Meanwhile, in Paris, contingents of the National Guard had been pressuring Lafayette, their commander, to join the procession of the market women. Lafayette feared that his untested and untrained men might themselves attack the King’s palace, and for several hours he extemporized. Finally, when it became clear that many of his men would leave even without their commander, he agreed to march to Versailles. They arrived before midnight, some 20,000 strong. The market-women, who were finding whatever shelter they could, cheered.

Alarmed by this new threat, the King again considered flight; but instead he received Lafayette, who explained that he was not fully in control of his men. Outside the shouting recommenced. Lafayette, and some of the King’s ministers, urged the King now to declare his acceptance of the Fourth of August decrees and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. At two in the morning, the King wearily assented to these demands. Lafayette went to the balcony, managed to quiet the multitude, illuminated by torchlight, and announced the King’s concessions. He then made arrangements for the National Guard to protect the palace and proposed that the King’s mercenaries withdraw, less their presence provoke the mob. The King agreed. Exhaustion took over, as people milled about and slept as best they could.

But before sunrise, some of the mob sneaked through an unattended gate and raced into the palace, seeking to kill Marie Antoinette. They slaughtered some of her bodyguards, whose screams alerted the Queen. She dashed through a secret passageway to the King’s rooms. Lafayette raced to the palace with his most trusted men and managed to save the King and Queen and evict the intruders. But the shots and screams had alarmed the multitude outside, which began to riot. "The King to Paris!" they shouted. Lafayette stepped upon a balcony and attempted to address the people, but they shouted him down and demanded to see the King. The King obligingly appeared, as did the Queen, who serenely gazed on the churning mob below, many of whom taunted her with obscenities and demanded her death. Some raised muskets and took aim. Then came Lafayette’s famous gesture, which people talked about for weeks: He saluted the crowd, bowed to the Queen, took her hand, and kissed it. This stunned nearly everyone into silence, and then came some cheers. Finally, the King announced that he and the royal family would immediately return to Paris. The crowd roared its approval.

Lafayette made the best of this impromptu drama. As fearful palace officials crowded together close to the King (and especially to Lafayette’s troops), Lafayette hastily arranged a procession. Lafayette and the National Guard surrounded the carriages of the King and his retainers, and these were followed by wagonloads of flour from the palace, and, last, by the market-women. When they arrived at the outskirts of Paris, 60,000 strong, the Mayor made a nervous welcoming speech, and the haggard King managed some suitable responses. Finally the King and Queen were established in the old palace called the Tuileries [TWEE-luur-ee]. National Guardsmen patrolled the premises, though it was unclear whether their function was to keep the mob out, or the King in.
carriage, however, a large mob assembled. Lafayette sought to rally the National Guard to clear the way for the King’s carriage, but too many soldiers ignored him. The crowd quickly grew unruly, shouting “Death to the Veto” and “Kill the Fat Pig.” Some threw stones and spat at the carriage while Lafayette blustered about on horseback, waving his sword and haranguing the mob. After three hours, the carriage had not moved; so Lafayette eventually succeeded in getting it back through the gates at the Tuileries. Still more National Guardsmen were assigned to protect the king, and to watch him.

THE “TRIP” TO VARENNES (JUNE 1791)

They did not watch carefully enough. Less than two weeks ago, on the night of June 20th the King, Queen, and the King’s heir, the young Dauphin, were either abducted by persons unknown, or they fled in a large carriage towards Germany. Most people in Paris believe that the King attempted flight. Meanwhile Lafayette sent mounted soldiers to save the King or apprehend him. On the morning of June 22, the National Guard caught up with him at Varennes and escorted him back to Paris. Tens of thousands lined the streets of Paris, watching the odd procession in silence. The Guardsmen installed the King in the Tuileries.

That was just last week. Now, they watch his every move.

The Game

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

Louis XVI

Louis XVI, thirty-six years old, is the King of France, the fifth monarch in the Bourbon line. As a child (and, some say, also as an adult), he was withdrawn and taciturn. The death in 1765 of his father, the dauphin, himself the eldest son of Louis XV, left the younger Louis in direct line to succeed his grandfather. He disliked social occasions and was regarded as inept on courtly occasions; he enjoined solitary pursuits, like hunting and locksmithing. He loved horses. He took his studies seriously and became fluent in English, German, and Italian.

In 1770, when he was sixteen, his grandfather promoted France’s alliance with Austria by arranging for Louis’s marriage to Marie-Antoinette, daughter of Maria-Theresa, archduchess of Austria. Marie-Antoinette was fourteen. The marriage was not happy. Marie-Antoinette was vivacious, and Louis was not. Rumors abounded about the couple and many French harbored ill-will toward their Austrian queen. For several years their marriage was unconsummated due to a genital malformation on Louis’ part; the lack of an heir fueled speculation about their relationship.
In 1774 Louis’ grandfather died and Louis became King; he was twenty-one. He was coronated in the cathedral at Rheims. Minor surgery corrected the young King’s genital problem and the couple had five children from 1777 to 1785. Louis became popular and earlier irritation toward the Queen subsided.

Louis was a student of foreign affairs and played a major role in the French decision to intervene on behalf of the American colonies in their “revolutionary war” against Great Britain. The cost of the war exacerbated perennial French budget problems. On the advice of the Swiss banker and financier Jacques Necker, Louis in 1788 decided to convene the Estates-General, which by French precedent, was necessary before the crown could impose new taxes.

Louis XVI bristled when the “Third Estate” declared itself to be the legislative body of France—the National Assembly—but his attempts to cow it into submission failed when the people of Paris, in a massive upheaval, stormed the Bastille. The emergence of the National Guard of Paris, under the command of Lafayette, provided an effective counterweight to the King’s soldiers and ensured the survival of the National Assembly. In October 1789, after the market women had besieged the King at Versailles and forced him to the Tuileries Palace in Paris, he and his family became virtual prisoners.

