillan colonies. The first five years of her reign were spent in a goodwill tour of the colonies of the time. It proved a formative experience for her.

Arastillan wine and racing sloops are much prized throughout the galaxy but it is the vast mineral wealth of its planets that truly feeds the Arastillan economy. Great mining concerns strip mine asteroids and lifeless moons with reckless abandon. Ore and gems are more carefully extracted from habitable worlds, though the Arastillans are deliberate in founding cities away from major deposits.

While Arastillan territory has largely been through exploration and colonization, there was a time several millennia back when a vast Arastillan armada swept through the core worlds and laid waste to the other Interstellar Imperia. It was the meager forces of Britannica and Cymri that finally halted the Arastillan advance in the Wold-Newton Nebula.

The Church

The origins of the Church are shrouded in mystery. It has been around as long as humanity has moved among the stars. While other religions exist, none are as widespread or influential as the Church which remains the official religion of the four Interstellar Imperia.

The heart of the Church was found within the Stellar Empire for more than ten millennia before establishing its own sector of space some two thousand years ago. The Vatican system was first explored by Star Pope Andromeda II when a catastrophic engine failure stranded her ship in the system. The Star Pope and her crew managed to limp to a stable orbit around the red giant and messaged for help. It was more than a year later before help arrived. An Arastillan explorer had experienced a navigation error and dropped out of warp to fix it; it was only by chance that she was in range of the Star Pope's distress signal. At the time of her rescue, the Star Pope hadn't eaten for nearly two weeks while her crew had been on starvation rations for nearly a month. Andromeda II said she had a divine vision during her ordeal that revealed to her a plan for the Church. Upon her return to known space she ordered the construction of a spacefaring cathedral built in the system in which she had been stranded.

Today Star Pope Regulus IV presides over the spiritual guidance of humanity from Vatican V—the latest and largest papal city-station ever constructed. It houses more than five million people. Regulus IV is known as a reformer and his term has been characterized by his overtures of peace and understanding to religious splinter groups. Many of his early papal edicts were focused on rooting out ecclesiastical corruption. This has angered a number of cardinals and Church officials, whose own wealth and power have been diminished. Critics of Star Pope Regulus IV say he has been too soft on heretics and blasphemers and has left many of the Church's educational institutions woefully underfunded.

When in public the Star Pope is always accompanied by the papal Simian Guard, a troop of genetically engineered and cybernetically enhanced intelligent apes. The apes were uplifted at the insistence of Star Pope Andromeda II, as part of her holy communion while stranded in the Vatican system. Raised by a combination of clergy and scientists deep in a jungle on an uncharted world, the apes are indoctrinated into the Church's teachings and are fanatically loyal to the Star Pope. While on duty they wear heavy armor draped with robes embroidered with the eight-pointed star-cross of the Church. Massive force bladed halberds are the weapon of choice, though even unarmed their cybernetic limbs and massive size make them more than a match for most seasoned soldiers.

Cardinals, such as Rotanev, maintain a squad of personal guards. These agents of the cardinals have been given ecclesiastical immunity and are the most visible sign of Church corruption as they are often little more than brigands and gangsters. Rotanev's guards are known to duel with the city guard and even the Rocketeers when questioned or interfered with.

CREATING CHARACTERS

The Player Characters (PCs) are Rocketeers, sworn to serve and protect whomever sits the Gallian throne. While this is a restriction, it serves the layered purposes of uniting the characters, giving characters agency within the story, and playing to the tropes of the setting.

Players may create their own Rocketeers or opt to play Rocketeer versions of Dumas' musketeers (see page 22). In either case, the players ought to familiarize themselves with the Interstellar Imperia (page 3) and technology of known space (page 16) to understand the setting and expectations of their characters.

Rocketeers may be of any race or gender. Don't be constrained by the all-male cast of Dumas' prose or by the perception that France is predominantly Caucasian. This isn't just Renaissance France after all, so it's just as likely to have Rocketeers who are neither Caucasian nor male traveling through space and being very awesome and heroic.

Aspects

Each PC has six aspects that describe the character.

Rocketeer: This is about the character's status and history as a Rocketeer. For instance, d'Artagnan was *Born to be a Rocketeer* and Porthos is *A Rocketeer Writ Large*.

Trouble: Despite being heroes, Rocketeers all have a flaw that humanizes them. Your trouble will bring drama and tension into the game. Porthos is known for his *Boastful* nature while Aramis *Never Says No to Romance*.

Swordplay: Every Rocketeer has a unique fencing style. This is represented both by the swordplay aspect, which describes the style narratively and thematically, and by a fencing stunt talked about later on page 13. The swordplay aspect should be evocative of the Rocketeer's overall approach to combat when armed with a blade. It needn't be incredibly specific but should give everyone at the table an idea of what it looks like or where it comes from. Athos is known throughout the galaxy as a *Fearsome Duelist* and d'Artagnan will tell you he was *Trained by My Father*.

Family: One's lineage and family has great importance in the Interstellar Imperia. There are numerous advantages to being of noble blood but opportunities exist for commoners of skill and bravery, as well. The gentry and the working classes tend to have different skill sets due to upbringing. Where Aramis is from an *Impoverished Noble House*, Porthos' parents are *Wealthy Merchants*.

Free: Lastly, each Rocketeer receives two free aspects that can be used to flesh out the character to your satisfaction. Porthos is the *Life of the Party* but Aramis' history describes him as *Noble, Novice, Soldier, Priest*.

Refresh, Stunts, and Aspects-only Skills

Rocketeers begin play with 3 refresh, one stunt, and a fencing stunt. Additional stunts can be purchased with refresh on a one-to-one basis.

Unlike *Fate Core*, *Three Rocketeers* has no skill list. Instead players use aspects to create the narrative behind, and provide a bonus for, their actions in the game. NPCs and other GM-controlled entities use Approaches (see page 15). Aspects do everything they do in *Fate Core* but here they also establish skill bonuses.

When a player takes an action, they begin by declaring which character aspects (Rocketeer, trouble, fencing, family, or their free aspects) are relevant to the roll. Each aspect named gives a +1 bonus to the roll. If a character applies three aspects, the character has a Good (+3) bonus.

As an added benefit, the Rocketeer aspect always adds a +2 to the action because being a Rocketeer is the heart of the game. Go forth and do bold, swash-buckling, daring things on rocket packs!

It's important to note that none of the aspects selected are invoked—they are merely counted for the purposes of establishing a bonus and may be invoked later. This also means players do not have to pay a fate point simply to roll the dice.

As every Rocketeer has a Rocketeer aspect and a swordplay aspect, it is reasonable to assume that they will generally have at least a +3 bonus to their roll when engaged in swordplay.

NO-SKILL FATE

A few general guidelines are important for playing without a skill list.

First, this means that any character can attempt any action but it is the character's history—that is, the character's aspects—that determine their level of proficiency. This means players should be especially aware of how aspects are phrased. It is good to have some overlap, but too much can easily hold a character back in many circumstances.

Second, there should be a consensus from the players at the table about whether an aspect really adds a bonus. Everyone should freely call out unbelievable stretches and bogus attempts. Roleplaying games are collaborative. Work together to build the story.

Third, don't feel that every aspect used in every action needs an explanation—other players will perk up with questions or objections if something seems suspect and you can explain the aspect's relevance then. Simply list the aspects and tally the bonus unless there's an objection at the table.

