

That would be enough

This has been issue 243 of *To Win Just Once*, published 12th April 2024. It incorporates *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*, a game of *En Garde!*. Issues are published ten times a year, roughly every five weeks. © Paul Evans 2024

Deadlines

Orders for *Railway Rivals* and *Star Trader* to Mike by Friday 26th April 2024.

Orders for *LPBS*, Trophy Hunter entries and any other contributions to Pevans by 3rd May 2024.

(Next deadlines: 31st May/7th June, 5th/12th July, 9th/16th August)

Waiting lists

En Garde! new players are always welcome in *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*. You will need the rules to *En Garde!* in order to play: www.engarde.co.uk

Railway Rivals – Gerald Udowiczenko is on the list for a new four-player game: “Only three more needed for a game of *Railway Rivals!*”. (Working map and rules provided).

Star Trader – There’s room for one more player in the current game and the list is open for the next one. (Rules provided)

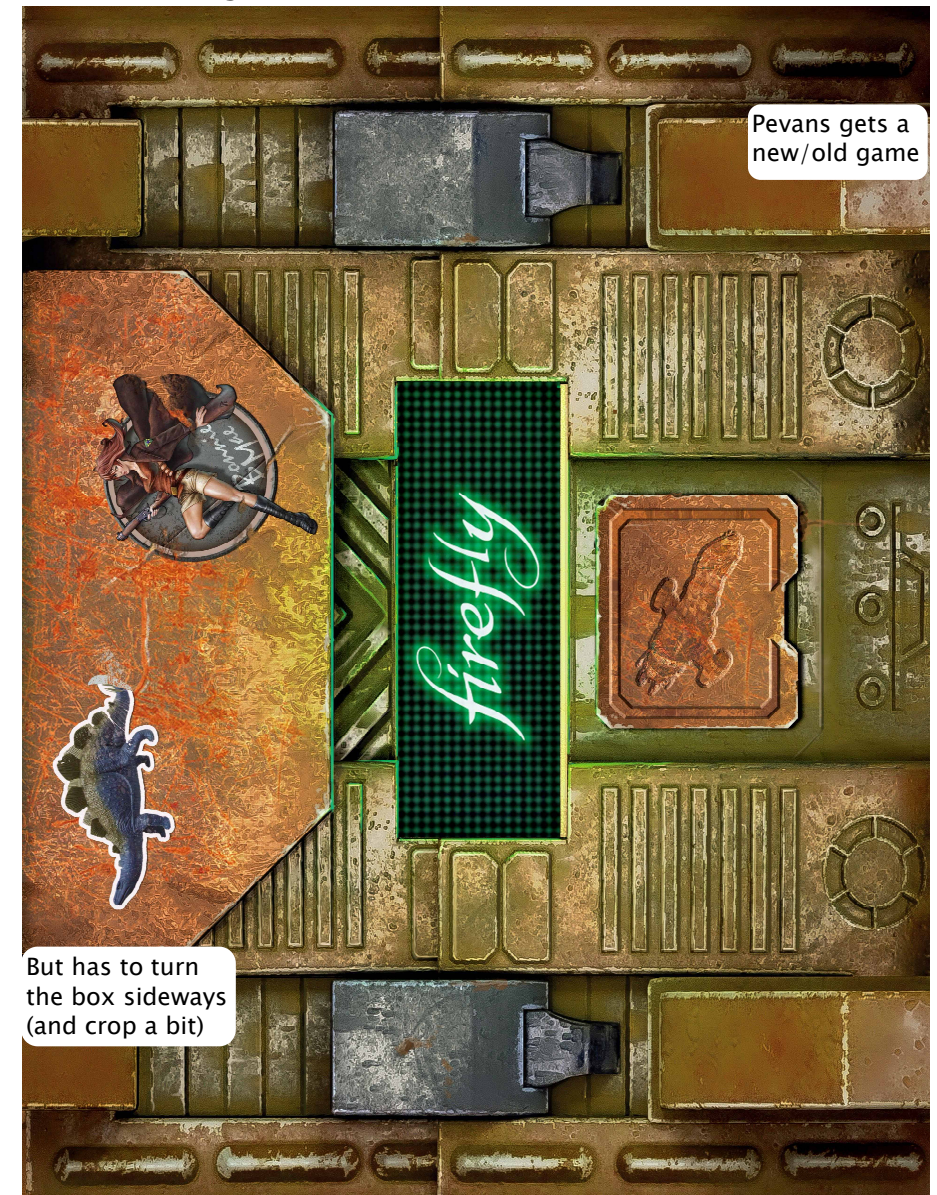
Credits

To Win Just Once issue 243 was written and edited by Pevans. The *LPBS* masthead (page 17) is by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, as are the drawings on pages 15, 24, 30, 32, 33 and 39. The pictures on pages 21 and 29 are by Tim Wiseman, those on pages 22 and 28 by Bryan Lea and Nik Luker drew the one on page 31. Game and book artwork is courtesy of the publisher. Pevans took the photos, except where noted, and played with Photoshop.

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To Win Just Once

(incorporating *Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses*)



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ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank,	Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player	
HJ	Hugh Jeneaux	11	24	Poor	Major	ALC	6	Hunt	3	Bruno	Giordan	
FXC	Frank X Change	11	+ 63	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	KM	6	Frances	4	Nigel	Monaghan	
TTT	Tiny Thierry Toothpick	10	+ 47	Comfy	Captain	RFG/LtGen's Aide (Fntr	5	Sue	1	Jason	Fazackarley	
YS	Yve Stanbul	10	+ 43	OK	Captain	QOC/LtGen's Aide (Cav	5	Sheila	4	Pam	Udowiczzenko	
MCC	Michael Chevalier-Cavallier	9	+ 35	OK	Lt.Colonel	DG	4		4	Mark	Cowper	
SE	Stephane Etrange	9	+ 28	OK	Lt.Colonel	CPC/Hvy Brigade Maj.	3	Thomasina	F&P	4	Neil	Packer
CA	Come Asiouar	8	+ 57	OK	Captain	QOC	3		F&P	4	Jacob	Andersson
BN	Beau Nidle	7	+ 35	OK	Major	CPC/CPC Regt. Adjnt.	2		F&P	3	Paul	Murphy
JPLM	Jean-Paul LeMon	6	- 1	OK	Captain	DG	4		F&P	2	Terry	Crook
BLC	Botte Le Chimiste	6	+ 56	Poor	Major	GDM/Drgn Brigade Maj.	4		F&P	4	Tym	Norris
TPN	Thibault Pinot-Noir	6	+ 31	Poor	Captain	CPC	5	Angelina	RP	3	Tim	Rattray
HF	Hugo Furst	6	+ 31	Comfy			5		F&P	2	Graeme	Morris
JdA	Jean d'Aubergine	6	+ 29	OK	Colonel	4A	3	Freda	F&P	3	Paul	Robbins
GdA	Grenville d'Arkrrite	5	+ 51	Poor	Captain	GDM	4		F&P	5	Gerry	Sutcliffe
EIF	Elroi le Flingue	5	+ 49	OK	Captain	GDM/D/GDM Regt. Adjnt.	6	Violet	RP	4	Daniel	Racke
TB	Thierry Boule	5	+ 34	OK	Subaltern	CPC	4	Belle	RP	6	John	Cooke
AA	Armand Alsace	5	+ 20	OK	Lt.Colonel	53F	8		RP	4	Sebastian	Emde
PPuf	Percival Puffington	4	+ 16	Comfy	Captain	PM	4	Viv	RP	5	Tony	Taylor
GdBm	Gaston de Bourm	4	+ 12	Poor	Captain	Gscn	3		RP	5	Ray	Vahey
OLS	Octo Lucretius Souris	3	- 0	Poor			5		RP	5	Olaf	Schmidt
ID	Ian Dediette	3	6	Poor			2		RP	2	Nik	Luker
JD	Jon Dichateme	2	3	Poor	Subaltern	4A	6			1	Steven	Malecek

An F under SPs means that the character was at the Front, RIP that he died. Ret that he retired.

+ against SL means it went up this month, - means it went down.

Cash: Poor = <500, OK = 500-1500, Comfy = 1500-5000, Withy = 5000-10000, Rich = 10000-25000, Flthy = 25000+

Last seen is the lady the character was last seen with in public.

EC is Endurance Class: 1 = <60, 2 = 60-90, 3 = 91-120, 4 = 121-159, 5 = 160-200, 6 = 201+

The Greasy Pole

ID	Name	SL	SPs	Cash	Rank	Regiment/Appointment	MA	Last seen	Club	EC	Player
BeV	Count Ben e'Volence	24-	3	Comfy	B.Bdr-Gen	CPC/Gds War Minister	11		Flr	3	Ash Casey
GdB	Count Greg de Bécqueur	24	64	Rich	B.Lt-General/Div	Commandr	13	Bette	Flr	5	Anthony Gilbert
BRJS	Count Beau Reese Jean Seine	24	48	Fithy	B.Bdr-General	RFG/State Min.	13	Chris	Flr	4	Bill Hay
JdG	Count Jacques de Gain	24	33	Fithy	General/Fld Army	Commndr	24			6	Ben Brown
PC	Count Pierre Cardigan	24	33	Withy			10	Justine	Flr	6	Matt Shepherd
JJ	Count Jean Jeanie	23	61	Fithy	General		32	Jacky	Flr	4	Andrew Kendall
CdP	Marquis Camille de Polignac	23+	79	Withy	Lt.Colonel RFG/FMshl's Aide		4	Morgane	Flr	4	James McReynolds
TC	Count Terence Cuckpowder	22	63	Withy	B.Lt-General/City Mil.	Gov	7	Kathy	Flr	6	Mike Dommert
BdLS	Count Bernard de Lur-Saluces	22	57	Fithy	Lt-General		19		Flr	3	Rob Pinkerton
RS	Marquis Rick Shaw	20+	79	Withy	General/Chancellor		2	Therèse	Flr	6	Charles Burrows
HDS	Earl Henri DuShite	20+	72	Rich	B.Bdr-General	RM/1 F Brigadier	15		Flr	4	Dave Marsden
ZUT	Baron Zavier Ulric Turenne	19	38	Comfy	Lt-General/2nd Div	Commandr	4	Laura	Flr	1	Bob Blanchett
JIT	Viscount Justin Thyme	19+	58	Rich	B.Bdr-General	QOC	16	Guinevere	Flr	2	Gerald Udowiczenko
LR	Baron Louis Renault	17	35	Rich	Lt-General/Cav Div	Commandr	3	Maggie	Both	4	Roy Bleasdale
CdN	Sir Claude de Nord	17+	56	Withy	B.Bdr-General	KM/CPS	3	Madelaine	Flr	4	Andrew Larder
NM	Sir Neville Moore	15	35	Withy	Captain RFG/C.	Prnce Aide	1	Vera	Hunt	2	Cameron Wood
GM	Sir Gaz Moutarde	15	Ret								Mike Clibborn-Dyer
JH	Sir Jacques Hatt	15+	49	Comfy	B.General		4	Cath	Both	3	Joel Halpern
LSD	Sir Louis Severin Descartes	14+	56	Rich	B.Bdr-Gen	GDMD/Fld Army QM Gen.	4		Both	1	Chris Schotmann
ZvT	Sir Zeold von Tu	14+	44	Withy	B.Bdr-General	CG/Gds Brigadier	7		Both	3	Tim Macaire
MdG	Martin de Garnache	14+	42	Comfy	Major RFG		3	Fifi	Both	4	Bill Howell
AiCh	Baron Alvin Charles	13+	59	Comfy	Lt.Colonel	GDMD	11		F&P	2	Graeme Wilson
FS	Baron Felipe Savant	13+	53	Comfy	Captain RFG		5	Pet	Both	4	Brick Amundsen
HWB	Hector William Boone	13+	44	Comfy	Major RFG		5		Hunt	5	Paul Wilson
BS	Marquis Balzac Slapdash	12	F	Withy			19		Hunt	5	Matthew Wale
TdLL	Thomas de la Lune	11	35	OK	Bdr-General		4	Katy	Hunt	5	Peter Card
LJR	Louis Joseph Reignaux	11	34	Poor	Lt.Colonel	CG	4		Hunt	4	Peter Farrell

Chatter

Spring is well under way now. The magnolia and blossom are beginning to fade, most of the trees have pale green leaves sprouting and the bluebells are appearing. However, Ickenham Marsh remains suitably marshy – though it can be more pond-like immediately after the rain.

