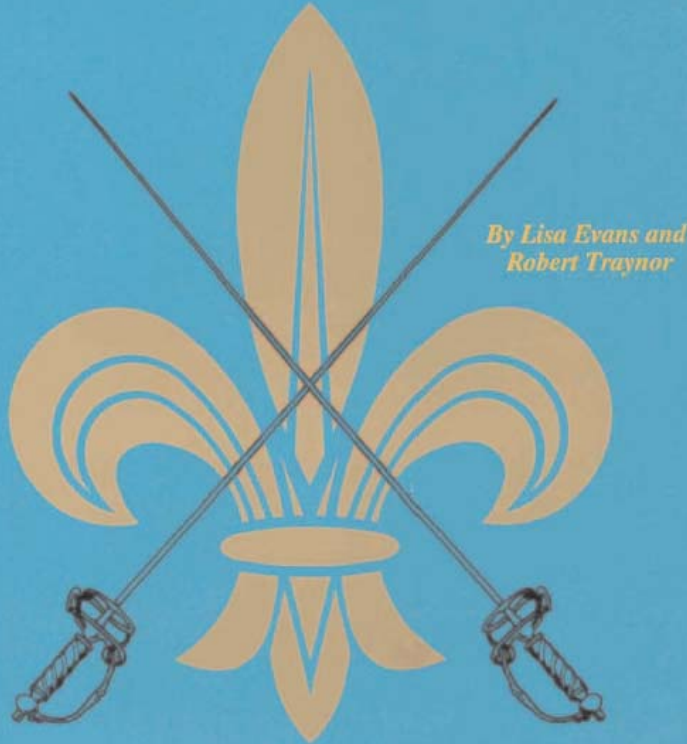


GURPS®

GURPS® SCARLET PIMPERNEL

Swashbuckling Adventure in Revolutionary France



*By Lisa Evans and
Robert Traynor*

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

CHEAT THE GUILLOTINE

*“We seek him here, we seek him there
Those Frenchies seek him everywhere.
Is he in Heaven? Is he in Hell?
That demmed elusive Pimpernel!”*

So runs the verse about the darling of Regency London . . . the Scarlet Pimpernel, elusive rescuer of the victims of the French Revolution. The streets in Paris are awash in blood as Robespierre orders hundreds to the guillotine, yet this unknown Englishman and his brave band continue to spirit the innocent to safety in England.

Scarlet Pimpernel is set in France during the darkest days of the Reign of Terror. Join the Pimpernel and his gallant crew as they outwit the Committee of Public Safety and its agent Chauvelin again and again. Aristocrats, clergy, shopgirls, even the Dauphin himself – no one is beyond the Pimpernel’s aid.