Lastly, you must establish your bonus *before* rolling the dice.



The Four Actions

Three Rocketeers uses the four actions from *Fate Core*. It is important to keep this in mind as some aspects lend themselves to certain actions better than others. Stunts and swordplay often deal specifically with which action is being taken.

Even more than most *Fate Core* games, the players need to be clear as to what action they are taking when they pick up the dice.

- Attacks harm your opponent.
- Defense prevents harm.
- Create an advantage changes the story for someone's benefit by introducing new aspects into play.
- Overcome removes some obstacle, often an aspect, that stands in the way.

What action is being taken should be clearly stated before the dice are picked up or skill bonuses are tallied.

Turn Order

At the start of a conflict, establish the turn order. Rocketeers tally a bonus from their character aspects as if they were taking an action. Any aspect that implies the character is quick or good at spotting incoming trouble will work. Major NPCs use their **Quick** approach while mooks default to Mediocre (+0) unless they are skilled at something relevant, like fencing or vigilance. Keep in mind that some swordplay stunt elements may modify a character's bonus when establishing turn order.



Stunts

Since *Three Rocketeers* does not have a skill list, stunts need to be handled a little differently than in *Fate Core* and *Fate Accelerated Edition*. Rather than providing a bonus to skills or approaches, make references to the four actions and provide a narrative hook for the stunt. Some example stunts follow.

All For One: Because I take the openings my friends give me, once per conflict I get +2 to my next attack after an ally takes out an enemy.

Dual Wield: Because I am trained to use a sword in each hand, when I fight with two swords I use the Main Hand element for each blade.

Former Gendarme: Because I was once a gendarme, I get +1 to create an advantage or overcome when I get help from my former colleagues.

Genius: Because I am the smartest person in the room, I get +2 to overcome puzzles and traps.

Giant: Because I am a giant of a person, I get +2 to overcome actions when I break things.

Idealistic: Because I am idealistic, I gain +2 to defend against intimidation and threats.

Master of Disguise: Because I am a master of disguise with a knack for being in the right place at the right time, once per session I can join a scene already in progress, having posed as a minor character.

One For All! Because I fight for my friends, when I create an advantage by giving a rallying cry and succeed with style my fellow Rocketeers gain +3 when they invoke the resulting aspect.

Pub Legend: Because I am a legend in bars across Gallia, I get +2 to create an advantage by gathering information in the pub.

Racing Sloop: Because I have a fast, sleek, racing ship, I gain +2 to overcome actions when I put the pedal to the metal in racing contests.

Rocket Racer: Because I am a master rocketeer I get +2 to overcome in chases when I fly through narrow or twisting spaces.

Up, Up, and Away: Because I am a high-flying daredevil I get +2 to overcome actions when I perform a swashbuckling maneuver that includes swinging, climbing, or rocketing.



Swordplay Stunts

In addition to the Swordplay aspect, players can build a custom swordplay stunt. A swordplay stunt consists of four elements: appearance, edge, main hand, and off-hand.

- **Appearance:** The qualities an observer might notice about the fencing style. It can be flamboyant or crude, straightforward or sly. Appearance is often used to create an advantage.
- **Edge:** A particular trick or set of maneuvers the fencer uses to seize the upper hand or score the final blow. Both appearance and edge can be used with any weapon as they are the product of technique and not tied to a fencer's equipment.
- **Main Hand:** Every fencing style requires a sword and each blade offers a unique benefit that only a fencer trained in the blade can use.
- **Off Hand:** Fencers employ a variety of off-hand techniques and weapons, usually for defensive purposes. A fencer only gains the benefit of a main hand or off hand weapon when using the appropriate gear.

To create a swordplay stunt, pick one item from each list of elements at character creation. You can advance your swordplay stunt as a campaign progresses. When you reach a significant milestone, add one additional item to your swordplay stunt—this is in place of a new skill point since *Three Rocketeers* does not use skills. Keep in mind that Main Hand and Off Hand elements can only be used with the corresponding gear.

ARMOR AND WEAPON RATINGS

Armor and Weapon ratings improve a character's defense and offense, respectively. A Weapon rating adds to the shifts of a successful hit while an armor rating reduces the shifts of a successful hit. Weapon and Armor values effectively cancel one another.

Weapon and Armor do not change the total of an action. Success with style still requires beating the opponent by three shifts or more. If the attacker has a Weapon rating, a tie results in a hit of shifts equal to the Weapon rating.

Appearance

- **Acrobatic:** Gain +1 to create an advantage when using obstacles, furniture, or terrain for superior positioning.
- **Flashy:** Gain +1 to create an advantage when intimidating an opponent with a demonstration of your style.
- **Quick:** Gain +1 when determining turn order.
- **Steady:** When you succeed with style creating an advantage, gain +1 to your next defense roll.
- **Subtle:** Invoking your fencing aspect to create an advantage based on misdirection grants +3 instead of +2.

Edge

- **Aggressive:** Your opponent does not gain a boost when you tie on a defense action.
- **Impenetrable:** Increase your Armor value by +1.
- **Perfect Footwork:** When you succeed with style on defense, you may create a situation aspect with a free invocation instead of gaining a boost.
- **Powerful:** When you tie on attack you create a situation aspect with one free invoke instead of gaining a boost.
- **Precise:** Increase the Weapon rating of your main hand by +1.

Main Hand

- **Broadsword:** Weapon:1.
- **Cutlass:** Gain +1 to create an advantage when you try to disarm your opponent.
- **Rapier:** Invoking your Swordplay aspect for a bonus on an attack grants a +3 instead of +2.
- **Saber:** When you invoke a situation aspect about your fencing style that you created as an obstacle, increase the opposition by an additional +1.
- **Small Sword:** Gain +1 to attack an enemy who has already acted in the round.

Off Hand

- **Buckler:** Gain +1 to your next attack when you succeed on defense.
- **Cloak:** Gain +1 to create an advantage when you obfuscate your weapon.
- **Empty:** Gain +1 to attack when you swing with both hands.
- **Gauntlet:** When you succeed with style on defense, create a *Grabbed Blade* aspect with a free invocation rather than take a boost.
- **Main Gauche:** When you succeed with style on defense against an attack you may deal a 2-shift physical hit with your off hand instead of gaining a boost.

NPCS

To keep the GM's turns snappy and the focus on the main characters, NPCs are created just like in *Fate Accelerated Edition*. (See Bad Guys on page 38 of FAE).

Major NPCs use the standard six approaches from FAE: Careful, Clever, Flashy, Forceful, Quick, and Sneaky. They receive three aspects and a stunt. If you want to make a major NPC an expert fencer like a Rocketeer, make one of their aspects a fencing aspect and give them one item from each swordplay element.

Mooks

To make the mooks your Rocketeers will face, follow these steps:

1. Pick the quality of the mook. Light mooks are Average (+1) when they are skilled, Terrible (-2) when bad, and have no stress boxes. Medium mooks are Fair (+2) when they are skilled, Poor (-1) when bad, but also have one stress box each. Heavy mooks are Good (+3) when skilled and Poor (-1) when bad at something. They have two stress boxes.
2. Choose two or three things the mooks are skilled at and two things they're bad at.
3. Give the mook an aspect or two.
4. Give each mook stress boxes as appropriate for the quality.