A good flow in the River (!) Pinn meant some fast Pooh sticks. This time thinner stick out-paced thicker stick under the bridge by several lengths and then disappeared off round the bend. It was all too much for thicker stick, which drifted into the bank and stayed there.

Next week is the Gathering of Friends, which I'm attending after a five-year absence. Expect to hear about any new games I played in next issue.

A FFRPG Murder Mystery

Long-term LPBS player Neil Packer (currently Stephane Etrange) and some friends have “dusted off the murder mysteries we used to run ... updated them for the 21st century and put in a set of referee's notes and guidelines.” They've launched the result on Gamefound (gamefound.com) with “some phenomenal artwork” as *Halloween Night* – “A New Experience in Murder Mystery”.

It looks to me like a role-playing approach to Murder Mystery, so there's a lot more going on than simply finding whodunnit. At time of writing, they're just over a third of the way to the funding needed, so take a look (just search for Halloween on the website) and see what you think.

Online stats

Last issue (242) hit the streets (so to speak) on 7th March and the PDFs were downloaded 160 times in the rest of the month. TWJO 241 attracted 29 downloads in March (must have been a boring issue) to make 177 in two months. The PDFs of issue 240 were downloaded just 15 times in March for a total since publication of 242.

Letters

Tim Macaire notes that

Spring at last - or is it, as they say about Canada, nine months of winter and three months of road repair?

I was once told by a Swede (in Stockholm): “Sweden has two seasons – Winter and August.” Palpably untrue as it was definitely Spring-like at the time. Mind you, it was June.

Eddy Richard chips in with his games from 2023.

Interesting to see your list of most played games. Mine were Race for the Galaxy with 31 plays (all 2 player, we know it so well we can play a game in 10 mins if we fancy something quick before bed), Azul (19), Ark Nova (16), Obsession (13), Upwords (13) – all with my parents, it's the only game they play (except Azul when I visit them!), Cat Lady (10). About 100 different games played over the year, many of them just once. Either because they weren't very good, they belong to someone else, or because there just isn't enough time to play everything I want to play.

Obsession feels terribly thematic, doesn't it, though I'm not sure that using an American heiress just for a heap of cash and then dumping her unceremoniously is quite the honourable thing to do! I recently acquired the Upstairs, Downstairs expansion which makes it more interesting and more flexible.

I'm in two minds about *Upstairs, Downstairs*. The extra servants give you (well, me) a lot more to think about which slows things down. However, they do mitigate against some of the luck in the game.

Jonathan Palfrey is amazed.

I'm amazed that you've never played Chinese Chequers – a game that (Wikipedia tells me) was invented in Germany in 1892 and is not at all Chinese. I don't remember when I first encountered it; probably in childhood. It's been around in my life as long as I remember, anyway.

But not in mine – though I have heard of it, of course.

Once more into the Black, dear friends

Pevans upgrades *Firefly*

The last couple of months has seen a fair few new games arrive. But the most anticipated of these was *Firefly: The Game – 10th Anniversary Collector's Edition*. That's the giant box on the cover. Just to be clear, it's 57 x 35 x 17 cms. About four times the volume of my venerable UK edition box (40 x 26.5 x 8 cms, if you must know). And what's inside?



Femmes Fatales

No	Name	SL	Attr	Lover
66	Morgane Le Fay	24	B	CdP
67	Justine Caisse	22	I	PC
65	Therèse Le Vert	21	B/W	RS
7	Chris Pacquette	19		BRJS
61	Bette Noire	19	I/W	GdB
64	Edna Bucquette	18	W	
3	Kathy Pacific	17	B	TC
54	Madelaine de Proust	17		CdN
35	Katy Did	16	I	TdLL
42	Maggie Nifisent	16	B	LR
55	Jacky Tinne	16		JJ
52	Guinevere d'Arthur	15	B/W	JiT
10	Frances Forrin	14	B	FXC
48	Fifi	14	B/W	MdG
62	Alison Wunderlandt	14		
11	Laura de Land	13		ZUT
26	Ella Fant	13	B	
27	Lucy Fur	13	B	
45	Cath de Thousands	13		JH
8	Lotte Bottle	12	B	
17	Henrietta Carrotte	12	I/W	
28	Vera Cruz	12		NM
31	Bess Ottede	12	I/W	
1	Sue Briquet	11	B	TTT
4	Anne Tique	11	W	
23	Agnes Sorel	11	I/W	
40	Sheila Kiwi	11		YS
63	Carole Singeurs	11		
20	Emma Roides	10	I	
38	Pet Ulante	10	W	FS
43	Di Lemmere	10	I	
53	Angelina de Griz	10	B	TPN
6	Viv Ayschus	9		PPuf
59	May Banquot l'Idée	9		
19	Jenny Russe	8	W	
32	Sal Munella	8	W	
47	Eve Ningalle	8	I/W	
34	Freda de Ath	7	W	JdA
39	Thomasina Tancenjin	7	I	SE
5	Belle Epoque	6	B/I	TB
24	Violet Bott	6	I/W	EIF
25	Lois de Lô	5	B	

Mistresses in Paris. Attr(IBUTES): B= Beautiful, I=Influential, W=Wealthy. Lover only if seen together in public this month.

Regiments

This table shows the ten senior positions in the 17 regiments by rank. Entries are Character abbreviations, N (+MA) for NPCs, blank for vacant. * shows the regiment adjutant; + indicates the reserve position of a character assigned elsewhere due to their appointment or brevet rank.

Col	LCol	Maj 1	Maj 2	Capt 1	Capt 2	Capt 3	Capt 4	Capt 5	Capt 6
RFG	CG	CC	KM	DG	OO	ALC	CPC	RM	CDMD
BrJS	ZVT+	FXC	GdN	MCC	JIT	OC	BeV	HDS+	LSD
CDP	LJR	MdG	N4	N6	N1+	HJ	SE+	BN	AlCh
MdG	N6	N4	N4	N5	N4	N5	N3	N2	BLC+
NM	N4	N4	N5	N4	N4	N5	N4	N3	N4
FS	N5	N2	N6	N4	CA	N5	N4	N1	GdA
TTT	N3	N2	N4	N4	YS	N4	N4	N3	N4
N2	N3*	N3*	N6*	N6*	N3*	TPN	N3*	N4*	N4*
N2*	N2*	N2*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N3*	N3*	N3*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N4*	N4*	N4*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N5*	N5*	N5*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N6*	N6*	N6*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N7*	N7*	N7*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N8*	N8*	N8*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N9*	N9*	N9*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N10*	N10*	N10*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N11*	N11*	N11*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N12*	N12*	N12*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N13*	N13*	N13*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N14*	N14*	N14*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N15*	N15*	N15*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N16*	N16*	N16*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*
N17*	N17*	N17*	N6*	N6*	N3*	N3*	N4*	N4*	N4*

Army Organisation and 1676's Summer Deployment

Field Army (Siege)	JdG/N/__/LSD
First Division (Siege)	GdB/__/N1
Guards Brigade (Siege) - RFG CG KM	
1st Foot Brigade (Siege) - RM PM	
Second Division (Siege)	ZUT/N/N5
2nd Foot Brigade (Siege) - 13F 53F	
3rd Foot Brigade (Siege) - 27M 4A	
Cavalry Division (Siege)	LR/YS/N2
Horse Guards Brigade (Siege) - DG QOC	
Heavy Brigade (Siege) - ALC CPC	
Frontier Division (Siege)	N1/TTT/N3
Frontier Regiments (Siege)	
Dragoon Brigade (Siege) - GDMD PLLD	

Organisation and Deployment for the Campaign Season with Army and Division posts (Commander/Aide/Adjutant/QMG)
 Entries are ID for player characters, "N" (+ MA if needed) for NPC, __ for vacant

Brigade Positions

Guards Brigade	ZvT/BeV/__
Horse Guards Brigade	N4/N/N1
Heavy Brigade	N6/N/SE
Dragoon Brigade	N4/N/BLC
First Foot Brigade	HDS/N/N1
Second Foot Brigade	N3/N/N6
Third Foot Brigade	N3/N/N4
Fourth Foot Brigade	N2/N/__

Current CO/Aide/Brigade Major of each Brigade; entries are ID for player characters, "N" (+ MA if needed) for NPC, __ for vacant

Frontier Regiments

				(Assault for Sept-Nov)	
Colonel	F1 N6	F2 N1	F3 N1	F4 N1	RNHB N6
Attached			BS		
Also at the Front					

This table shows the Colonels of the Frontier regiments ("N" + MA for NPCs), together with the volunteers assigned for the season.

Battle Results

Frontier regiment 1: 4
 Frontier regiment 2: 5
 Frontier regiment 3: 6
 Frontier regiment 4: 2
 RNHB regiment: 1



A lot of air! Contained in plastic trays. Since I already have the original *Firefly* board game plus almost every expansion (I don't need *Big Money*), this is the "Veteran Pilot's upgrade". That is, just the new expansions, the upgrades from the new edition and the storage trays. The only duplication with what I already have is the Whole 'Verse neoprene mat that combines all three boards.

Though I do now have four copies of Serenity's crew: the cards from the original game, the cards from the *Big Damn Heroes* expansion, the BDH set in the Collector's Edition and, finally, the blinged-up (with holograms no less) BDH set that was a stretch goal. Guess which cards I'm going to use.

It wasn't long before the game was on the table to play solitaire. In part because I had spent several hours integrating the new expansions (there are an awful lot of decks to shuffle new cards into!) and then working out where to put it all in the huge new box. There's a place for everything in the trays, each slot marked (moulded into the plastic) to indicate what goes where. Except the money.

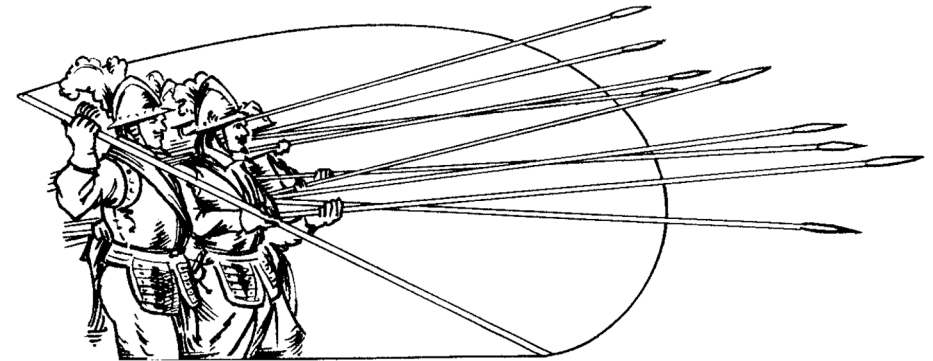


Kalidasa has disappeared off to the right. Note the business card holders with the cards for the Supply places and Contacts (a bit of reorganising means I can even store them in the box). And these are the nice new resin ship models.

Firefly has paper money – something I really like in a game – but there’s no place marked in the trays for it. And none of the slots is the right size to stow the cash (apparently there is one that fits *Big Money*). Shame this slipped past.

Anyway, with everything organised, it was time to see how easy it was to set up the game from the big box. Okay, I needed to pile up the trays as I worked down the box, but setting up the game was straightforward. I always include the *Blue Sun* expansion as it makes the Reavers a real threat (3 of them in play), but I decided I didn’t need *Kalidasa* – I left the end of the mat hanging off the table.