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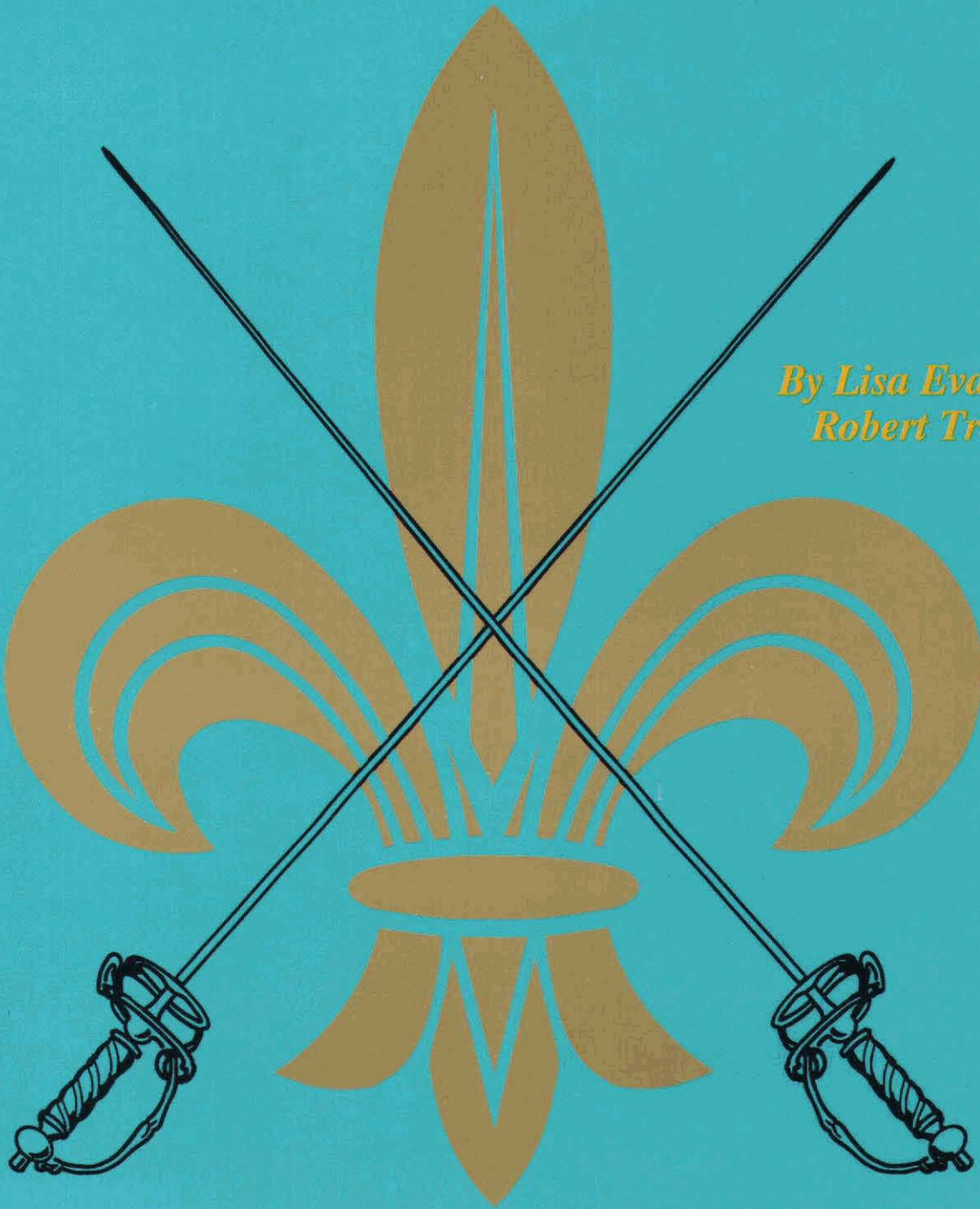
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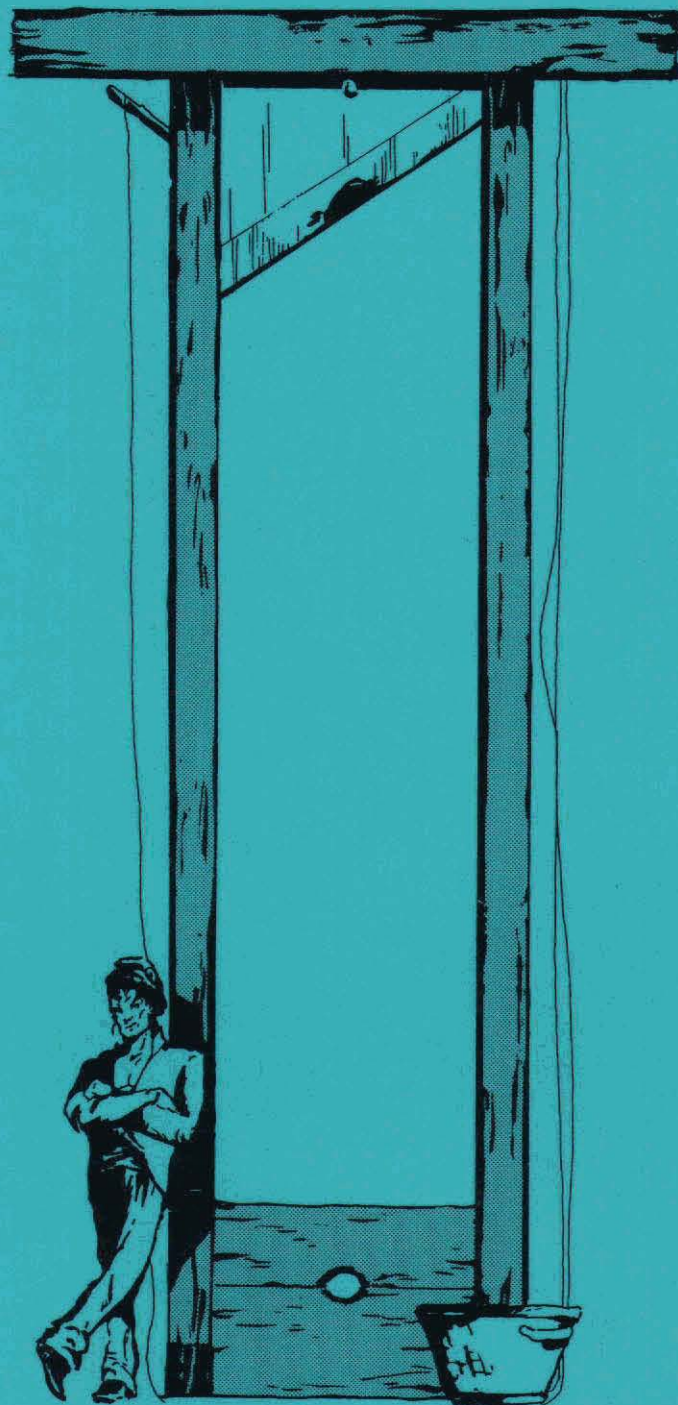
Who is this Scarlet Pimpernel? Why does he risk life and honor in a land not his own? And who is brave enough to forsake the Prince Regent’s glittering court to join the Pimpernel under the very shadow of Madame la Guillotine?