Each mook in a mob after the first adds +1 to actions when doing something the mooks are skilled at. A group of four Cardinal's Guards—medium mooks—are skilled at fencing, giving them a Fair (+2) to start, so the extra three mooks add +3 for a total of Superb (+5) when fencing. Each mook also brings its stress track to the mob. When a mob takes a hit, shifts in excess of what's needed to take out one mook are applied to the next mooks in the mob, one at a time. This means a single attack from a Rocketeer can take out multiple mooks in a mob but it also means a large mob can be very hard to take down. It's best to keep the mooks in groups of three.



TECHNOLOGY IN KNOWN SPACE

The humanity of known space is far more technologically advanced than we are on Earth. Interstellar travel is hardly the only incredible technology Rocketeers will encounter.

Warp Travel

Ships are able to achieve faster than light speeds by warping the fabric of space. It's a bit of a cheat, since the ships don't technically move faster than light but are simply traversing less space than light going through normal space. The warp effect allows for incredibly fast transit but the sheer massiveness of space keeps star systems relatively insulated from one another. Most ships can cover a light year in two days, though the fastest ships can cut that time almost in half. Reaching a neighboring star system takes a week of travel for most vessels.

Exploring the galaxy has been a long and tedious process. Those brave enough to venture into unknown space often spend months in solitude with no guarantee of finding a hospitable world at the end of the journey.

Ships

Countless craft have been designed for civilian and military use. Most private coaches are small enough to be operated by a lone pilot and carry enough passengers for a modest family. Larger classes of private craft, such as cargo freighters or luxury yachts, may require several dozen crew members. Highly prized by race pilots and thrill seekers, Arastillan sloops are the fastest ships available. Civilian ships tend to be long and sleek with large engines at the aft and stabilizers for atmospheric flight.

Military ships range in size from single-seat fighters all the way up to super-cruisers with crews numbering in the tens of thousands. Fighter craft and shuttles are sleek like civilian ships but ships get progressively boxier and utilitarian the larger they get.

Most civilian ships equipped with warp engines are also armed. The vastness of space makes it impossible for militaries to patrol effectively. Brigands and pirates prey on hapless travelers, particularly in times of war and economic depression.

Rocket Packs

Rocket infantry revolutionized war. Able to move about urban battlefields with greater freedom and ease than any other infantry unit, rocket troopers soon dominated ground battles. Further developments came when King Louis XXXIII founded the Rocketeers as his honor guard and pioneered the use of rocket troopers for boarding actions in space battles.

A typical rocket trooper's kit includes body armor with helmet, rocket pack, and force blade. The armor is vacuum sealed and thermally regulated, allowing a trooper to survive and fight in nearly any environment. The rocket pack's fuel cell carries enough fuel for several hours of sustained flight. While not powerful

enough to break atmosphere, a rocket pack can reach several miles of altitude in standard gravity. Well-trained rocket troopers can navigate narrow streets, canyons, or an active battlefield at speed.

Force Blades

As fleet combat became more common and body armor advanced beyond the capabilities of firearms, the need for a new class of melee weapon was needed. The force blade was developed as a weapon that would not pierce a ship's hull but could still penetrate enemy armor. A force blade is typically a sword, with an energy emitter fitted into the haft or hilt. When activated, the emitter surrounds the blade in a force field with an infinitesimally thin cutting edge. This dramatically improves the cutting power and hardness of the blade. A force blade rapier can hew through limbs where the cuts of an unpowered rapier would only inflict a minor flesh wound. Yet the force field won't even scratch the metal used to construct ship hulls and bulkheads.

The introduction of force blades revived the ancient fighting arts. Fencing became a practical skill for soldiers once again. Schools teaching deadly practical arts of the blade became common in cities across the core worlds as the wealthy took an interest in the sword.

Arguably the most famous fencers in known space are the Rocketeers of Gallia. One must be an expert fencer before even applying to join the company. Though the two groups have never had cause to meet in battle, it is said that the Rocketeers' greatest rivals for hand to hand combat skill are the cybernetic papal apes with their massive force bladed halberds.

Energy Weapons

The standard weapons load for any space going ship consists of one or more particle cannons of various sizes. Kinetic projectiles add too much weight to a space going vessel to be viable for sustained combat. The power generators of ships are able to throw enough energy to make particle cannons a truly devastating weapon. The blasts from particle cannons are invisible, so lasers are used for guidance purposes. A trained gunner, with the proper range dialed in is a lethal opponent.

Particle cannons also play an important role in ground combat. Tanks and weapons emplacements are equipped with particle cannons and generators.

Particle cannons have not yet made their way into personal armament. Power sources sized for infantry use do not generate enough energy for an effective particle cannon. The Holy Roman Stellar Empire experimented with single-shot infantry particle rifles with limited success.

CONSPIRACIES

Conspiracy is rife within the Interstellar Imperia. Noble houses scheme against one another and the throne with equal viciousness. Cabals of treacherous, vindictive dissidents threaten every monarch sitting a throne. It is only the dedication of the various intelligence agencies keeping the realms stable in the face of these threats.



What is a Conspiracy?

Conspiracies in *Three Rocketeers* are larger than life. The architects of a Conspiracy plan to gain power on a galactic scale by any means necessary. The schemes are grand, pitting nations against one another in fabricated wars, using weak rulers as puppets to further enrich the nobility, and assassinating those who resist. The Conspiracy in the adventure provided here is a cabal of nobles and clergy who seek to depose Queen Marie-Hélène and install a puppet ruler who is more easily controlled by the Church.

Modeling Conspiracies

In *Three Rocketeers*, conspiracies are modeled with aspects—**alliance, goal, and weakness**—and approaches—**Influence, Might, Power, Reach, Resources, and Secrecy**.

Conspiracy Aspects

Conspiracy aspects are campaign aspects that begin play hidden from the Rocketeers. The first time the GM invokes each Conspiracy aspect or if the Rocketeers are able to uncover it, it is revealed and the Rocketeers can invoke it as usual.

Alliance: A conspiracy's alliance aspect names its primary architects. It's blatant and obvious but that's what makes it powerful in play. When the aspect is revealed to the players, it focuses them and gives them a direction for their efforts. Or the alliance aspect can be revealed early in play, leaving the Rocketeers leads but no proof of perfidy until they can discover the goal and the weakness that can be exploited. The alliance aspect in the adventure here is *Cardinal Rotanev and Duke Arguil*.

Goal: The purpose of the conspiracy, its endgame, is represented by its goal aspect. *Assassinate the Queen and Install Our Papal Puppet* is the goal of the noble cabal in the adventure that follows. Other good examples are *Assassinate Kriegsprinz Blum* and *Frame Grand Duchess Ariana for Murder*.

Weakness: A conspiracy's weakness aspect is like a Rocketeer's trouble—it complicates matters and provides an opportunity for opponents to capitalize on the shortcomings of those pulling the strings. After all, a conspiracy is a human organization and subject to the same failings of any human endeavor. That the cabal is *Working Without The Star Pope's Knowledge* is a major hindrance to their cause. Not only must they hide their actions from the Queen and her agents but they must achieve their goals without rousing the suspicion of the Star Pope. They walk a fine line.