I had looked through the new solo rules and picked out a story to have a go at. The aim here is to sell contraband to four Contacts, which means first completing a job



Tables

Other Appointments

King’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Cardinal’s Escort: Ensign N	Captain N
Aides: to Crown Prince NM	to Field Marshal CdP
Provincial Military Governors: N/N/N/N/N	
City Military Governor TC	Adjutant-General N
Inspectors-General: of Cavalry __	of Infantry __
Commissioner of Public Safety CdN (until end December 1675)	
Chancellor of the Exchequer RS (until end August 1676)	
Minister of Justice __	
Minister of War BeV (until end February 1676)	
Minister of State BRJS (until end January 1676)	

Shows who holds appointments outside military units (except Aides): ID for Characters, “N” for NPC, __ for vacant, “CPS” for extra posts held by the CPS

Claude de Nord (Sabre, Seconds TTT, adv.) and Louis Joseph Reignaux (Rapier, Seconds ZvT, 3 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Frank X Change (Rapier, Seconds CdN & LSD, adv.) and Louis Joseph Reignaux (Rapier, Seconds ZvT, 1 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Justin Thyme (Sabre, Seconds ZUT & RS, adv.) and Michael Chevalier-Cavalier (Sabre, 3 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Michael Chevalier-Cavalier (Sabre, adv.) and Yve Stanbul (Sabre) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Jon Dichateme (Rapier, 2 rests) has cause with Thierry Boule (Sabre, Seconds SE & BN, adv.) for pinching Belle.

Alvin Charles (Sabre) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, Seconds TB & BN,

adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Botte Le Chimiste (Sabre, 1 rests) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, Seconds TB & BN, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Elroi le Flingue (Sabre) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, Seconds TB & BN) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Grenville d'Arkrite (Sabre, 2 rests) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, Seconds TB & BN, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

“adv.” shows who (if anyone) has the advantage of higher Expertise: his first duelling sequence need only contain six actions.

All duels listed above (including any to be voted on) must be fought next month unless held over (below). Orders conditional on a challenge being voted cause are acceptable.

New Characters

Mike Clibborn-Dyer gets the Bastard son of a Merchant: Init SL 2; Cash 135; MA 5; EC 3 (X1).

for them (so that you're "Solid"). The board is seeded with a few stacks of Contraband to pick up. As I'm including *Blue Sun*, I've added Goals for the two extra Contacts and another pile of contraband at the additional Supply system. This probably makes the scenario easier – sell contraband to four out of six rather than four out of four – but it does mean I can avoid Niska. (He's a bad, bad man!)

As always, I took the orange Firefly: a) it's my favourite colour and b) it's Serenity! Plus Mal as my Captain – though him being moral and all does mean I wouldn't be doing any immoral jobs (another reason to avoid Niska). (Obligatory aside here to mention that I had an uncle called Malcolm Reynolds. Though I don't think he – a heavyweight lawyer – would have appreciated anyone calling him "Mal"!)



Ready to fly: my initial purchases (from the scenario's "Priming the Pump") have allowed me to hire Inara and Jayne and buy a Cry Baby (for warding off the Alliance cruiser when necessary).

The Set-up card I'd picked meant seeding every space of the board with an 'Alert' token. These require a die roll when entering with the possibility of attracting the attentions of the Alliance cruiser (in Alliance space) or a Reaver (everywhere else). This was my undoing as I kept rolling '1's and triggering them. As I wasn't carrying any contraband yet, the Alliance wasn't a big problem.

Then a Reaver cutter arrived. Without a Mechanic to pair with my Pilot, I couldn't pull a 'Crazy Ivan' to escape. I rolled a 1 for the result of the encounter: "Kill 2 crew". And no Medic. Eek! I had one dispensable crew and then it was a choice between Wash and Jayne. Given Mal is also a Pilot, Wash sadly bit the dust (I believe there's precedent for this).

Things were going badly as I was already halfway through my allotted 20 turns. After a second fatal encounter with the Reavers, I threw in the towel. Defeated by bad luck!

However, I re-set the scenario and took it on again the following day, finishing it off a few days later. My starting crew wasn't as exciting this time, but I did have a Medic – who saved my crew in my first Reaver encounter. I picked up a Mechanic a bit later, allowing me to 'Crazy Ivan' away from the Reavers, after which they were much less of a problem. And I added Zoe towards the end.

This time, I was completing jobs and earning quite a bit of cash – enabling a few purchases/hires to bolster my team. It still took quite a few turns to complete a job (with Badger) and then sell him some contraband – first Goal achieved. Which is when it sank in that I gained two extra turns for completing a Goal. Suddenly, things were looking up.

Jobs for Amnon Duul and Patience followed. Rather sneakily, I took on a job that started with loading contraband. Which I then sold to Duul instead to complete Goal two. Naughty Mal!

However, I was also picking up contraband from encounters in open space, so I actually had plenty to sell to Patience. (Though completing this job did mean I was no longer solid with Badger. I could cope.) Three down.

Using the 'Cortex Uplink' I'd bought, I'd been checking Niska's jobs. And there was one straightforward pick-up-and-deliver that wasn't immoral! I delivered it with one turn left and contraband on board. So my final two actions had to be to fly to Ezra (just in range) and sell the contraband to Niska. In order to make it, I had to disgruntle my moral crew by ignoring an SOS. Still, I had a card to re-gruntle them in short order. And I'd won!



Okay, the crew is a bit disgruntled – enjoy the win, guys!

Trials

Pierre Cardigan will be on trial at the start of November (after duels have been fought, but before anything else happens). CPS Claude de Nord will prosecute on charges of treason. Minister of State Beau Reese Jean Seine will sit in judgement.

Players are welcome to 'attend' the trial by submitting press and other antics for their character. If you actually want to influence the outcome, you'll need to talk to the Minister of State.

Should the defendant be found guilty, any character may use influence (or a bribe, we're not proud) on the King to commute the sentence.

Duels

Results of October's duels

Jean d'Aubergine (with TdIL, gains 1 Exp) beat Zeold von Tu (with CA, losing 7 extra SPs).

Yve Stanbul declined to meet Come Asiouar as he was under half Endurance.

Justin Thyme (with ZUT & RS, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Michael Chevalier-Cavalier.

Armand Alsace declined to meet Beau Nidle as he was under half Endurance.

Claude de Nord (with TTT, gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Louis Joseph Reignaux.

Jon Dichateme didn't turn up to fight Zeold von Tu and lost SPs.

Ben e'Volence didn't turn up to fight Armand Alsace and lost SPs.

Thierry Boule (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Armand Alsace.

Louis Joseph Reignaux (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Frank X Change (with LSD).

Michael Chevalier-Cavalier (gains 1 Exp) beat his enemy Yve Stanbul.

Terence Cuckpowder (with ZUT, gains 1 Exp) beat Camille de Polignac (with BdLS).

Grudges to settle next month

Jean-Paul LeMon (Sabre) and Yve Stanbul (Sabre, adv.) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

Gaston de Boum (Sabre, adv.) and Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, Seconds TB & BN) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Belle.

Gaston de Boum (Sabre, adv.) and Ian Dediette (Rapier, 1 rests) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Belle.

Hugh Jeneaux (Sabre, Seconds TB & BN, adv.) and Ian Dediette (Rapier) have mutual cause as neither stood down over Belle.

Come Asiouar (Sabre, Seconds ZvT, adv.) and Michael Chevalier-Cavalier (Sabre, 1 rests) have mutual cause for being in enemy regiments.

7 Oh, Yve! Thy name a bitter taste,
A rival's shadow, cold and chaste.
But in the clash of steel and strife,
I'll win back Sheila, my love, my life.
† Major Come Asiouar
Who dragoons the Dragoons?

And who guards the Guards?
Chevalier-Cavalier,
You've marked your cards.
† FXC

Points Arising

Next deadline is 3rd May

And that was Mike Clibborn-Dyer retiring Gaz Moutarde to take up a new character.

Newer players (and me) may want to check the rules for horse races – section 25 of the house rules.

You may have spotted that it's taking me longer and longer to write up the reports. So I'm going to try something different next time. I'll publish what I use as raw materials for the report – this will give the bare bones who was where and did what. I'll then write a shorter report to flesh that out. Let's see how that works.

Absent friends

I didn't receive orders from the following (No Move Received) and they suffered the consequences:
JPLM Jean-Paul LeMon (Terry Crook) has NMR'd. Total now 1

OLS Octo Lucretius Souris (Olaf Schmidt) has NMR'd. Total now 1

Notes

The *En Garde!* rules are available to LPBS players at a reduced rate: see any month's Points Arising page at www.pevans.co.uk/LPBS.

There's an email group for *En Garde!* players and GMs, providing a forum to swap stories and ideas. Sign up at: <https://groups.io/g/EnGarde>

Reminders: It is worth sending orders in even if they're late: I may be able to action the orders and should be able to use any press. It also reassures me that you're still there.

Orders (and press) should be emailed to lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk – you'll get an automated reply when the message arrives in my mailbox. Please give your name and your character's name and specify actions in full detail. If you want a query answered before the deadline, please use LPBS@pevans.co.uk instead.

Announcements

All characters may use Influence (and/or a bribe) for or against these actions.

Martin de Garnache applies for Brigade Major of Guards Brigade



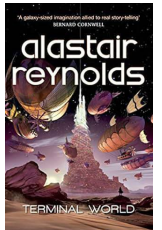
And here's the way things were at the end. Serenity is left of centre at the top, uncomfortably close to a Reaver cutter – the other two are bottom right, hanging around the Space Bazaar. I didn't bother putting a Reaver Alert token on every Border and Rim space, so the Alliance tokens are there to show the spaces that I've cleared.

As you can tell from the length of this report, I had a whale of a time playing *Firefly* again. There's a great story every time.

I'd love to introduce it to the Ruislip gang, but would it fit into one of our 3-hour sessions? Come to think of it, can I hump the box up the road?!

Reading Matter

I recently spotted that I have several books by Alastair Reynolds in my e-book libraries that I haven't read. So I checked the publication dates and went for the oldest: *Terminal World* from 2010 (oops!). This turned out to be a kind of odyssey around a very peculiar world (though there are hints that it could be a far future Earth). In particular, the world is divided into invisible 'zones' where the laws of physics can be different – and humans get ill when moving between them.



To explain, the story starts on Spearpoint, a conical mountain with a city, divided into several zones, winding its way around and up. The Neon City zone has technology comparable to ours. Above is the Celestial City, populated by 'angels' with highly advanced technology – notably bioengineering. Go down a zone and you're into 1950s technology (oil-powered, without transistors), then it's a gas and coal-powered Victorian era and below that is Horsetown, where it's all man- and horse-power.

Our hero has to leave Spearpoint and journey across the planet, helped by an almost-friendly guide. They encounter setbacks, hostiles and major shifts in the

zone boundaries (a potentially catastrophic event). But they also accumulate companions and meet interesting people, building into the sort of friendly fellowship that I've found in lots of Reynolds's stories.

Their odyssey tells us – and the characters – more about this world, suggesting that they may be able to resolve its problems. Which just cries out for a sequel! There's been none so far, though.