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This book includes a complete chronology of the French Revolution, game statistics for the Pimpernel and his major lieutenants, maps of Paris and France in the 1790s, and four complete adventures, plus sidebars on everything from fashion to politics . . . everything you need for a swashbuckling campaign in the days when France turned upside down.

This book is designed for use with the *GURPS Basic Set*, but can be used as a sourcebook for any roleplaying game. *GURPS Swashbucklers* is highly recommended, but not required.

Written by Lisa Evans and Robert Traynor
Edited by Steve Jackson
Based on *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and its sequels,
by Baroness de Orczy
Cover graphics by Carl Anderson
Illustrated by Ruth Thompson



STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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GURPS® SCARLET PIMPERNEL

Swashbuckling Adventure in Revolutionary France

By Lisa Evans and Bob Traynor

Edited by Steve Jackson

Illustrated by Ruth Thompson

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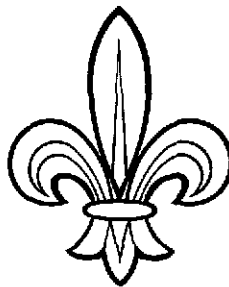
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INTRODUCTION

Scarlet Pimpernel n. 1: a common pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*) having scarlet, white or purplish flowers that close in cloudy weather 2: a person who rescues others from mortal danger by smuggling them across a border.

— Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

It is not often that a wildflower becomes a synonym for courage and daring. It is even rarer for a fictional hero, however brave and swashbuckling, to enter the dictionary. Yet this is exactly what has happened with Baroness Orczy's greatest literary creation: Sir Percy Blakeney, alias the Scarlet Pimpernel, the gallant adventurer who devotes his life to rescuing innocents from the Reign of Terror.



About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly magazine includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us — but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

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Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. Similarly, any reference beginning with an H refers to *GURPS Horror*.