Conspiracy Approaches

Conspiracy approaches represent the political strength, social influence, military might, and economic means the conspirators commit to their scheme. While Rocketeers are investigating a conspiracy, they will often be opposed by the conspiracy itself.

Influence: the conspiracy's ability to apply social pressure to get its way. A conspiracy with high Influence has famous, visible, and charismatic conspirators such as dukes and ranking clergy.

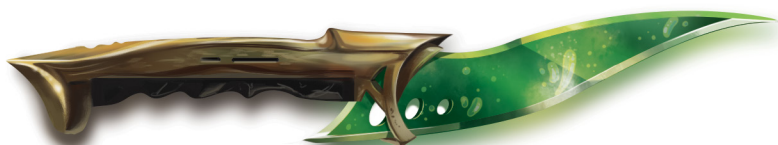
Power: a conspiracy's ability to abuse governmental power for the conspiracy's gain. High Power conspiracies count generals and high level bureaucrats among their conspirators.

Might: the measure of the conspiracy's fighting forces, whether through traditional arms or paid assassins. Might covers both the number of the fighting forces and their quality. A conspiracy with high Might often has its start in the military but may also be led by nobles or clergy with private armies.

Reach: how large and expansive a conspiracy is. A larger Reach, means the conspiracy is more pervasive with more places a conspirator can be found and more layers to it. A conspiracy with Reach as its peak approach has a wide variety of conspirators at all levels of society from common laborers and merchants to powerful nobles and court officials.

Resources: This represents the financial, material, and technological capabilities the conspiracy controls. A conspiracy with high Resources has secret bases with supercomputers and top of the line courier crafts—as well as the ability to bribe their way to victory. A high Resources approach means the conspiracy has wealthy conspirators, such as the heads of large corporations or major landowners.

Secrecy: a measure of how well the conspiracy guards itself from discovery. Every conspiracy is shrouded in Secrecy to a degree but some are simply better at keeping secrets than others. While Secrecy doesn't directly indicate who is a conspirator—after all, dock workers can keep secrets just as well as the upper class—it does indicate that the conspirators are careful and methodical. Truly dangerous opponents to have in the game of shadows.





USING CONSPIRACY APPROACHES

A conspiracy's approaches are arranged in a pyramid with a base of three Good (+3) approaches, two Great (+4) approaches, and one Superb (+5) approach. Conspiracy approaches are used in two ways.

First, the approach is used as the difficulty of passive opposition whenever a Rocketeer tries to overcome the conspiracy's work. Bypassing the security system in the Cardinal's mansion would require a Rocketeer to overcome the conspiracy's Resources and finding incriminating documents in the Cardinal's office would be up against Secrecy, for example.

Approaches can also be used in place of NPC approaches or skilled actions by mooks. To do so, the GM spends a fate point to use a conspiracy approach in place of the NPC's usual bonus for the roll. For example, if Cardinal Rotanev were to face off against the Rocketeers in a desperate sword fight, the GM could spend a fate point to replace the cardinal's Mediocre (+0) Quick with the conspiracy's Good (+3) Might. Note that spending a fate point in this way replaces the entirety of a mob's skill bonus including any teamwork bonus from additional mooks. Aspects may still be invoked as normal and add to the total after the fact.

THE ROCKETEERS

Below are four Rocketeers based on the characters from Alexandre Dumas' *Three Musketeers*.

Catherine 'Cat' d'Artagnan

ASPECTS

Rocketeer Aspect: *Born to be a Rocketeer*
Trouble: *Prickly Pride*
Fencing: *Trained by My Father*
Family: *Elevated Rural Nobility*
Open: *New to Politics; Exuberance of Youth*

STUNTS

With my **youthful energy**, I get +3 instead of +2 when I use the free invocation on an opponent's consequence.

SWORDPLAY

Acrobatic: Gain +1 to create an advantage when using obstacles, furniture, or terrain for superior positioning.

Aggressive: Your opponent does not gain a boost when you tie on a defense action.

Saber: When you invoke a situation aspect about your fencing style that you created as an obstacle, increase the opposition by an additional +1.

Empty: Gain +1 to attack when you swing with both hands.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3



Olivier Athos

ASPECTS

Rocketeer Aspect: *The Rocketeer's Rocketeer*

Trouble: *Torn by Love and Honor*

Fencing: *Fearsome Duelist*

Family: *Ancient Noble Blood*

Open: *Regimental Captain; Secretive*

STUNTS

Because I preside over **Comté de la Fère**, I get +2 when I create advantages based on my station.

WORDPLAY

Steady: When you succeed with style creating an advantage, gain +1 to your next defense roll.

Precise: Increase the Weapon rating of your main hand by +1.

Rapier: Invoking your Swordplay aspect for a bonus on an attack grants a +3 bonus instead of +2.

Main Gauche: When you succeed with style on defense against an attack you may deal a 2-shift physical hit with your off hand instead of gaining a boost.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3





Michael Porthos

ASPECTS

Rocketeer Aspect: *A Rocketeer Writ Large*

Trouble: *Boastful*

Fencing: *Storm and Fury*

Family: *Wealthy Merchants*

Open: *Always up for a Fight; Life of the Party*

STUNTS

Because I tell **the tallest of tales**, situation aspects I create with my stories get an extra free invocation when my roll is a success or better.

SWORDPLAY

Flashy: Gain +1 to create an advantage when intimidating an opponent with a demonstration of your style.

Powerful: When you tie on attack you create a situation aspect with one free invoke instead of gaining a boost.

Broadsword: Weapon:1.

Buckler: Gain +1 to your next attack when you succeed on defense.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3

Renée Aramis

ASPECTS

Rocketeer Aspect: *Spiritual Guide of the Rocketeers*

Trouble: *Never Say No to Romance*

Fencing: *The Hidden Blade*

Family: *Impoverished Noble House*

Free: *Noble, Novice, Soldier, Priest; Highly Educated*

STUNTS

As a **novice in the Church** and knowledgeable in its ways, I get +2 to overcome when I try to uncover Church secrets.

WORDPLAY

Subtle: Invoking your fencing aspect to create an advantage based on misdirection grants +3 instead of +2.

Perfect Footwork: When you succeed with style on defense, you may create a situation aspect with a free invocation instead of gaining a boost.

Small Sword: Gain +1 to attack an enemy who has already acted in the round.