Games Events

For wargamers, Salute 51 is this weekend, 13th April at the ExCeL exhibition centre in London's Docklands. It's packed full of traders plus demonstration and participation games, workshops, painting competition and more. More details on the website: southlondonwarlords.co.uk

The next Handycon (number 12) is 19th-21st April at the Delta Marriott in Milton Keynes. This is an open gaming event that I've had good reports about – though that was in its original venue. There's a Bring & Buy, but nothing else organised that I can see. Details are on the website: www.handycon.co.uk

A new one on me is EPIC.LAN Tabletop edition, to be held at the Delta by Marriott hotel in Warwick 26th-28th April. If I'm translating the jargon correctly, these guys host computer games/esports get-togethers and this is a crossover event with tabletop games (board games, RPG etc) – the sixth one they've held. I have no idea about this one, but there's plenty of information on the website: epiclan.co.uk/tt6

On the same weekend (though just 27th April) is Springcon at Wellspring Church Centre in Watford. This looks like just an open gaming event and places may be limited. Find out more at www.wellspring-church.org/springcon

Swiggers: games club that meets on Wednesday evenings (co-ordinated on WhatsApp) upstairs at The Shipwright's Arms, 88 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TF (next to London Bridge station) – though without me these days. For more info, see www.pevans.co.uk/Swiggers or the BGG Guild at boardgamegeek.com/guild/1672

UK Games Expo: 31st May - 2nd June 2024 at the NEC. This is a public event that showcases games of all sorts with a huge trade hall plus demonstration and participation games and guests. For gamers there are lots of tournaments and open gaming. For details see www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

Spiel: the board games event of the year. 3rd-6th October 2024, at the Messe (Exhibition Centre) in Essen. Contact Friedhelm Merz Verlag, Postfach 210250, Bonn, 53157 Germany or see www.spiel-messe.com/en

MidCon: early November 2024 at the Derby Mickleover Hotel in Mickleover (two miles from Derby city centre). **MidCon** is a friendly board games convention, now in a comfortable modern hotel. It's largely open gaming, but the new website allows games to be scheduled in advance – useful if you want lots of players for something. There's also a Bring 'n' Buy and a quiz on Saturday night. See midcon.org.uk

Personal

To: Thomas de la Lune
My Most Esteemed Sir,
'Tis with a pen heavy with the ink of grievance that I must address thee on a matter most distressing. Imagine my consternation upon observing your arrival at my victory soirée, with none other than my former mistress, the fickle bedswerver, Miss Did, draped upon your arm! Oh, the irony of it all, to witness the ostentatious display of one who has pilfered the affections of another, paraded about like a prize sow at market. Such behaviour ill befits a gentleman of discernment and breeding.

Moreover, in the presence of my new muse, the enchanting Miss Nifisent, thy actions bordered on the impertinent. 'Tis not the mark of a true gentleman to flaunt past dalliances in the face of present company.

Henceforth, I must regrettably inform thee that thy presence shall not be solicited at future gatherings should thou persist in such antics. I trust thou wilt heed this guidance and conduct thyself henceforth with the decorum befitting a man of standing. With a modicum of hope for your understanding,

† Baron Louis Renault
Cavalry Division Commander

To whom it may concern,
I am interested in your investment offer, please contact me with further information.

† Le Chimiste

Dear Come Asioua,
Please accept my apologies for not signing off your request to be the Regiment Adjutant of QOC, I only saw the paperwork after it was too late. Please apply again, and if you know of any good Aides, please ask them to apply to me, as I need someone.

Yours, † Justin Thyme

Poetry Corner

(All signed poetry submissions gain their author at least 1 SP)

1 In realms of love, where passions
rage,
A tale unfolds on history's page,
Of Yve Stanbul, with guile and art,
Who dared to steal young Sheila's
heart.
2 Through fields of glory, we marched
as one,
Our valour shining 'neath the sun.
But in the camp, where whispers fly,
Yve's treachery did catch mine eye.
3 Sheila, fairest flower in my heart's
keep,
Caught in the web of Yve's deceit.
His rank, a cloak for wily schemes,
To steal affection in moonlit dreams.
4 Oh, Yve! Betrayer in soldier's guise,
Thou art a serpent 'neath the skies.
With every glance, my blood did boil,
As Sheila fell for thy honeyed toil.
5 Though ills of jealousy may sting,
My quill shall wield a potent sting,
With sword and shield, and honour
bright,
I'll challenge Yve to mortal fight.
6 So let the duel of hearts commence,
In verses penned with eloquence,
For Sheila's love, a prize to win,
And banish Yve's deceitful grin.

Press

Announcements

Aide Wanted!

Looking for a competent Subaltern as Aide.

† Sir Louis Severin Descartes
Br Brigadier General GDMD & QM
General

** Join the QOC **

Gentleman of Paris, if you are new to the city or are looking for a new Regiment, then you can do no better than join the Queen's Own Carabiniers.

Please contact me for more details, and some financial help is available.

† Viscount Thyme

** Aide Required **

I am looking for a competent aide.

Please contact me with your credentials

† (Brevet) Bdr-General Viscount Thyme

Despatches from the Front

“OK cavalry brigade, follow me! We will teach those Dutchies where to stick their stroopwafels.”

Thunderous quiet...

Balzac Slapdash turns around, “Cavalry Brigade?”

He finds himself standing by a dyke in a field of Flemish tulips, not a cavalryman in sight. Sheepishly, a frontiersman sidles up, “Sorry, guv, they all went back to Paris. Still, the brass were so impressed at your solo assault they’ve promoted you.”

Matters of Honour

Mes Amies

I have three duels this month and desperately need a Second. Please contact me, if you would be so obliged.

Yours Etc, † YS

Too late for this month, but maybe next... † Le Roi

Social

GRAND DUKE MAX TROPHY

Horse race – week 4!

To spice up the glorious autumn days, I hereby call all gentlemen of Paris to a horse race in week 4 of November! I will put up the pot of 1000 GC, starting fee is 50 GC per rider, including drinks! First price wins 500 GC, second 250 GC, third 100 GC.

The race will conclude with a party at Bothwell's, ladies welcome!

For participants the drinks are included – for our ladies and spectators paid by yourself.

Who will take home the Grand Duke Max Trophy?

† Sir Louis Severin Descartes
Br Brigadier General GDMD & QM
General

Gentlemen of Paris,

During week 2, Miss Nifisent and I will be dining at my club and be delighted to receive gentlemen (SL 9+) and their ladies for polite discussion and Whist; refreshments at my expense. † Baron Louis Renault

Games from Pevans

Hand picked board games since 2004



Distant Skies

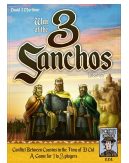
Ryan Laukat's follow-up to *Sleeping Gods* (below): this time it's a portal in the sky that takes the players to another world. And they're in a plane. Again, they must explore the world (and tangle with bizarre creatures – and people) to find their way back home.



For 1-4 players, aged 13+, playing time 1-10 hours (full campaign): £82.00

War of the 3 Sanchos

Latest in Surprised Stare's "Pocket Campaigns" series, this is the war of 1065-67 between the three kingdoms of northern Spain, all ruled by Sanchos. It's about outwitting your opponents and making best use of the clever combat system



For 1-3 players, aged 12+, playing time 30-45 minutes: £18.00

Online at www.pevans.co.uk/Games

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The table on the right shows the costs for the paper edition, including postage, and the games only subscription.

	UK	Other Europe	Rest of World	Games only
10-issue (1 year) subscription	£27.00	£36.00	£43.00	£5.00

To subscribe, send your name, address and payment to *To Win Just Once*, 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF, UK or TWJO@pevans.co.uk. You can pay by bank transfer (contact me for the account details), by UK cheque (payable to Margam Evans Ltd) or by PayPal to Games@pevans.co.uk. Or subscribe online at www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO, where you can pay by credit card or PayPal account.

Trophy Hunter

Turn 6

This turn's shots

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1	X																x			
2						e	e	x								x	e	e		
3						E	e		B								e	E		
4				X																
5								X							‡	‡	‡			
6				X																
7									x	x										
8									X	X										
9		a						x	a	X										
10		a	x						A			L				e	e			
11								x								e	e			
12																			X	x
13								m												x
14										x								X		
15	a	a						‡								G	X			
16								‡												
17								‡					m					A		
18																G	X	a		
19				A	a	x				x									x	
20						x														

“How did I miss that great big Elephant?” Asks Brad Martin. “Must get it this time...” And he does. Helped by Eddy Richards while most people concentrate on the other Elephant.

Anthony Gilbert carefully finds where the central Antelope isn't for Rob Pinkerton to finish it off. Andrew Larder's only find is a bush.

Mike Pollard's luck finally runs out as he accidentally wings a Gorilla.

Nord and Madelaine, Camille de Polignac and Morgane, Greg de Bécqueur and Bette and Pierre Cardigan and Justine. Plus Terence Cuckpowder, who rolls up with Kathy Pacific on his arm – bad luck, Jon Dichateme. First for losing your lady and second for having to fight a duel with Terence! Camille does his usual gambling thing, but with less success this time. Even losing two bets and cutting three, he still only loses two-thirds of what he made last week. Jean d'Aubergine is hanging around the club's entrance. He's hoping Ben e'Volence will let him Toady for a second time, but Ben isn't in.



Bothwell's gets a visit from Martin de Garnache and Fifi. Hunter's sees Thierry Toothpick and Sue again. Yve Stanbul and Sheila adjourn to Blue Gables. Stephane Etrange and Thomasina complete their month in the Frog & Peach. While Red Phillips is almost busy. Ian Dediette is there again. So are Percival Puffington and Viv. And Thierry Boule arrives with Belle.

Swelling numbers at the gyms are Frank X Change and his rapier, Hugh Jeneaux, who badly needs some practice with his sabre, Justin Thyme with his sabre, rapier-carrying Louis Joseph Reignaux, Louis Renault and his rapier and Rick Shaw plus sabre. The Bawdyhouses see outings from Alvin Charles, Botte Le Chimiste, Come Asiouar, Grenville d'Arkrite, Henri DuShite, Hugo Furst, Hector William Boone and Michael Chevalier-Cavalier.

In the courting stakes, Louis Severin Descartes's perseverance pays off as he finally wins the heart he's been after all month. Felipe Savant doesn't as his intended is out with her beau. And Zeold von Tu is at home with his lady. Gaston de Boum has to call off his courting as he's run out of cash. Oops!

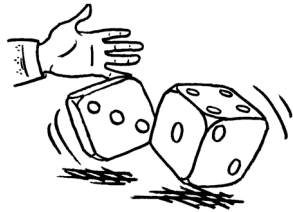
And Ben e'Volence is at the Louvre, where His Majesty has requested his services as Deputy Keeper of the Secondary Royal Footstool. Or some such. It certainly doesn't involve any face time with the King.

In other news, Gaz Moutarde departs Paris on a “slow boat to the Orient”. Where he will seek fresh adventures.

Oops!

Meanwhile, the Frontier regiments are assaulting a Dutch fortress and making heavy weather of it. Brigadier-General Balzac Slapdash is assigned to number 3 regiment which is decimated by volleys of grapeshot. When it turns out that Slapdash was never in range of the guns, he is immediately cashiered and will have to serve as a Private next month. ❖

Louis Joseph Reignaux hits the bawdyhouses. Louis Severin Descartes continues his unsuccessful courting. And Gaston de Boum lucks out on his second courtship.



Over at Red Phillips, Percival Puffington and Viv are in residence again. Ian Dediette pops in this week to check it over. Stephane Etrange and Thomasina return to the Frog & Peach again. “Tiny” Thierry Toothpick and Sue are in Hunter’s, checking out Thierry’s new club. And Zeold von Tu goes gambling at Bothwell’s. He places four 500-crown wagers and comes out even after losing two and winning two.

This earns him a little status amongst the gambling crowd.

To the main event, then. Ben is paying for the drinks, but not indulging himself, and has not brought his mistress. Everyone is welcome with the sole exception of the 53rd Fusiliers – presumably why Armand Alsace isn’t there, but what’s everybody else’s excuse? Perhaps they were put off by Michael Chevalier-Cavalier parading outside with a mob of urchins and large placard advising attendees “Don’t Touch the Cheese”. Anyway, despite the possible fee for attending, the guest list is lengthy. It kicks off with Alvin Charles. Botte Le Chimiste is next. Then Beau Nidle. Come Asiouar follows. Camille de Polignac brings Morgane and his dice. To much acclaim he wins all five of his bets this week, going home with a substantial pile of cash.

Elroi le Flingue brings Violet and joins Alvin and Botte as he’s the third member of Grand Duke Max’s Dragoons in attendance. Felipe Savant escorts Pet. Frank X Change has Frances on his arm. Grenville d’Arkrite makes it four GDMD officers. Greg de Bécqueur has Bette on his arm. Henri DuShite is alone. As is Hugo Furst. Hugh Jeneaux arrives on his own, but is quickly surrounded by all of Grand Duke Max’s men as he’s in Archduke Leopold’s Cuirassiers. Challenges are exchanged.