The League of the Scarlet Pimpernel

Baroness Orczy

Baroness Emmuska Orczy was born in Hungary in 1865 and emigrated to England as a teenager. Trained as an artist, she began writing in her adopted language in the 1890s, and soon made a name for herself with detective stories about the Old Man in the Corner, the first "armchair detective."

In 1905 she wrote the play of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* with her husband, Montague Barstow. The play and accompanying novel were an instant success, and for the next 40 years the Baroness wrote a succession of popular historical novels, most of them centered around the Pimpernel and his family. Although much of her work is no longer available, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* has never been out of print, and has become a byword for selfless heroism.



The Scarlet Pimpernel

"The Scarlet Pimpernel . . . is the name of a humble English wayside flower; but it is also the name chosen to hide the identity of the best and bravest man in all the world, so that he may better succeed in accomplishing the noble task he has set himself to do."

— *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, by Baroness Emmuska Orczy

Anagallis arvensis is a small wildflower, growing on vines by roadsides and on the edges of cornfields. Its flowers, which appear during daytime from May through August, are made up of five red petals, with a purple dot in the center. It is found throughout the world — including the United States — in temperate climates. The flower is odorless, and has a bitter taste. While the concentrated extract of the plant is a strong narcotic and poison, the flower has a widespread reputation as a medicinal plant.

Aside from that, Sir Percy Blakeney — the Pimpernel himself — uses the flower as his calling card. Every rescue of an aristocrat from the guillotine is followed by a mocking message sent to the authorities, bearing the imprint of the flower — Blakeney has a seal ring for the purpose. His messages to other league members invariably bear the sigil of the flower.

The French Revolution of 1789 was the greatest upheaval Europe had seen since the Reformation. The old order of the Three Estates was displaced by a republic modeled roughly on the United States, which quickly deteriorated into a police state such as the world had never before seen. The dreaded Law of the Suspect allowed anyone to denounce anyone else for offenses as trivial as serving bad soup or as serious as treason, and allowed the accused to be tried and sentenced without evidence or a defense. Maximilian Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety were the virtual dictators of France, and no one was safe from denunciation. Shopkeepers and nuns were executed beside aristocrats and traitors, and today's political hero could easily be tomorrow's scapegoat. Thousands of desperate people tried to flee to England or the Netherlands, but it was almost impossible to do so without being arrested. France, once the cultural center of Europe and the most elegant nation in the West, had become a land at war with itself.

The League of the Scarlet Pimpernel was created in response to the carnage of the Terror. A group of foppish young Englishmen came together in 1792, vowing to rescue the unjustly accused from the guillotine. They took their name from a humble English wildflower, and soon became a major irritant to the ruling Jacobin party. Hundreds of aristocrats were whisked away to safety in England, leaving behind estates and servants and a slip of paper imprinted with a five-petalled red flower — the little scarlet pimpernel, harmless enough in its native land, but guaranteed to drive Robespierre to distraction when transplanted to France . . .

The Adventure Begins!

The Scarlet Pimpernel, leader of the gallant band which bears his name, is always on the lookout for new recruits, fearless adventurers to aid him in his work. It is a rare rescue that can be accomplished without teamwork, and there are plenty of victims to be saved. Courage, brains, a cool head and (of course) exquisite manners are the only requirements for membership. Can any English gentlemen refuse such a call? Join the League in its noble work, and remember that quick thinking can be just as useful as swordplay . . . and so much more sporting!

About the Authors

Lisa Evans wrote her first story at the age of six and has never stopped. She holds an A.B. in medieval English from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, where she studied with Richard Wilbur and Jane Yolen and founded the college science fiction club. Over the years she has done everything from costuming mystery plays to singing in Christmas festivals to running a Unitarian-Universalist church; current projects include a novel and several quilts. She lives in Springfield, Massachusetts, with her husband, two cats, and entirely too much fabric. This is her first project for Steve Jackson Games.