Cloak: Gain +1 to create an advantage when you obfuscate your weapon.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

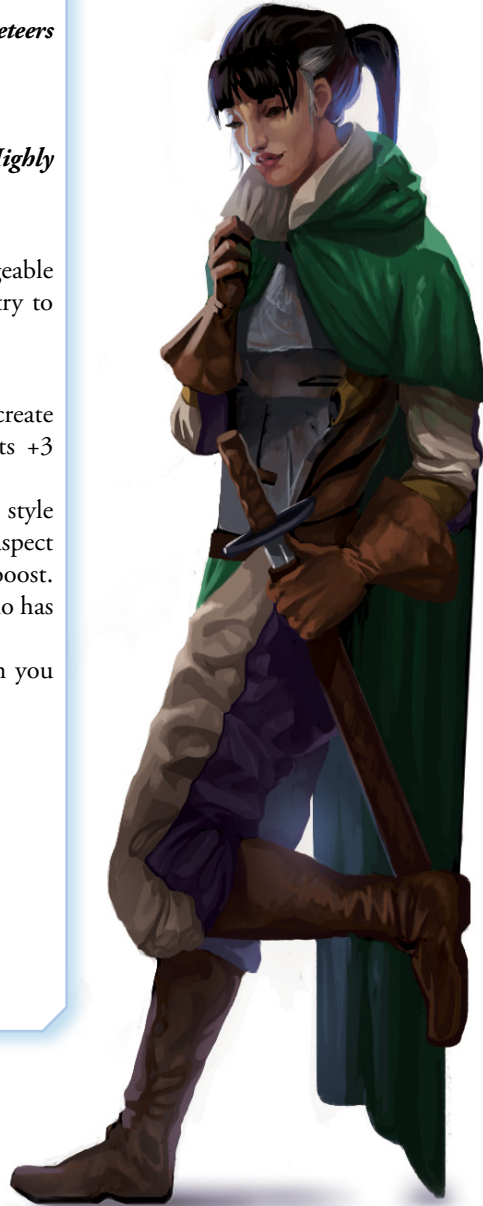
CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3



THE THREE ROCKETEERS IN... *BATTLE FOR THE GALLIAN THRONE*

Adventure Overview

A little over a year ago, Queen Marie-Hélène turned 18 and assumed the throne as queen and began slowly pulling back the power from the council of regents that had controlled Gallia in all but name for eleven years. The regents, grown fat and comfortable with power who thought the queen a quiet puppet, were taken by surprise. Several were removed from their positions but the craftier regents stayed, leaving no trails of wrongdoing. Those that remain scheme and plot from the shadows, eager to return themselves to positions of power.

One regent—Cardinal Rotanev—conspires with Ian Campbell, Duke of the Planet Arguil in the Britannica Solaria to assassinate the queen and install her Heilstern cousin Kriegsprinz Bertrand of Schwerberg upon the throne as a more malleable ruler. The two villains undertake this endeavor in the shadows, with neither the blessing nor knowledge of Star Pope Regulus IV, who would surely condemn this course of action should he learn of it. The conspiracy is a ticking bomb for all of Gallia that the Rocketeers must race to stop.

Each act of the adventure showcases a couple of key scenes from the act. The GM can play just these scenes for a short adventure or sprinkle in more scenes for a longer game. The setup for an act tells the GM what to expect and focus on in the act. The conflict section lays out several scenes that give the Rocketeers a chance to be heroic. Lastly, the resolution section specifies what the players should have at the end of the act in order to move onto the next.

SCENE TYPES

The adventure below is a series of connected scenes. Action scenes feature some sort of conflict—a challenge, conflict, or contest—where the Rocketeers are pitted against NPCs and do all their swashbuckling. Interludes feature more exposition and are focused on roleplaying. The NPCs in the scene and the information the players need from the scene are listed in the description but there's no box text for you to read aloud. Each NPC has a brief explanation of their personality. Bring each character to life, recalling the drama and excitement of Dumas' work, its numerous adaptations, and good old fashioned space opera.



The Conspiracy

ASPECTS

Alliance: *Cardinal Rotanev and Duke Arguil*

Goal: *Assassinate the Queen and Install Our Papal Puppet*

Weakness: *Working Without The Star Pope's Knowledge*

CONSPIRACY APPROACHES

Influence: Great (+4)

Reach: Good (+3)

Might: Good (+3)

Resources: Good (+3)

Power: Great (+4)

Secrecy: Superb (+5)

Motivations

Cardinal Rotanev wants to maintain his power behind the throne because he believes that guiding Gallia will put him in line to be the next Star Pope. The young queen has proven too willful and he has resolved to remove her.

Duke Arguil is one of the most powerful leaders of Albainn. He fears that Gallia under Queen Marie-Hélène would grow too powerful and act as check against Solarian expansion. If he can install Bertrand on the Gallian throne, it would serve to weaken Gallia and unrest could be fomented with the Holy Roman Stellar Empire. A Kriegsprinz holding a foreign throne, with a foreign army, would be viewed as a threat by the rest of the Heilstern rulers.

Other conspirators include: Febre, an Arastillan swordsman and former Rocketeer who now works for Cardinal Rotanev; Jussac, the captain of Rotanev's private guard; and Maga, a simian assassin recruited by Duke Arguil after being left for dead by the Star Pope and his guards. Kriegsprinz Bertrand is aware of the plot but knows none of the specifics, only that Cardinal Rotanev has promised to make him king of Gallia.

Various other Cardinal's guards and ducal agents feature as mooks.

ACT I: A DEADLY GAME REVEALED

In Act I our adventure begins as intruders attempt to gain access to the Gallian palace. A mystery emerges as it is revealed a former Rocketeer was behind the assault. Major de Treville dispatches the Rocketeers to uncover the secrets of the plot and put a stop to it. They investigate and find Febre is working for a shadowy figure, recruiting forces for some unknown purpose. The Rocketeers nearly catch up with Febre but the blackguard escapes on a Bainn ship while his troops hold the Rocketeers back.

Action: Intruders in the Palace

Late at night, a group of five intruders trip the perimeter alarm of the queen's palace. The Rocketeers are sent to apprehend them and are drawn into a chase through the darkened city. The intruders are sneaky and avoid direct confrontation, working together to wind through the narrow streets and alleys, keeping to places where a rocket pack is of little use. This is a contest (*Fate Core*, page 150) between the Intruders and the Rocketeers.

Intruders (Light Mooks)

Running Patsies, Hired Goons

Skilled (+1) at: Running away, ambushes, deception

Bad (-1) at: Dueling, bargaining

WHAT IF THE ROCKETEERS FAIL?

Unknown to the Rocketeers, the intruders they chase are merely pawns hired to create a distraction for Febre to scout Maga's entry into the citadel. If the Rocketeers fail to catch the intruders, Febre grows confident and moves more boldly by recruiting more foot soldiers. He tries recruiting a loyal Gallian—one not stupid enough to turn down Febre immediately—who approaches Major de Treville about the plot. He doesn't have any details, just that Febre is pulling in muscle from the gangs to be ready at a moment's notice.

Action: Interrogate the Intruders

When captured and interrogated, the intruders will spend a fate point to use the conspiracy's Superb (+5) Secrecy in place of their deception. It will be difficult to get them to talk but not impossible. When a mook cracks, he lets slip that he was hired by a one-eyed Arastillan dressed all in black to break into the palace grounds. The description matches Febre—a former Rocketeer dismissed from the company on charges of conduct unbecoming a Rocketeer.

CONDUCT UNBECOMING A ROCKETEER

Febre was ejected from the company for conduct unbecoming a Rocketeer but his exact offense is left to you, the GM. The Rocketeers are a military unit and subject to military law. Conduct unbecoming an officer includes but isn't limited to cowardice in the face of the enemy, dereliction of duty, bringing public shame to the Rocketeers, and acts of cruelty. Take into consideration the Rocketeer values of honor, valor, and fidelity and how the players' Rocketeers view those values when picking Febre's exact crime.

Interlude: The Major's Mission

Major de Treville calls the Rocketeers to her office after she learns of Febre's involvement. The Rocketeers are tasked with rooting out his plot but cautions them. Febre was a deadly blade when he was a Rocketeer and his name so easily coming up makes the Major nervous. She believes it could a feint.