Hector William Boone is another man without an escort. Jean d’Aubergine accompanies Freda. Jacques Hatt has Cath with him. Justin Thyme brings Guinevere and insists that he pay his host 100 crowns – anything less would be an “insult”! Jean Jeanie is with Jacky. Louis Renault has Maggie on his arm. Martin de Garnache escorts Fifi. It’s Therèse who’s with Rick Shaw. Thierry Boule shows off his conquest, Belle Epoque. Thomas de la Lune accompanies Katy. Thibault Pinot-Noir brings Angelina di Griz. Sheila accompanies Yve Stanbul once more and their drinks are paid for by Yve’s boss, Louis Renault.

Other members in the Fleur are Claude de Nord, escorting Madelaine, and jailbird Pierre Cardigan with Justine.

Every man for himself!

With no parties at the end of the month, socialites visit their own clubs, deal with their regimental duties or get in a week’s sword practice. The Fleur sees Claude de

And Ray Vahey joins in with a hit on a Lion – I spy a target for next turn.

Key

Animals	Symbol	Size (squares)	Number on grid	Points Value
Bush	B	1	12	0
Monkey	M	1	12	4
Antelope	A	2	9	8
Snake	S	2	?	10
Gorilla	G	3	4	-12
Lion	L	3	4	15
Elephant	E	4	3	20

Other symbols

	X	Missed shot
UPPER CASE = this turn, lower case = last turn, Strikeout = dead animal		

Notes: animals go up and down or left and right, not diagonally, with two exceptions. Elephants are blocks of four squares; each Snake is two diagonal squares and moves by up to three squares a turn.

Animals only touch (if at all) at corners and only Snakes will go next to a Bush.

What’s this all about?

This game is essentially a *Battleships* variant and is open to all readers of *TWJO*. The 20 x 20 grid represents a safari park that needs to cull some of its animals (except the gorillas). The players are hunters who’ve paid to bag trophies.

All you have to do each turn is nominate two squares to take pot-shots at: F9 and M17, say (the second is only used if the first misses). Letters (A-T) run across the top of the grid and numbers (1-20) down the side (A1 is thus the top left corner).

The first hit on each animal scores points in proportion to its size. For example, a Lion is three squares and worth 15 points, so the first hit scores $15/3 = 5$ points. If several players hit the same square at the same time, they share the points; if several players hit different squares of the same animal at the same time, they get the points for the square they hit.

Once an animal has been identified, subsequent shots share the points of new squares hit (no more points for the first square/s). So if players A and B hit the second square of that lion and C gets the third, C gets 5 points, A and B 2½.

An animal is dead when all its squares have been hit. No more points can be scored for this animal.

After 10 turns or when the board is clear (except for any snakes), the player with the most points wins.

Scores

Player	Shots	This turn	Total
Alex Bardy	E19	1	11
Colin Bruce	F3	1	7.08
Charles Burrows	F2, F3	1	-1.17
Mark Cowper	E19	1	11.83
Mike Dommett	E19	1	5
Anthony Gilbert	I8, J9	0	8
William Hay	P15	-4	-6.7
Andrew Kendall	F3	1	8
Andrew Larder	S12, 13	0	0
Nik Luker	P18, Q17	4	12
Tim Macaire	F2, A1	0	4
Brad Martin	R3	2.5	7.33
Graeme Morris	P18, E19	1	3.5
Rob Pinkerton	J9, I10	4	9
Mike Pollard	O18	-4	8.08
Eddy Richards	R3	2.5	6.5
Chris Rudram			-3.5
Pam Udowiczenko	H5, Q14	0	12.5
Ray Vahey	L10	5	5
Matthew Wale	F3	1	9.75
John Watson	F3	1	3.5
Graeme Wilson	D6, I8	0	1.25
Paul Wilson	D4, J9	0	5

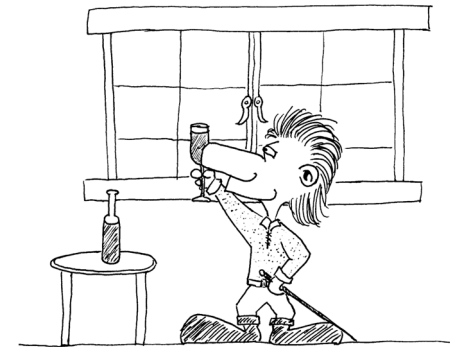
Send your shots to Pevans at 180 Aylsham Drive, Uxbridge UB10 8UF or TWJO@pevans.co.uk by 3rd May 2024.

The Frog & Peach sees Stephane Etrange and Thomasina settling in. Jean d'Aubergine arrives at his new club with Frea de Ath on his arm – yes, he was one of last week's courting successes. Another one is Percival Puffington, who can now be found in Red Phillips showing Viv Ayschus a good time. Talking of courting, this week's winners are Hugh Jeneaux (a tactical change of target here), Thierry Boule (stepping in where others have failed) and Terence Cuckpowder. Louis Severin Descartes is the sole loser, but is not going to let that put him off.

After missing out last week, Ian Dediette takes his needs to the Bawdyhouses. He looks a likely mark to the footpads, but has made sure to spend all his cash. Beau Nidle is the second visitor to the red light district in his brand new Major's uniform.

Weapons practice continues and is joined by Beau Reese Jean Seine, Jon Dichateme, Neville Moore and Zavier Ulric Turenne, all of whom forsake further parties to spend three weeks with their rapiers. Jacques Hatt, Jean Jeanie and Thomas de la Lune forego Louis Renault's bash to get their first week (of two) with their blades – rapier for Jean and Thomas, sabre for Jacques. And Zeold von Tu spends one week with his rapier.

Which leaves us with Louis Renault's memorial dinner for the fallen. Louis and Maggie's guests start with Armand Alsace. Then Alvin Charles. Botte Le Chimiste is third. Come Asiouar is the fourth unaccompanied male, but Claude de Nord breaks the pattern by bringing Madelaine. Elroi le Flingue has Violet on his arm. Felipe Savant escorts Pet. Frank X change accompanies Frances. Grenville d'Arkrite is a loner. Greg de Bécqueur is with Bette. Gaston de Boum has no companion. Neither does Hugo Furst. Nor Hector William Boone. Justin Thyme brings Guinevere. Louis Joseph Reignaux gets the challenges going – again swapping insults with the two Musketeers. The arrival of Michael Chevalier-Cavalier provokes another round of shouting between him and the QOC three (once Yve arrives). In comparison. Martin de Garnache and Fifi are quiet and retiring. Rick Shaw brings Thérèse. Thierry Toothpick has Sue on his arm and several orange-clad minions in tow. Yve Stanbul and Sheila are last on the list.

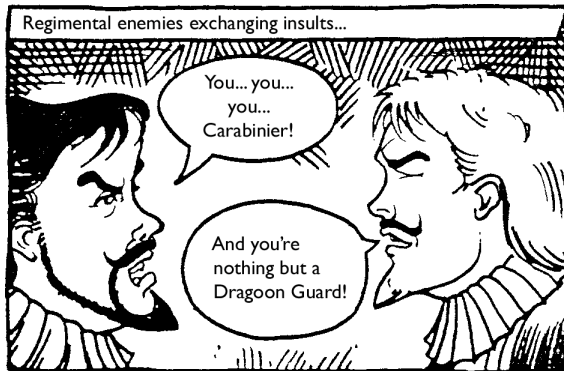


Ben's bash

The third week sees the biggest event of the month when Ben e'Volence holds his bash at the Fleur. But first, what are those not attending up to? Well, Armand Alsace joins the gym crowd to practise rapier lunges for two weeks. And Terence Cuckpowder pops into his local gym for this month's work-out with his sabre.

The guest list starts with Alvin Charles. Next is Botte Le Chimiste, pondering who might have sent him an anonymous message. Come Asiouar follows. Claude de Nord brings Madelaine de Proust. Camille de Polignac escorts Morgane Le Fay to the gaming tables. Wagering 600 crowns a time, he places five bets. He wins the first, but loses the second, then wins again. He cuts the fourth when he sees the house's roll and loses the last to end up out of pocket. The other guests admire his style, though.

Partygoers are still arriving. Felipe Savant is accompanied by Pet Ulante. Frank X Change has Frances Forrin on his arm. Grenville d'Arkrite follows. Bette Noire is with Greg de Bécqueur. Henri DuShite is on his own. As is Hector William Boone. Jacques Hatt brings Cath de Thousands. Justin Thyme escorts Guinevere d'Arthur.



Louis Joseph Reignaix is next. As second in command of the Cardinal's Guard (having bought the rank of Lt-Colonel) he is pounced on by the two King's Musketeers in attendance: Claude de Nord and Frank X Change. This one will run and run. Louis Renault accompanies Maggie Nifisent. Martin Chevalier-Cavalier comes alone and quickly has the attention of QOCs Come Asiouar and Justin Thyme. Arms investor Martin de Garnache's plus-one is Fifi. Rick Shaw brings Therèse Le Vert. Terence Cuckpowder is alone. "Tiny" Thierry Toothpick and Sue Briquet are together. Yve Stanbul escorts Sheila Kiwi and joins Come and Justin in exchanging insults with Michael. Zavier Ulric Turenne brings Laura de Land.

Highlight of the party, though, is CPS Claude leaving the event to get Pierre Cardigan's attention. By serving a warrant on him – much to the delight of "Tiny" Thierry.

Louis's lunch

Thus the second week of October sees Count Cardigan languishing in the Bastille (and Justine languishing at home). Cardigan's usual haunt – the Fleur – is occupied only by Henri DuShite and Camille de Polignac and Morgane. Camille is, of course, at the gaming tables where he places his customary five 600-crown bets. His luck seems to be following the same pattern as last week when he loses his first wager and cuts the second. However, he then wins three in a row to finish well ahead in cash and kudos.

The Wizard of Anharitte (*Star Trader* game 12)

Turn 3

The main news this Quarter was the discovery in the Mu Herculis system and the subsequent rise in prices that disconcerted some Corporations.

Trading started at Gamma Leporis as COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE brought 6 Alloys for 2 HTs each and gained a Dealership.

ROCKET TRADERS sold 2 Isotopes for 10 HTs each at Epsilon Eridani, while SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS used Crip to sell 10 Monopoles for 18 HTs apiece and gain a Dealership.

ROCKET TRADERS bought 11 Isotopes at Tau Ceti for 4 HTs each, taking a Contractorship, and made space for them by selling 10 Alloys for 10 HTs apiece and another Dealership.

Mu Herculis saw MADNESS & MAYHEM selling 3 Monopoles at a price of 15 HTs, but COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE had already sold 5 for 12 HTs each. TREKBOER wanted to buy at 14 but couldn't find a willing seller.

SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS tried to sell Spice for 13 at Beta Hydri but were undercut by ROCKET TRADERS' bid of 12, selling all 12 for a Dealership. MADNESS & MAYHEM sold 7 Alloys for 7 HTs each and gained a Dealership, and ROCKET TRADERS sold 6 Isotopes for 8 HTs apiece.

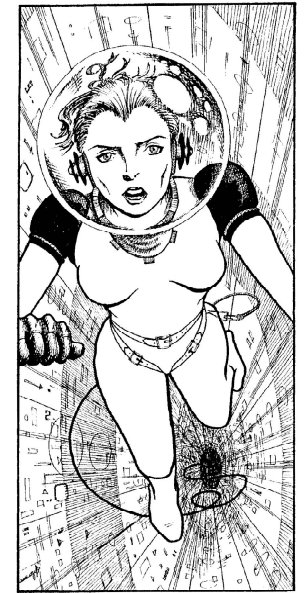
TREKBOER sold the Light Weapons pod from their Clarinet hull and added the Battle Comm pod from the Dagger which is sitting in the Spaceport. Its Reputation has gone up significantly.