Bob Traynor is a bank representative and long-standing gamer whose covert reason for writing is to finance Springfield Indians hockey season tickets. He holds a B.S. degree from the University of Massachusetts, and can't help thinking that there's some moral justice there. A lifelong resident of Massachusetts, he has written for Gamelords, Iron Crown, and Mayfair Games. His previous book for Steve Jackson Games was *Conan and the Queen of the Black Coast*.

Character Types

The original League of the Scarlet Pimpernel consisted of 20 young English aristocrats who were revolted by the excesses of the French Revolution and vowed to rescue as many innocent victims from the guillotine as they could. Aristocrats may still be the characters of choice — few middle or lower-class folk would have the necessary skills or wealth to carry off such a double life. However, there is still room for variety!

All League members and allies *must* take the following advantages and disadvantages:



Unusual Background (skills taught by the League): 10 points.

League members have access to a wide range of skills not normally found amongst the aristocracy — Stealth, Acting, Disguise, Sleight of Hand, Streetwise, Holdout, and Pickpocket among others. Gamemasters may waive the Unusual Background requirement, since it is vital that virtually all characters have these skills.

Patron (The Scarlet Pimpernel, appears on a 9 or less): 15 points

Sense of Duty (to the League): -10 points

Enemy (Committee of Public Safety): -20 points

The listed disadvantages do not count against the permitted total of 40 character points.

Certain other advantages are highly recommended, but not required: Luck, Intuition, Combat Reflexes, and Toughness are all invaluable. Disadvantages that are in character include Code of Honor, Fanaticism, and Impulsiveness. Very useful skills include Area Knowledge (Paris), Area Knowledge (France), Brawling, Fast-Talk, and French.

Since the *Pimpernel* style of play is likely to be cinematic, the GM may allow characters built on 125 or 150 points instead of the usual 100, especially since most PCs will need to put a number of points into high Status . . . which is all very well in England, but won't help them dodge the Paris sans-culottes!

Below are listed some of the types from which *League of the Scarlet Pimpernel* characters can be drawn.

English Aristocrats

Most upper-class Englishmen were raised by French governesses, educated by French tutors, and spent time in France on the traditional "Grand Tour" of Europe after finishing their studies at university — often pausing long enough to acquire a French mistress or wife.

Consequently, the average British aristocrat will speak excellent French, be thoroughly familiar with French cuisine and habits, and will know at least one section of France as if it were his home. However, aristocratic characters must be constantly on guard against speaking English, giving orders to servants or commoners, showing any interest in English politics, or being even slightly sympathetic to an impoverished aristo or priest. The typical English member of the League will regard the whole business as a wonderful game of outwitting those stupid Republicans — indeed, the young dandies who joined the League were quite apolitical. Compassion for innocent victims would be the impetus for joining Blakeney and his gang, but the sport of tweaking Robespierre's nose would add to the fun. Non-English members and rescues regard this lack of concern for the perils of espionage peculiar at best.

Required Advantages: Status 2 (minimum), Wealth, Reputation (member of the Prince of Wales' social circle).

Required Disadvantage: Gentlemen's Code of Honor.

Required Skills: Area Knowledge (London), French, Black Powder Weapons, Fencing, Riding, Brawling, Savoir-Faire.

Suggested Skills: Carousing, Gambling, Dancing.

Exotics

Non-European characters will be extremely rare, but possible. A foreign officer just returned from the Colonies might bring an Indian or black servant with him. The illegitimate child of a colonial planter might have non-European blood. Some Haitians were resident in France, and of course the peoples of the world gathered in Marseilles.

Such a person would be so notorious as to make disguise very difficult; one of the few disguises possible would be that of a Gypsy, and Gypsies were not welcome in most French cities. However, a visitor from the West Indies or Asia might know of exotic drugs or weapons, and have skills that would be otherwise unavailable. GMs should be reasonable about permissible skills and advantages, given the inherent difficulties. If the Unusual Background is such that the character would have learned the various League restricted skills, the character need not pay for Unusual Background twice.