Major de Treville

Major Astrid de Treville is an old soldier. In years gone by she was famous for her temper and was quick to draw her force blade. Many Rocketeers joke that the Major is still banned from more pubs on Gallia than the rest of the company combined. She's seen numerous wars and served under three Gallian monarchs. Her most storied exploit was when she seconded King Henri IX in his famous duel with Duke Karl Freiberger of Ostria. Then-lieutenant de Treville faced a seasoned Heilsterner duelist who seconded the Duke. De Treville struck like lightning the instant the duel began, killing her opponent with a single and fantastic thrust to the heart.

These days she has mellowed considerably and is more measured in her approach. She has earned the respect and admiration of all the Rocketeers and leads by example. Rarely does she need to impose her will upon her troops. It's with a quiet dignity and confidence that she commands the Rocketeers.



Major Astrid de Treville (Major NPC)

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Commander of the Rocketeers*

Trouble: *A Thousand Plots in the Dark*

Other Aspects: *Fastest Fencer in Gallia; Queen's Confidant; Wisdom of Age*

APPROACHES

Careful: Good (+3)

Clever: Fair (+2)

Flashy: Average (+1)

Forceful: Mediocre (+0)

Quick: Great (+4)

Sneaky: Mediocre (+0)

STUNTS

Lightning Fast: Because I am the *Fastest Fencer in Gallia* once per session I can go first in the turn order even if I do not have the highest total.

For the Queen: Because I am the sworn protector of the Gallian crown, while I stand at the Queen's side, I can use my own stress track and consequences to reduce the shift value of a successful attack against her.

To Me, Rocketeers!: Because I lead the Rocketeers, once per session I may spend a fate point to allow every Rocketeer that can hear me to move one zone toward me during my turn.

WORDPLAY

Quick: Gain +1 when determining turn order.

Impenetrable: Increase your Armor value by +1.

Rapier: Invoking your Swordplay aspect for a bonus on an attack grants a +3 bonus instead of +2.

Main Gauche: When you succeed with style on defense against an attack you may deal a 2-shift physical hit with your off hand instead of gaining a boost.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Action: Finding Febre

The investigation into Febre's scheme can be approached from a number of ways. The Rocketeers are trained for this and their various backgrounds could be of use. Underworld contacts, friends in the police and administration, or even knowledge of La Capitale's seedier districts could provide leads for the heroes. The players should be encouraged to describe who their contacts are and how they approach the investigation. Possible leads include the location of Febre's safe house, who he's been talking to, and who he's managed to recruit to his gang. Gathering this sort of information requires a Rocketeer to overcome the conspiracy's Superb (+5) Secrecy.

Febre's safe house is a high rise apartment only a few kilometers from the palace. It has a balcony that looks out at the palace itself and shows telltale signs of being used as a rocket pack platform. The safe house is abandoned but the Rocketeers find a note with the departure time and landing bay at the Starport au Provence. The ship is due to leave in a few moments!

If the Rocketeers find out who Febre has been talking to, they are directed to a local gang leader named Nikka, who can be found near Starport au Provence with her Nasties. The Rocketeers are outnumbered three-to-one.

Nikka and the Nasties don't react kindly to the arrival of the Rocketeers, preferring to attack them with clubs made of pipes and other discarded material. Attempts to reason see the Nasties ganging up on the Rocketeers. Only when beaten does Nikka reveal that Febre is inside, and preparing to leave.

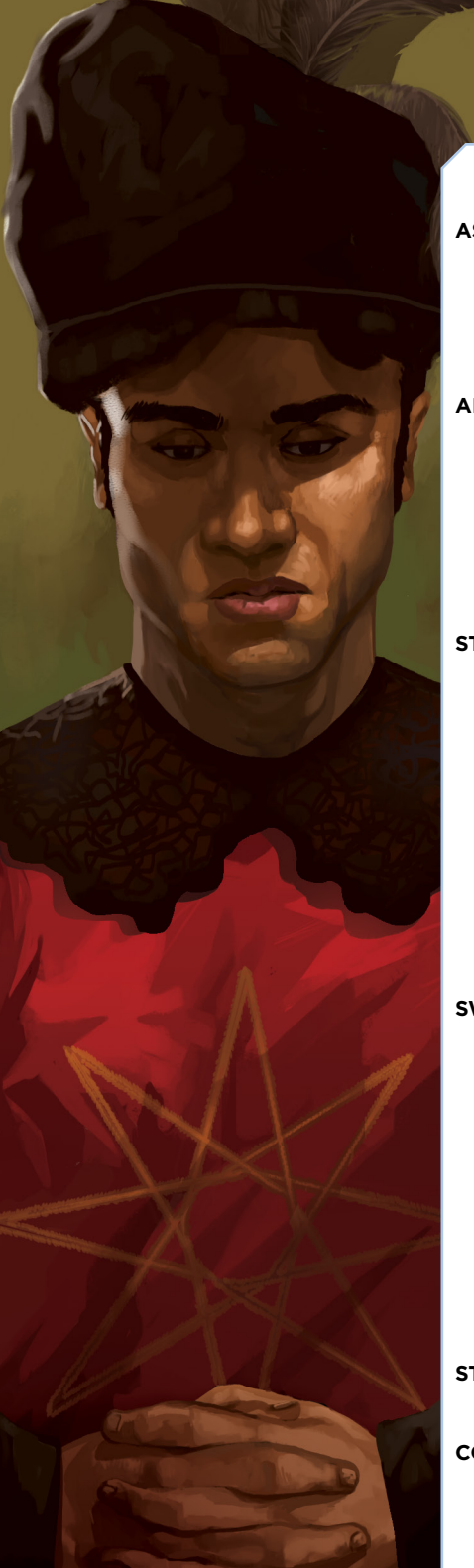
Nikka and her Nasties (Light Mooks)

Street Toughs, Makeshift Clubs

Skilled (+1) at: Bullying, Ganging up

Bad (-1) at: Playing nice, sneaking





Jussac (Major NPC)

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Captain of the Cardinal's Guard*

Trouble: *Failed Rocketeer Cadet*

Other Aspects: *Master of the Arastillan Saber; Veteran Spy; Quick to Anger*

APPROACHES

Careful: Average (+1)

Clever: Fair (+2)

Flashy: Average (+1)

Forceful: Mediocre (0)

Quick: Fair (+2)

Sneaky: Good (+3)

STUNTS

Backstab: Because I prefer to attack from behind, I get a +2 to Sneakily attack when my opponent is focused on something else.

Better Part of Valor: Because I am a coward at heart who always has a way out, once per game session I can automatically escape from a fight, as long as there's a way out.

Arpeggio's Disarm: Because I am a master sabreur, I get a +2 when I Flashily create advantages by disarming my opponent.

SWORDPLAY

Acrobatic: Gain +1 to create an advantage when using obstacles, furniture, or terrain for superior positioning.

Aggressive: Your opponent does not gain a boost when you tie on a defense action.

Saber: When you invoke a situation aspect about your fencing style that you created as an obstacle, increase the opposition by an additional +1.

Empty: Gain +1 to attack when you swing with both hands.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):



Action: Starport Scuffle

When the Rocketeers arrive at Starport au Provence, they are met by Jussac, captain of the cardinal's guard, and a bevy of the duke's men armed with Bainn cutlasses and wearing unadorned armor. They move quickly to block the Rocketeers as Febre tosses a casual salute and boards the Bainn galley. Jussac's men outnumber the Rocketeers two to one and are capable opponents. Their goal is not to kill the Rocketeers but merely to stall them until the ship lifts off and rockets into space. They buy as much time as possible.