ROCKET TRADERS loaded Passengers for three spaceports.

COSTA NOSTRA COFFEE INC was quiet, possibly connected with a re-siting of their headquarters.

MADNESS & MAYHEM sold their Cargo Pod at Mu Herculis.

SOLAR SPICE & LIQUORS repaid their loan and took out a new one for 200 HTs over 4 Quarters. It took the sale of a Monopole Factory, but Reputation rose strongly and Warehouses were bought at Epsilon Eridani and Sigma Draconis.



News

There are three new News chits. The current list (new chits in **bold**) is:

Turn 6 P7, B6, **B7**

Turn 7 **C3**

Turn 8 **P4**

(Chits are identified by the Connection type and level required to see them and disappear/take effect in the News Phase of the turn listed.)

Corporation Table

Corporation letter and name	Connections			Init'v Bid	Turn order	Cash Rep	Player
	Bus/Crim/Pol						
A Costa Nostra Coffee	7	0	0	0	5th	115 19	Mark Cowper
B Madness & Mayhem	5	5	0	0	2nd	22 26	Anthony Gilbert
C Solar Spice & Liquors	3	3	4	0	4th	184 39	Paul Evans
D TrekBoer	2	7	2	0	3rd	220 34	Mike Dyer
E Rocket Traders	7	0	8	4	1st	500 40	Przemek Orwat
N under Initiative Bid means No move received, F indicates the Corp was floated							

GM Notes

Orders to Mike Dommett, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk
by 26th April 2024

handshake that's measured in hundreds of crowns. Pinot-Noir becomes a Captain of the Cuirassiers.

Hugh Jeneaux is another man new to Paris, yet he already has influence. This assists him in signing up with Archduke Leopold's boys where his large loan lets him buy the rank of Major (and second in command).

Party, party, party (reprise)

October in Paris seems to be rather similar to September in that, should they have the standing/connections, socialites can spend most of their month partying – first with Beau Reese Jean Seine, then Louis Renault and finally Ben e'Volence – before having a week to themselves.

However, let's see what everybody else is up to in week one. Starting four weeks' practice in the gyms are Bernard de Lur-Saluces with his daggers and Jacques de Gain with his rapier. Now he's a cavalryman, Thibault Pinot-Noir gets to improve his sabre skill for free and does so for three weeks. Ben e'Volence, Beau Nidle and Elroi le Flingue all practise sabre with a second week of this to come.

Frequenting the Bawdyhouses is Armand Alsace. While Subalterns Jon Dichateme and Thierry Boule (recently elevated from trooper) attend to their duties in their respective regiments.

Going courting are Jean d'Aubergine (who's clearly flush as he's just repaid his loans and bought the rank of Colonel), Louis Severin Descartes, Percival Puffington (newly a Captain) and Zeold von Tu – we may find out who was successful later in the month. So, too, are Gaston de Boum, Hugh Jeneaux and Ian Dediette. But they all turn up on the same doorstep and none of them will stand down – duels required.

Spending a quiet week in their clubs are new Lt-Col Stephane Etrange and Thomasina Tancenjin in the Frog & Peach. In Hunter's are Neville Moore and Vera Cruz and Thomas de la Lune and Katy Did. While Jean Jeanie and Jacky Tinne and Pierre Cardigan and Justine Caisse are staying out of the way of the party in the Fleur. Until Pierre is accosted...

This party is hosted by the Minister of State and commander of the Royal Foot Guards, Beau Reese Jean Seine – with Chris Pacquette at his side. It's open to all Ministers and soldiers, which encompasses most Parisian socialites. But not Hugo Furst. He has no military standing and certainly is no Minister, so is relegated to kicking his heels in the foyer.

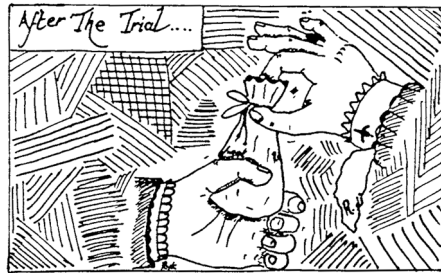


With that, Count Ben e'Volence resumes his seat, his statements resonating like a clarion call throughout the courtroom before fading to silence. Like the man himself.

Minister Seine follows up: "There appears to be some confusion, Monsieur Chevalier-Cavalier, you are the defendant here not the prosecution. In any case it is normal practice for the defendant to be given a week's privacy in the cells to prepare their defence. The Minister of War has not been charged with anything and as such has had no time to defend against your accusations. Perhaps we can return to the actual charges from the Commissioner of Public Safety? I believe that is the normal procedure."

The only other witness is Louis Severin Descartes, called as a character witness for Chevalier-Cavalier. However, he seems not to have much opinion of the accused. After some waffle about service, nobility and being "ver' ver' drunk", he concludes, "at last, I hardly know him, but it seems unfathomable to me that an officer of the Dragoons would be an enemy of the crown - I am sure there is an enormous misunderstanding here!"

The Minister of State lifts his head. "Is it all over?" he enquires. On being reminded that he still needs to deliver the verdict, he states "Guilty - fined 1,000 crowns!" (Completely coincidentally, this is the same amount that was donated to Chevalier-Cavalier earlier.) As Seine stumbles, dazed by all he has heard, back to his chambers, Justin Thyme can be heard shouting "more, more, that's not enough, check his boots for coin!"

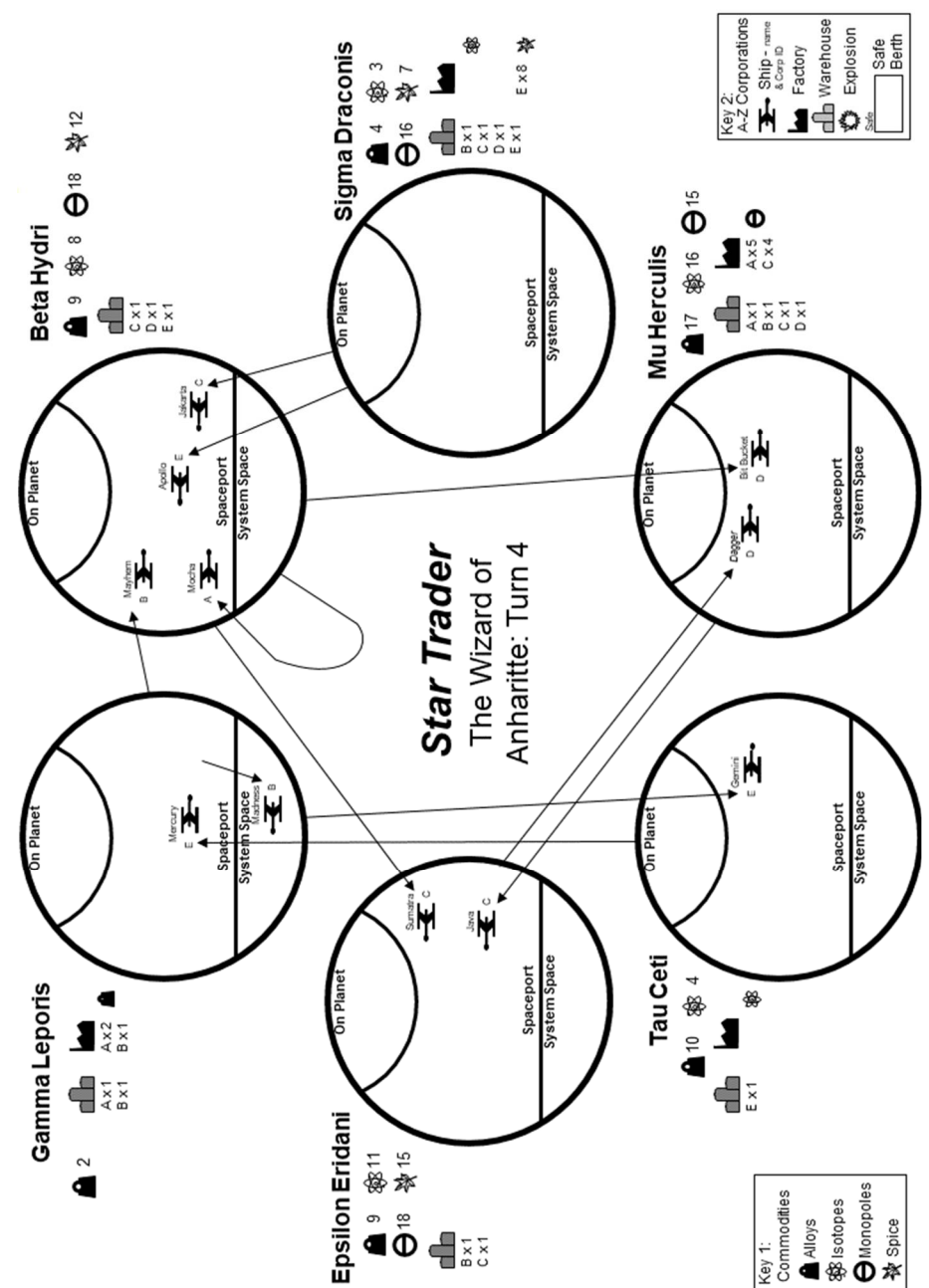


A few recruits

The theatre of the trial out of the way, it's time for the serious business of the month. Newly arrived in Paris, Gaston de Boum doesn't know what all the fuss is about and makes his way to the Gascons' HQ to join the regiment. He is, of course, accepted and looks to buy himself the rank of Major and take command. Sadly, despite his borrowing, he hasn't budgeted for the cost of this (it's those horses) and has to settle for being the most junior of the regiment's Captains.

Jon Dichateme signs up for the Fourth Arquebusiers, courtesy of the regiment's commander, Jean d'Aubergine. He takes the rank of Subaltern.

Things are not straightforward for Thibault Pinot-Noir. First, CO Justin "Join the QOCs" Thyme turns down his application for the Queen's Own Carabiniers. Then he is rejected by Archduke Leopold's Cuirassiers. However, Ben e'Volence is only too happy to welcome him to the Crown Prince Cuirassiers with a golden



Key 2:

- A-Z Corporations
- Ship - name
- Ship ID
- Factory
- Warehouse
- Explosion
- Safe
- Berth

Key 1:

- Commodities
- Alloys
- Isotopes
- Monopolies
- Spice

Troodos (*Railway Rivals* game 18 – RR2528CY)

Turn 4

MEDITRAINEAN built along the coast and is poised to connect to Paphos. CANTERBURY RAILWAYS built to the north-eastern end of Cyprus, then returned to building south-west to Troodos. ALL GREEK TO ME continued through the mountains to Troodos, which looks like being a meeting point for everyone. INLAND IRONHORSE INTERNATIONAL built south into Kilana, and extended at the west end of the island.

MediTrainean (MT), Anthony

Gilbert – Red

Starts: Larnaca

Builds:

a) G11 – Kilana; (+6)

F11 – F9

b) F9 – F7 – G7

c) G7 – G6 – H5

Points: 53 +6 = 59

Canterbury Railways (CR), Rob

Pinkerton – Blue

Starts: Famagusta

Builds:

a) (Evrykhou) – A53 – N12;

(J72) – Theodoros (+6)

b) (N12) – M13;

(Theodoros) – L74

c) (Lefkoniko) – H67;

(L74) – M75

Points: 47 +6 = 53

All Greek To Me (AGTM), Mike Dyer

– Black

Starts: Kyrenia

Builds:

a) (Paleokhoro) – L14

b) (L14) – L13

c) (L13) – Troodos;

D63 – C64

Points: 26 +0 = 26

Inland Ironhorse International

(III), Chris Rudram – Green

Starts: Lapithos

Builds:

a) (J10) – I10 – H10 – Kilana

b) (L11) – Troodos (+6, +2*)

c) (Polis) – M4

Points: 56 +8 = 64

GM Notes

Order layouts: Your Name, Company Name, Company Colour

* +2 bonus for the hotel we stayed in one night to minimise drive time from the east end exploring the mountains.