Required Advantage: Unusual Background (non-European).

Required Disadvantages: Reputation (well-known), Social Stigma.

Suggested Disadvantages: Illiteracy, Primitive.

Skills: Any non-European weapon or skill, at the GM's discretion.

Emigrés

Thousands of Frenchmen fled to England, Austria and the Low Countries after the Revolution. Aristocrats, politicians whose party had fallen from power, Freemasons, soldiers, nuns — virtually anyone who disagreed with the Republican government would find life across the border much more congenial. Most of the aristocrats found work as milliners, restaurant owners, tailors and the like, but many actively worked to overthrow

Sir Percy Blakeney, Baronet, the Scarlet Pimpernel*

Age 29, blue-eyed blond, powerful physique. 6'3", 200 lbs.
ST 14, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 13.

Basic Speed 6.5, Move 8.

Advantages: Alertness +1, Status 3, Filthy Rich, Extraordinary Luck, Charisma +3, Appearance (Attractive), Literacy, Strong Will +2, Intuition, Reputation +2 (leading socialite, by English nobility and gentry, 12-).

Disadvantages: Fanaticism, Gentlemen's Code of Honor, Duty (the League, 15-), Odious Personal Habit (Buffoonery), Enemy (Chauvelin, appears 12-), Compulsive Behavior (Always Well Dressed).

Quirks: Intensely loyal; Snuff user; Loves Marguerite; Very proud; Thrill-seeker.

Skills: Brawling-17, Area Knowledge (Paris)-15, Area Knowledge (France)-15, Disguise-21/18**, Acting-18, Fencing-16, Seamanship-14, English-14, French-15, Gambling-13, Running-12, Singing-13, Area Knowledge (London)-14, Carousing-13, Streetwise-15, Savoir-Faire-18, Leadership-15, Tactics-15, Psychology-15, Riding-13, Driving-14, Black Powder Weapons-14, Poetry-12, Stealth-14, Administration-15, Shadowing-14, Bard-15, Musical Instrument (Fiddle)-11.

** Skill reduced when disguising himself due to height.

Sir Percy Blakeney is the scion of a distinguished English family. To fashionable London, he is the most perfectly dressed of fops, an essential element for a successful party, the leader of a coterie of inane young men who copy his dress and mannerisms to the delight of their peers and disgust of their elders. Whatever Sir Percy and his wife Marguerite wear to the opera one night will appear on every slave to fashion within a week, and ridiculous doggerel originating on his lips will be popular slang in days.

Few know that his foppish ways and amiable stupidity are a cover for the Scarlet Pimpernel. Disgusted by the carnage in France, Sir Percy inspired 19 of his friends to join him in founding the League and dedicated himself to rescuing victims of the Revolution. Since secrecy is essential not only to the League's continued success but to its members' continued survival, virtually every member has assumed the role of brainless dandy; after all, who would suspect "that idiot Blakeney" and his followers of having the intelligence and nerve to plan the successful rescue of entire families from the vengeance of the Revolution? Among his foes, only Chauvelin and a few cronies know the Pimpernel's identity, and they keep silent in the hope of nabbing Sir Percy themselves.

This cover has its drawbacks. Sir Percy's own wife had no idea of his double life for nearly a year, and his irritatingly frivolous approach to everything produced an estrangement that

nearly proved permanent. Eventually the couple reconciled, but Blakeney nearly ruined his own happiness while assuring that of countless others.

On missions, Sir Percy acts with consummate verve and planning. He insists on the painstaking coverage of every contingency; the key to this is constant misdirection. However, he seldom hesitates to trust to his luck and intuition in seizing any chance needed to succeed. Blakeney is an astute student of humanity, and seldom errs in his judgment of character.



Marguerite, Lady Blakeney*

Age 25. Extraordinarily beautiful blue-eyed redhead, 5'9", 130 lbs.

ST 10, DX 11, IQ 15, HT 11.

Basic Speed 5.5, Move 5.