Duke's Shadow Blades (Medium Mooks)

Trained Bainn Fencers, Loyal to the Duke

Skilled (+2) at: Fencing, Stalling, Guarding

Bad (-1) at: Chasing, Arguing



Resolution

Jussac is well known to the Rocketeers as the fanatically loyal right hand of the cardinal. His involvement implies Cardinal Rotanev is tied up in the plot. A Rocketeer can overcome the conspiracy's Good (+3) Reach to identify Jussac's fighters as the infamous Arguil Shadow Blades, covert agents for the Duke of Arguil. This uncovers the Alliance aspect of the conspiracy: **Cardinal Rotanev and Duke Arguil** and puts the Rocketeers on the trail of the Duke in the next act.

ACT II: BREAKING THE SHADOWS

Setup

During Act II, the Rocketeers follow Febre to the planet Arguil, one of the major Bann principalities in the Britannica Solaria. There they infiltrate the duke's palace and learn the details of the conspiracy when they overhear the Duke of Arguil discussing plans with Febre and Kriegsprinz Bertrand. They plan to assassinate Queen Marie-Hélène during her welcome speech when Star Pope Regulus IV arrives in fifteen days.

Interlude: Reporting to the Major

The Rocketeers may choose to chase Febre in their own ship immediately, though they may not have a ship or simply choose to report back to Major de Treville. If they do, she orders them to follow Febre and uncover more information about the plot on Arguil. If the Rocketeers do not have a ship of their own, one will be provided for them: a lightly armed, unmarked courier ship designed for speed.

Action: Infiltrating the Palace

To gain the information they seek, the Rocketeers will need to sneak into the duke's palace.

Asking for local help requires overcoming a test against the conspiracy's Superb (+5) Secrecy. Asking questions of the locals runs the risk of discovery by the duke's agents. Rocketeers who wish to avoid detection should attempt to act covertly against the conspiracy's Good (+3) Reach.

If the Rocketeers forgo any local assistance, they may instead surveil the palace and gain entrance on their own. Creating an advantage against the conspiracy's Good (+3) Resources can reveal such an entrance.

Gaining entry by disguise is an option, though it almost assuredly means leaving rocket packs and force blades behind. Doing so is also more difficult, as it goes against the conspiracy's Superb (+5) Secrecy.

Action: Navigating the Palace

Once inside, the Rocketeers must search for the evidence they seek while avoiding the suspicion of the palace residents. It's an ancient palace, so finding a series of secret passages is entirely possible but being careful and sneaky through the corridors is just as likely. The palace is busy and avoiding notice takes some work. The light mooks who act as the palace employees are skilled at vigilance. Use them for active opposition.

Palace Servants (Light Mooks)

Duke's Personal Attendant, On Watch in a Palace of Paranoia

Skilled (+1) at: Vigilance, eavesdropping

Bad (-2) at: Fighting, lying

Interlude: Uncovering the Plans

Successfully sneaking through the palace means the Rocketeers will find themselves in a position to observe the duke and Febre discussing their plans. In just over a fortnight, Star Pope Regulus IV will arrive for a historic visit to Gallia. The queen will give a speech at the welcoming ceremony in which she will reaffirm Gallia's commitment to the Church. Shortly after she will announce that Star Pope Regulus IV has agreed to stay on Gallia for several years to give her direct spiritual guidance.

The plan is to assassinate the queen before she can make her announcement. Her last words will be a promise that Gallia is a pillar of the faith. Febre has already dispatched the assassin to Gallia with instructions. Jussac has prepared a group of agents to assist the assassin. The queen's cousin, Kriegsprinz Bertrand of Schwerberg, has been invited to the historic meeting by Cardinal Rotanev. His presence in a time of tragedy puts him in the forefront of everyone's mind as succession is discussed.

If, however, the Rocketeers are caught during the infiltration, the guards take their force blades and escort the prisoners to the Duke, explaining he personally has foiled *their* plans to assassinate the Queen or even the Pope! In true melodramatic fashion, the Duke will explain his plan to the Rocketeers before ordering them brought to the dungeon to be executed at dawn. Surely the heroes can engineer an escape!

The Rocketeers must hurry if they are to return to Gallia in time to stop the assassin.

Action: Facing Febre

The Rocketeers may decide to attack Febre (see next page) despite being in an enemy stronghold and vastly outnumbered. Should they do so, the duke quickly calls for his guards and the Rocketeers could easily find themselves overwhelmed.

Action: Race to Gallia

Having discovered truly dire news of a plot to kill the queen, the Rocketeers make haste back to Gallia. Escaping the duke's palace and leaving Arguil in their ship is a contest (*Fate Core* page 150). Opposing the players are Febre, if he is still alive, the Duke's guards, and the Duke of Arguil himself. Legs of the race may include escaping the palace, reaching their ship, rocketing through crowded spacelanes for a clear warp lane, or even trying to lose pursuers in an asteroid field.

Resolution

Finding the duke and Febre in the palace reveals the Goal aspect of *Assassinate the Queen and Install Our Papal Puppet* and possibly the Weakness aspect *Working Without the Star Pope's Knowledge*.

Febre (Major NPC)

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Fallen Rocketeer*

Trouble: *Cold and Arrogant*

Other Aspects: *Dancing Blade Fencer; Ultratech Force Blade Rapier; Spymaster for Hire*

APPROACHES

Careful: Average (+1)

Clever: Mediocre (+0)

Flashy: Fair (+2)

Forceful: Average (+1)

Quick: Good (+3)

Sneaky: Fair (+2)

STUNTS

Agents: Because I often fight with guards at my side, I get a +2 when I Quickly attack with henchmen on my side.

Hoverpack: Because I have an ultratech stealth hoverpack, once per game session, I can sneak onto a roof or ship without being noticed.

Duplicitous Nature: Because I need to lie to survive, I get a +2 when I Sneakily defend when I keep secrets.

WORDPLAY:

Flashy: Gain +1 to create an advantage when intimidating an opponent with a demonstration of your style.

Perfect Footwork: When you succeed with style on defense, you may create a situation aspect with a free invocation instead of gaining a boost.

Rapier: Invoking your Swordplay aspect for a bonus on an attack grants a +3 bonus instead of +2.

Main Gauche: When you succeed with style on defense against an attack you may deal a 2-shift physical hit with your off hand instead of gaining a boost.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Ducal Guard (Medium Mooks)

Duke's Loyal Guard, Well Armed

Skilled (+2) at: Fighting, guarding, ganging up

Bad (-1) at: Chasing





Ian Campbell (Major NPC)

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Ambitious Duke of Arguil*

Trouble: *In Queen Elizabeth's Disfavor*

Other Aspects: *Solarian Patriot; Vengeful Temper; Master Schemer*

APPROACHES

Careful: Average (+1)

Clever: Average (+1)

Flashy: Fair (+2)

Forceful: Fair (+2)

Quick: Mediocre (+0)

Sneaky: Good (+3)

STUNTS

Bodyguards: Because I am the Duke of Arguil, once per game session I can call for a group of guards equal to the number of my opponents.