Building rolls for next turn: 4, 6, 3

**Orders to Mike Dommatt, 12 Watton Park, Bridport DT6 5NJ
or by e-mail to mike_dommett@yahoo.co.uk
by 26th April 2024**

thrown back to reveal a mass of scorched and melted hard cheese, streaked with black powder.

“My Lord,” resumes Smith “this was recovered from the southern battlefields, where Nord has been perfecting a bomb – a round of Dutch edam stuffed with Gunpowder. The DOMINION plan to serve these “loaded cheeses” at the next Royal Cheese and Wine Party to blow the Royal Line into oblivion. The sudden disappearance of the master cheesemaker van Goudameer is not a coincidence. Who better to doctor the Edam Rounds triumphantly brought back by Nord as Booty fit for a King than a master cheesemaker? Though we know not whether through bribery or under duress.”

Smith draws himself up to make his conclusion, “My Lord, I call on you to throw out these TRUMPED up and false accusations against my Client and immediately arrest the true traitors who threaten the Realm, who I publicly name as

The DOge – Ben e’Votence

MINI – Tiny Thierry Toothpick

ON – The NORSEMAN DU NORD”

During this speech, Count Ben e’Votence remains a figure of composure and subtle amusement, despite being the target of some of the most fantastical claims. The unveiling of the crate elicits from The Minister of War not fear, but a soft chuckle and a shake of his head in disbelief at the theatricality before him. He interrupts proceedings, his voice cutting through the murmured speculation, silencing the chamber with its commanding presence. “My Lords,” e’Votence begins, his tone laced with authority yet underscored by an unshakable calm. “It appears we’ve been led astray from the true essence of this trial. Let us not be mistaken, I am not the subject under scrutiny here today.”

His sharp gaze sweeps the room, challenging and direct. “To resort to such desperate measures, to fling accusations as one might fling mud, speaks more of the accuser than the accused. It is the tactic of a desperate man, a craven dog,” he declares, his words heavy with censure, casting a pall over the allegations and those who presented them.

Allowing a brief pause for reflection, e’Votence continues, his voice now imbued with a colder timbre. “I wish to remind the court of my service and devotion to the King – marked by 27 Mentions in Dispatches, three battlefield titles for valour and a substantial contribution of 10,000 crowns to our kingdom’s coffers. These are not the deeds of a traitor, but the honours of a true servant to our crown.”

With a light, ironical smile, he addresses the more ludicrous claims. “As to the absurdity of presenting Dutch cheese to the King of France,” e’Votence adds, a twinkle of mockery in his eyes, “What folly. What expertise could the Dutch possibly possess in cheese-making that would interest us, when their offerings are deemed by even the lice on Chevalier-Cavalier’s body to be so inferior that they’re fit only for the cesspit?”

normally observed in young girls and the criminally insane. Secondly, his ramblings could have a detrimental effect on the common man of Paris. The feeble minded being vulnerable to such nonsense. Thirdly, he appears to be a man on a downward spiral and may grow more desperate with passing of time.

“Is there a remedy for this sickness? Not really, but if he cannot control himself I would recommend one of the three options: Incarceration in an asylum; Banishment from France; or Execution.”

And that, apparently, is the whole of Nord’s case. Michael Chevalier-Cavalier is thus called on to speak in his defence, but instead summons Special Investigator Jacques Smith who was hired by the Chevalier-Cavalier family to investigate the charges.

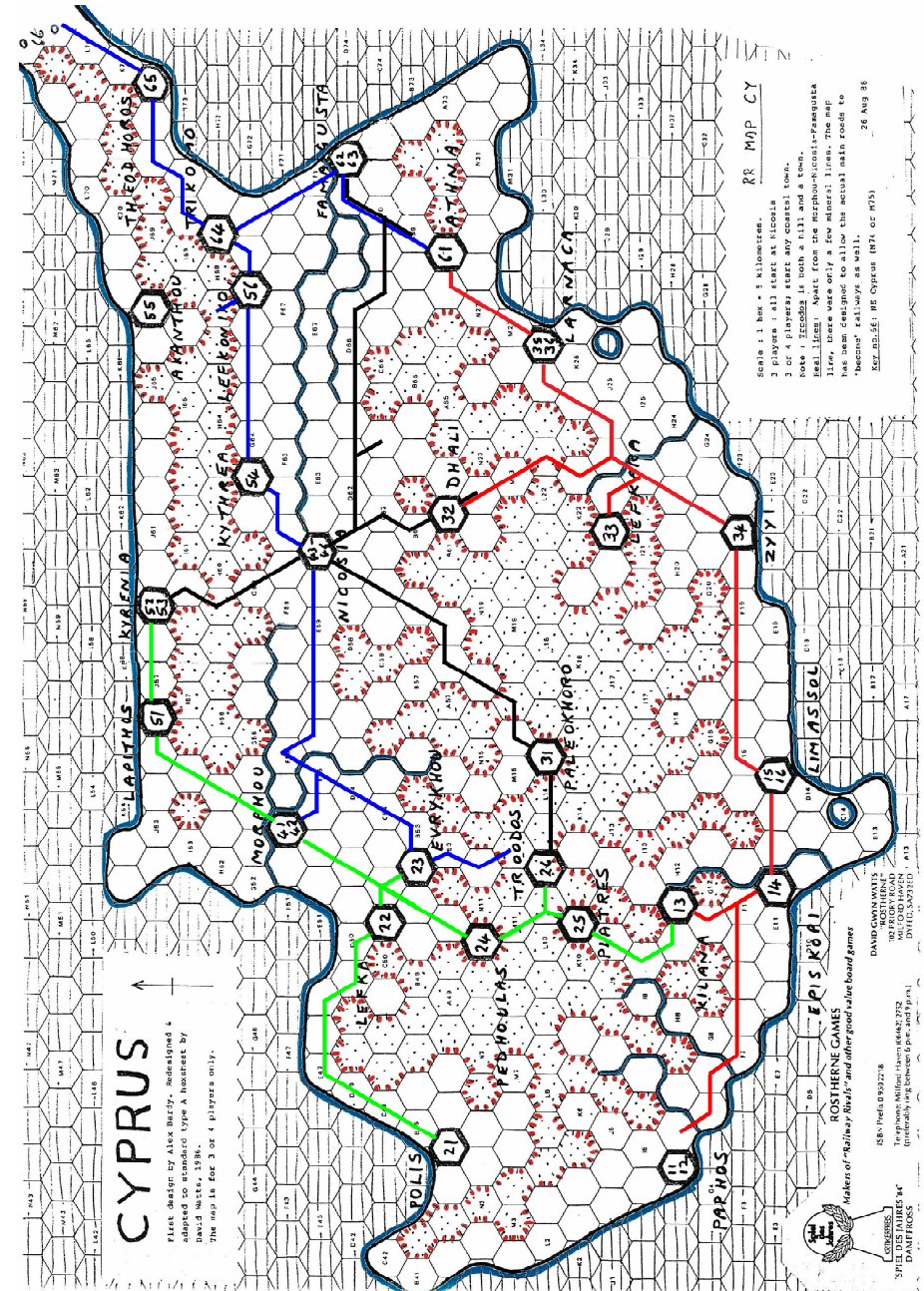
“My Lord, these are TRUMPED up charges against my client,” he asserts. “In fact, as I will explain, the real threat to France and the true traitors are those very people who are trusted to keep out streets safe and Le Roi protected.

“This started last year with my client’s cousin Kit C-C stumbling across some papers in the effects of his late schoolfriend Petit Garçon-Riche. It pointed to the DOMINION, a cartel of evildoers who wish to overthrow the Monarchy and establish a REPUBLIC – ridiculous I know, as if this would ever happen! Kit went to the front to obtain evidence, but he was silenced. However, not before he told my client that one of the conspirators was none other than our CPS and commander of the very regiment who are responsible for keeping Le Roi and our streets safe. His code name was The NORSEMAN (ON) – du Nord – a man of little military skill and poor social skills. His fate was sealed when he recruited my Client into the King’s Musketeers and let slip minor details of the plot. My Client immediately left the King’s Musketeers and went to the front to get evidence.

“The next member of the evil trio goes by the Codename MINI and is none other than the Deputy CPS – a man who SLIPS UNDER the radar but has infiltrated Paris with a number of Diminutive Dutchmen (aka the Tangerine Team). They are the gophers.

“This just leaves the puppet-master behind the whole plot, the DOGE (DO) and this is none other than our Minister of War. I will not detail the recent scandal in which his MAKE AQUITAINE GREAT AGAIN (MAGA) movement used public money to DRAIN THE SWAMP in his lands using illegal immigrants (cheap Spanish labour) instead of the French artisans that he billed the Exchequer for. Luckily, he has been forced to pay back this money leaving him in a POOR state, financially and mentally, with a number of lawsuits pending.

“My client’s cousin Kit died for the evidence I now bring to court,” he concludes and beckons to the door. A large crate is wheeled in – the sulphurous smell is atrocious, leaving the Ladies and Gentlemen in the gallery reaching for the perfumed handkerchiefs and pot pourri bouquets; some faint and need reviving. The lid is



Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses

Being a correspondence game of *En Garde!* run by Pevans since April 1986 and now published as part of *To Win Just Once*.

New players are always welcome. If you'd like to play, you'll need to subscribe to *TWJO* (see page 11). You will also need (access to) a copy of the published rules to *En Garde!* (see www.engarde.co.uk).

**Orders for November 1675 to Pevans
at 180 Aylsham Drive, UXBRIDGE
UB10 8UF, UK or
lpbsorders@pevans.co.uk
by 3rd May 2024**



October 1675 (380)

October is bright and sunny in Paris, with just a hint of cold in the mornings. Hence Parisians tend to wrap up when out and about early in the day – particularly those carrying cold steel to their arranged meeting places. Yes, with the boys back in Paris there are affairs of honour that need to be settled. Quietly. Without witnesses.

First up this month is Zeold von Tu with two appointments. He's arranged the first to meet Jon Dichateme, but the gentleman does not show up. On to his meeting with Jean d'Aubergine. They are an evenly matched pair, both using their regimental rapiers. Come Asiour seconds Tu, while Thomas de la Lune backs up Aubergine. An unsuccessful parry from Tu is followed by an exchange of lunges. Then there's a slash from Aubergine and a more damaging cut from Tu. As Tu recovers his balance, Aubergine gets in another lunge. Tu responds with a slash before stepping back and hurling his weapon at his opponent. The blade whistles harmlessly across the courtyard and Aubergine lunges to prompt Tu's surrender. His behaviour does Tu's social standing no good at all.

QOC Captain Yve Stanbul has several duels to fight, but he won't start with Jean-Paul LeMon as this is held over pending LeMon's availability. Dragoon Guard Michael Chevalier-Cavalier is thus Stanbul's first adversary. This is another even fight, but with sabres this time – both are cavalrymen – and no seconds. Chevalier-Cavalier launches into a furious slash. Stanbul uses the same attack, but waits a beat before starting. Thus, Chevalier-Cavalier's hits come just before Stanbul's. After the slashes and cuts have been exchanged, Chevalier-Cavalier's next slash is

definitely not Cardigan! You blundering fool, de Nord, you've arrested the wrong man!!"

"Your Grace," he continues, turning to MoS Count Seine, "I've been duped, we've all been duped, today's trial was supposed to be for that notorious murderer and threat to France, Pierre Cardigan and yet we have this fellow instead. Who is he? Some two-bit rent-boy, by the look of him... What did he do, run off with his client's money before servicing him? You see, Your Grace, this is what happens when a buffoon like Nord is entrusted with the nation's security, he can barely button his own tunic and is clearly not up to the task of actual Commissioner." The diminutive Deputy flounces back to his seat next to CPS de Nord and a brief, hushed discussion takes place with various papers produced and shuffled and several pats upon the head delivered to his Deputy by the Commissioner before the two men finally shake hands and Toothpick turns back to face Minister of State Count Seine.