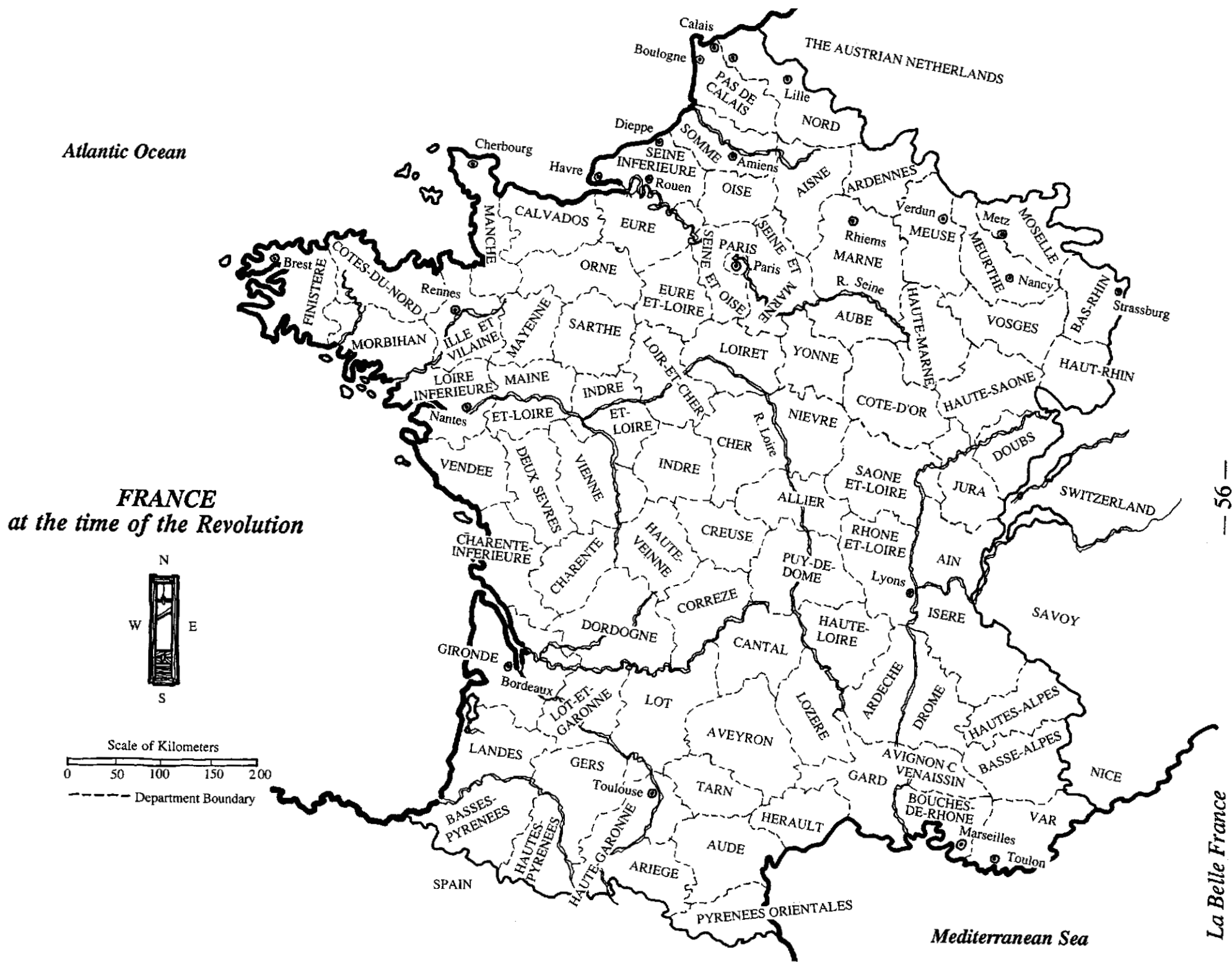
Advantages: Very Beautiful, Filthy Rich, Status 2, Charisma +2, Literacy, Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages: Impulsive, Sense of Duty (her family), Social Stigma, Honesty, Reputation -2 (as Republican sympathizer, French emigrés, 12-)

Quirks: In love with Percy; Devoted to her brother Armand; Sarcastic wit; Generous; Fatalistic.