Blood and Thunder: Because I have an aura of command, I get a +2 when I Forcefully create advantages by rallying people to my cause.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

ACT III: IN A RUSH TO SAVE THE QUEEN

Setup

In Act III, the Rocketeers will return to Gallia, search for a hidden assassin, foil the plot, and have a final, climactic showdown with Cardinal Rotanev in the catacombs beneath the palace.

Interlude: Back to Gallia

The Rocketeers arrive on Gallia with just minutes to go before the Queen's speech. They make their way to the La Grande Pavilion where the Star Pope is finishing his speech to dignified applause. As the Queen takes the stage, our heroes must search for and stop the assassin.

Action: Stop the Assassin

Though our heroes may call ahead, not even Major de Treville can stop the ceremony from proceeding. She has set the remaining Rocketeers on watch but there are so few of them that patrolling the crowd in a meaningful way is impossible. Cardinal Rotanev and his guards are on the platform with the queen, Star Pope Regulus IV, and the Simian Guard.

As the Rocketeers arrive, Star Pope Regulus IV is finishing his speech. Queen Marie-Hélène moves to the podium and addresses the gathered Gallians. La Grande Pavilion seats nearly one hundred thousand under its dome.

Finding and stopping Maga the assassin in the throng is another contest, this time between the Rocketeers and Maga. The GM can spend fate points to use the conspiracy's Superb (+5) Secrecy on Maga's behalf.

Maga is found high in the rafters, hanging upside down by one cybernetic leg. She wears a bulky power pack, one too large for easy portability even by an uplifted ape, and is armed with a massive particle rifle.

Stopping Maga the assassin isn't enough, however, as the cardinal and his guards sweep the Queen off to the hidden tunnels. Confronting the cardinal and his retinue beneath the palace, the Rocketeers must secure the Queen's safety.

Maga (Heavy Mook)

Uplifted Ape Assassin, Former Simian Guard

Skilled (+3) at: Sharpshooting, Climbing, Brawling

Bad (-1) at: Hiding, Moving fast



Cardinal Rotanev (Major NPC)

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Ambitious Cardinal of the Church*

Trouble: *Will Kill to be Star Pope*

Other Aspects: *Silver Tongued Devil; Powerful Friends in My Pocket; Natural Born Schemer*

APPROACHES

Careful: Fair (+2)

Forceful: Average (+1)

Clever: Fair (+2)

Quick: Mediocre (+0)

Flashy: Average (+1)

Sneaky: Good (+3)

STUNTS

Save Me: Because I hire guards for a reason, once per game session I can direct all shifts of an attack against me at one of my guards instead.

Trust Me, I'm a Cardinal: Because I hold such a public position in the church, I get a +2 when I Cleverly create an advantage when I use my position as a social shield.

Untouchable: Because I have powerful friends at court, I get a +2 when I Cleverly defend against intimidation.

STRESS

Physical

Mental

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

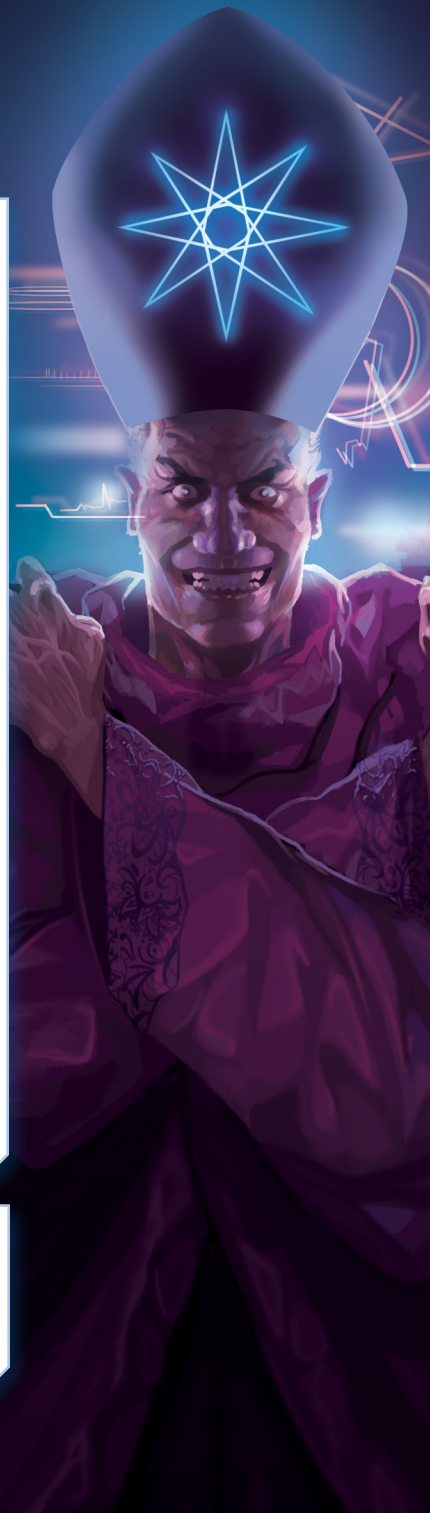
Severe (6):

Cardinal's Guard (Medium Mook)

Deadly Mercenary, Formation Fighter

Skilled (+2) at: Fencing, Ganging up, Taking a hit

Bad (-1) at: Arguing, Guarding



Action: Through the Tunnels

In the commotion that erupts when the Rocketeers struggle with Maga, Star Pope Regulus IV is quickly moved to safety by the simian guard. Cardinal Rotanev and Queen Marie-Hélène are similarly swept away by the cardinal's guards, though hardly to safety. The cardinal leads the group down into the ancient tunnels beneath the palace where he plans to kill her, claiming she was fatally injured in the attempt.

The Rocketeers must find the entrance to the tunnels, catch up with the Cardinal, and rescue the queen. Major de Treville and the rest of the Rocketeers are engaged in crowd control, trying to keep the panicking citizens from rioting.

Rotanev is a pragmatist and tries to worm his way out of a fight by posing as the queen's rescuer. He offers to hand her over to the Rocketeers and congratulates them on a job well done. It is his belief that he can survive to try again another day. The Rocketeers have a choice: do they fight through the cardinal's guard to bring Rotanev to justice—risking the Queen's life in the confusion of a pitched battle—or do they take the Queen and leave the Cardinal to wriggle his way out of justice in the political arena? Jussac (page 32) leads a group of the cardinal's guards equal in number to the Rocketeers should it come to a fight. If blades are drawn, the cardinal quickly grabs Queen Marie-Hélène, holding a blade to her side and threatening to kill her unless the Rocketeers surrender. Plan B for the Cardinal is to kill the Rocketeers and the Queen, spinning a tale of how he was too late to save Her Majesty.

Resolution

With bold action, derring-do, and a good amount of luck, the Rocketeers will have saved the Queen and secured themselves places of honor within the *Compagnie des Rocketeers*. Their adventures aren't over, though. Cardinal Rotanev may still be a threat, depending on how the Rocketeers wrapped up the adventure. Duke Arguil is still out there and very concerned with Gallia's growing strength. The Kriegsprinzen of the Holy Roman Stellar Empire are always a threat to Gallia. While Star Pope Regulus IV wasn't involved in the plot to kill the queen, how corrupt is the rest of the Church? Find out more in the continuing adventures of

3 THE ROCKETEERS