"Your Grace," he says again, "I apologise. It appears I was under some misunderstanding that today's trial was that of Count Cardigan and not whoever this person is. However, I'm reassured that I'll not have to wait long for that, so I'm happy to resume giving my evidence on behalf of the Prosecution." He stands on his chair to declaim, "Clearly whoever this is in the dock today, this simpering sodomite is 100% guilty of whatever crime he stands accused of, especially if it's stealing a client's money without delivering the goods – that is a most serious offence. Our judicial system is second to none and anyone who finds themselves up in Court must be a total rogue, otherwise we wouldn't have arrested him".

Then, looking directly at the accused, he cries out, "GUILTY, you are guilty, Sir, with or without a name. There can only be the ultimate penalty for the crime or crimes, it matters not how many, that you've committed". He turns back to address the Minister, his tiny face flushed red, stamps his feet and jumps up and down a few times. "DEATH, Your Grace, it has to be death and being your most loyal servant, I can do it for you – me and my lads here. Hand the rascal over to me once you've sentenced him and we'll do the rest." With that he sits back down again and awaits the verdict.

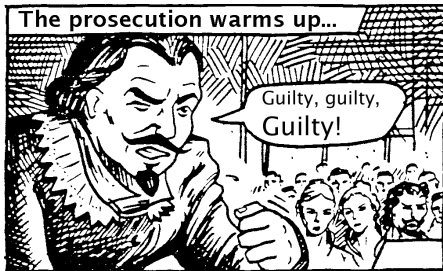
As Minister Seine hides his head in his hands, Nord calls his third witness: Dr. Antoine Faquin. A portly gentleman trudges forward and introduced himself. "My name is Dr Antoine Faquin and I am the personal physician to the King. I studied at the conservatoire of medicine in Paris and my areas of expertise are in the fields of neuro deficiencies and phycological anomalies. I am also an expert witness in the following ailments: rheumatism, gout, intestinal infections and fistula. I can assure the court His Majesty is in rude health and I concern myself with his staff and advisors.

"I have been asked to study the letters and behaviours of Chevalier-Cavalier. First, his written words display tendencies of paranoia and delirious hysteria,

made public. By now word on the streets was that Chevalier-Cavalier was either the world's worst conspirator, or that for some reason he was seeking to discredit Count de Gain and His Majesty's Government.

"As part of my evidence gathering, I checked up on the owners of Dominos outfitters and Dom 'n' Ian Carriages, who publicised their businesses over the summer. I can confirm that these are both legitimate and long-established family businesses. The proprietors of both were aware of the many rumours of Chevalier-Cavalier and his dominion letters. They posted their advertisements to boost trade in a quiet summer. I do not believe that they are implicated in this dominion conspiracy. Indeed, the owners of Dom 'n' Ian are concerned that this trial should make it clear that they are nothing to do with dominion.

"Amongst members of the Army I met in the inns there are many who expressed concern at how Chevalier-Cavalier came to be commander of the Dragoon Guards. Within two months of him joining the Dragoon Guards, the Colonel, Sir Philippe F'Loppe, disappeared at the Front in mysterious circumstances. The soldiers say that the only persons gaining from the loss of Sir Philippe were the enemies of France and Michael Chevalier-Cavalier. There is concern among the ranks that this has not been properly investigated. This has resulted in consternation among the residents of Paris worried that such a man is in command of a Regiment based in the city and near the King and Ministers.



"Your honour, I have here a bundle of sworn statements made by the those I met which back up the evidence I have given." And he passes most of his documents to the clerk for Minister Seine. As he leaves the stand, CPS Nord calls his second witness, "Tiny" Thierry Toothpick. A stool is quickly brought for Toothpick to stand on and be visible over the sides.

"Your Grace, Monsieur Minister, Count Seine and Commissioner de Nord," says Toothpick with a little bow at each title. "I'm delighted to be here today to give evidence against this absolute psychopathic villain Pierre Cardigan. The fact that the rogue has been able to remain at liberty for so long after he heinously murdered past Commissioner Sheikh Yadik Al-Abowt, is a total travesty, indeed if I..." At this point, he suddenly stops and takes a long, hard stare at the prisoner "What?" he exclaims. "Just one goddamn moment here..." And rushes across to the Dock to stab his Deputy's baton into the ribs of the accused.

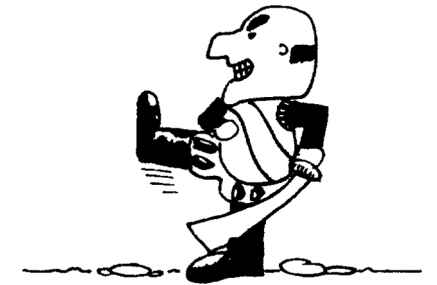
"THIS IS NOT CARDIGAN," he screams. "Who the hell is this? I can see the squinty eyes and the rat-faced features, yes, they're the same, but this is most

enough for Stanbul and he concedes the fight. His injuries mean Stanbul is unable to duel Come Asiouar.

For Chevalier-Cavalier there is another Carabiner to face: Justin Thyme, who greets him with a sneer. "Ah, the traitorous scumbag has turned up. Can I save the State a Trial, monsieur?" Thyme is the smaller of the two duellists, but Chevalier-Cavalier's injuries and Thyme's superior skill redress the balance. Thyme catches Chevalier-Cavalier napping with a slash. He swings round to deliver a cut as well, just as Chevalier-Cavalier gets in a slash of his own. The additional injuries are too much for the Dragoon and he surrenders. Thyme accepts his surrender rather than following up on his threat.

Armand Alsace is another man with a series of duels. In his case it's because he's Lieutenant-Colonel of the 53rd Fusiliers and keeps bumping into Crown Prince Cuirassiers. He decides to take on the top man, Ben e'Volence, first. However, there is no sign of the Minister of War. Private Thierry Boule is next on the list. Boule may be lowly in rank, but he's one beefy bloke. And has a sabre to pit against Alsace's rapier. Expecting a lunge, Boule parries, only to be hit by a slash. Still, that doesn't do much damage from a rapier. Certainly not as much as his own slash inflicts on Alsace. A cut from the Fusilier evens things up, but Boule's cut is savage. The two men recover their ground and Alsace lunges for the first time. Boule hits him with another slash and Alsace concedes. He planned to meet CPC Captain Beau Nidle next, but is now too battered.

Louis Joseph Reignaux is a Cardinal's man and has two fights scheduled with those pesky King's Musketeers. First, Lt-Col Frank X Change. The two are well matched, though Change has slightly more expertise. He has just one second, Louis Severin Descartes, in attendance – Claude de Nord appears to have better things to do than second a colleague. It's a rapier fight, so Change parries the expected lunge.



What he doesn't expect is for Reignaux to close in and apply his boot. The kicking leaves Change hopping about, but he recovers to inflict a lunge on his opponent. He gets a lunge in return and attacks with a cut, but it's the second lunge from Reignaux that proves his undoing. Change surrenders, hoping he's done enough damage to give Reignaux's next adversary a chance.

That Musketeer is the suddenly-not-so-busy Claude de Nord, who rolls up with his second, "Tiny" Thierry Toothpick. Nord wields a cavalry sabre and is much more skilled than Reignaux, whose injuries definitely put him at a disadvantage. The man with the rapier lunges; the man with the sabre slashes; and, after two hits each, it's Reignaux who concedes defeat. Toothpick is pleased this hasn't taken long. "We've a trial to get to and Pierre Cardigan to execute!"

And finally, we have the beefy Camille de Polignac versus the even beefier Terence Cuckpowder. Bernard de Lur-Saluces seconds Polignac and Zavier Ulric Turenne is with Cuckpowder. Cuckpowder's superior expertise shows in the disdainful way he parries Polignac's rapier lunge with his sabre. He rides out the cut and clobbers his opponent with a slash and a cut that leave him in urgent need of medical attention. That didn't take long either.

The greatest show

Once everybody's been bandaged up (and leeches applied), it's time for court to convene. Cue spectators packing in for the latest show. Lt-Col Michael Chevalier-Cavalier of the Dragoon Guards is the man on trial, charged with treason by the Commissioner of Public Safety, Claude de Nord (also commander of the King's Musketeers). The Minister of State, Beau Reese Jean Seine sits in judgement.



Just before things get started, there is a blast of trumpets outside the door. In marches a group of short people in bright orange uniforms. "Make way," they shout, "Make way for the Deputy Commissioner" and Thierry Toothpick is carried into the court by two rather tall fellows in the same tangerine get-up. Unfortunately, as he comes in, his head hits the door frame and he unceremoniously tumbles to the floor, his feathered hat falls off and he drops his 'official' Deputy's baton. Much scrambling and confusion arises amongst the Tangerines as they mill around and struggle to sort their boss out and hoist him back upon the shoulders of his tall bearers.

"The Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety, Captain Toothpick", announces one of the Tangerines, "A seat for the Deputy!" Toothpick is hurried to a seat next to CPS Nord where a fuss is made to find a collection of cushions so that he can see over the table properly. "Is it my turn to speak yet?" He keeps asking. "When is it my go to give the evidence? It's all written down, you know. Tell Minister Seine I'm very meticulous at keeping notes, very suitable to be actual Commissioner he should know!"

Ignoring this distraction, CPS Nord opens proceedings, "My Lords," he intones. "Chevalier-Cavalier has been charged with Treason, slander and libel. We are here today to consider a grave matter that cannot be allowed to fester any longer. Indeed, whilst to some it might be considered trivial, the falsehoods and lies spread by Cavalier do in fact attack the very foundations of our society. They eat away at the soul of this country and insult our government, King and God. Even whilst we

are at war he continues to seek to destroy the confidence of the people of France in the government and crown.

"On several occasions, and I will not bore the court with further details as I am sure you are aware of what has been said, Chevalier-Cavalier has spoken and repeatedly published in the Paris press unfounded claims of some preposterous conspiracy by a secret organisation called the Dominion. In particular, Count Ben e'Volence, the War Minister. These accusations are abhorrent at any time but when we are at the front defending our country? Extensive enquiries have found no evidence and I expect he will say that is because I am involved. Today will be the last time he will slander me, indeed he will no doubt repeat some of these scandalous lies if allowed to do so today.

"My first witness is Frank X Change who will recount his observations of the common people and how they have been affected by these lies."

The second in command of the King's Musketeers strides to the witness stand with a large bundle of documents. "With your leave, your honour," he begins, "I would like to say that the current commander of the Dragoon Guards is a fine upstanding fellow who can be trusted to faithfully and loyally command his regiment; that M. Chevalier-Cavalier, is faithful and loyal to His Majesty, to France and to God, and that at worst he is a confused and misinformed chap." He pauses and turns to the next page as a confused hush descends.

"Sadly, I cannot say any of that," he adds. In the hubbub from the public benches the voice of Justin Thyme can clearly be heard: "yes, I always knew there was something wrong with him. His eyes were too close, sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself, **are** too close together."

Letting the crowd quieten down, Change continues, "Over the last few months, I heard of communications from the scoundrel. In April I first heard that he was spreading rumours about 'dominion', a word which means control. As His Majesty appoints his most senior Ministers and they act on his behalf, the dominion referred to is the rightful King and Government of France. And any attempt to undermine the Government is treason.

"The following reflects what is being discussed in Paris – I can confirm that I spent a whole afternoon frequenting the inns and gathering statements. In May the accused was seen at the Front handing letters to Paris to his groom. It seems one was the letter addressed to then Field Marshal Gain which was found pinned to a postern outside a Parisian brothel. At the time, it appeared an attempt to smear Count de Gain, but it now looks like a failed effort to recruit the faithful Count into a conspiracy. Indeed, I would not be surprised if the letter was posted by him to make public the criminal acts of Chevalier-Cavalier.

"Clearly the accused was not aware that he was already exposed. On his return to Paris in August, he again wrote to Count de Gain and again his missive was