Skills: Bard-15, Performance-20, Acting-17 (default), Area Knowledge (Paris)-15, Area Knowledge (London)-15, English-14, French-15, Carousing-12, Literature-15, History-15, Riding-11, Dancing-13, Disguise-13, Stealth-11, Savoir-Faire-15, Philosophy-15, Politics-12.

Marguerite St. Just was one of the most prominent actresses in Paris during the early days of the Revolution, and used her position as leading lady of the Comedie-Francaise to run a salon frequented by Moderates and Girondists. To the shock of friend and enemy alike, "the cleverest woman in Europe" eloped with what many considered the stupidest man in England, Sir Percy



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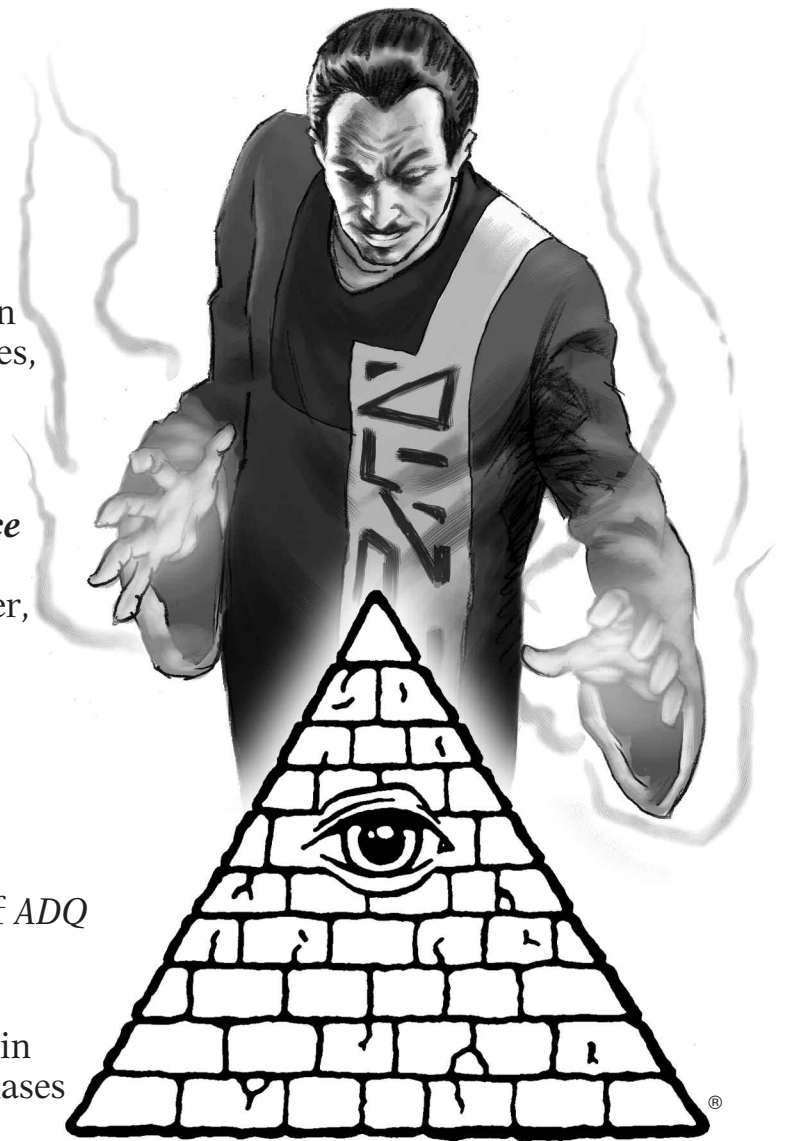
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