Under pressure from the National Assembly, he began to endorse some of its revolutionary proposals. He even took an oath to support the constitution that the National Assembly was enacting. In 1790 he agreed to sign into law the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which made all Catholic officials employees of the state, and ultimately subject to the authority of the National Assembly. It also obliged Catholic officials to take an oath to that effect. Several months ago, Pope Leopold VI repudiated the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and threatened to excommunicate those Catholics who adhered to its provisions. About half of the Catholic clergy in France have refused to take the oath. King Louis XVI, who had long been more religious than most monarchs and frequently spoke of his “Christian duty,” appears to side with the “non-juring” priests and bishops and thus against the National Assembly. Rumors fly that the King takes mass privately with a non-juring priest.

Now, having been abducted from Paris, or perhaps having attempted to flee from it, the King and his family have been returned and placed “under protection” at the Tuileries.

Louis’s behavior has been difficult to understand: Sometimes, perhaps influenced by his wife and brothers, he denounces the Revolution and seemingly conspires to destroy it. (There are rumors that when he left Paris he left behind a written indictment of the revolution.) At other times, perhaps when under the influence of liberal ministers such as Necker, he has supported reforms that would have struck his father and grandfather as democratic extremism.

Despite his awkward living arrangements at the Tuileries, Louis remains the titular head of the government. If the National Assembly passes a piece of legislation, it requires his signature to become law. Some government ministers are more attentive to the instructions of the Assembly than to those of the king, but the king still possesses some power, or at least some claim to power. And if
people, acting together in accord with the wishes of Rousseau’s general will, should rule themselves.

According to many in the Crowd, the current constitution promotes the schemes of the money-grubbing businessmen and speculators by destroying the old economic system—feudal dues and royal fees, and government control everywhere—and replacing it with a system controlled by fast-talking entrepreneurs who care mostly about property and wealth. The Crowd wants protection from these predatory market forces; they want a return to the old way of doing things, with stabilized prices and secure employment. Some in the Crowd want the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and similar provisions in the constitution, to refrain from endorsing a “natural” right to property. If a child is about to die of hunger and another person has an extra piece of bread, the child’s right to that bread is absolute. It is a natural right. The Crowd insists that the revolution is not over until such rights have been guaranteed.

Some in the Crowd also believe that elements of counterrevolution are gathering steam—the non-juring priests and bishops in the countryside; the émigré army, headed by the Comte d’Artois in Germany; the property-holding troops of the National Guard under the command of the Marquis de La Fayette; and the vengeful troops of the other European monarchs—Leopold of Austria, Frederick William of Prussia, Catherine of Russia—seeking to punish the Crowd for its actions against Louis XVI. These members of the Crowd want to destroy the enemies of the revolution before those enemies march on Paris and destroy the Crowd. Many in the Crowd do not want to see the King who has already betrayed them restored to power as a constitutional monarch.

The Jacobins: Maximilien Robespierre

Formed in 1789 by a group of delegates to the Estates-General from Brittany (i.e., far west France), the group acquired its name in October, when the National Assembly moved to Paris. Although it formally identified itself as the Society of Friends of the Constitution, it became known by the Dominican monastery in which it met—the Jacobins. The Jacobins corresponded with similar revolutionaries throughout France. Now, there are perhaps 800 Jacobin clubs in the nation, which circulate newspapers, letters, and revolutionary gossip.

The Jacobins consist mostly of lawyers, small-town notables and magistrates, and others who were familiar with the workings of the ancien régime and had thus come to despise it. The Jacobins approve of the achievements of the revolution at present, but they insist that more must be done. They applaud specifically the fact that the Catholic Church has been stripped of its feudal power and placed under the thumb of the National Assembly; and they have cheered the dismantling of noble powers and the tentative adoption of a unicameral (single) house legislature, whose powers are great. Unlike the United States and England, where the will of the people is divided into multiple houses (Senate and House of Representatives; Lords and Commons), the current constitution places great power in a single legislature. The pending constitution also protects
property rights, and this matters immensely to the many lawyers and shopkeepers who belong to the Jacobin Club.

Maximilien Robespierre, a small-town lawyer from the northern French town of Artois, has emerged as the leader of the Jacobins, and he has pushed the club to an increasingly explicit republican position. The people are sovereign, he declares. He cites Rousseau, who insisted that sovereignty cannot be divided, to call for the elimination of the monarchy. The nation is to be governed by the general will of the people; the monarch ultimately serves no interests but his own.

The ascendency of Robespierre, sometimes in concert with Danton, has pushed the Jacobins into seeking a larger, and far greater, revolution. The issue ceases to be who will rule France, but to be whether any government can be truly based on the general will of the people, a principle that is both universal and almost holy in its implications. Under Rousseau, the Jacobins seek to advance a utopian vision and export it throughout the world, one reason why they support the cause of slaves in Saint-Domingue [Haiti]: liberty (freedom), equality, brotherhood—these principles are to become the basis for a new order of mankind.

Now the Jacobins demand an end to the monarchy, which would plunge France into a radically different political world. The attempted flight of the King is proof, they say, of his perfidy, and all the more justification for an end to the monarchy and the beginning of a republic. Even as you read this, Jacobin leaders are circulating petitions calling for the dethronement of Louis XVI.

The Feuillants

Such actions have alarmed many Jacobins, most of whom abandoned that club and have recently begun meeting at the former Feuillant [fuh-yawn] convent, leaving the Jacobins with only a small faction of members under the spell of Robespierre. The Feuillants endorse the revolution and its accomplishments: the Civil Constitution of the Clergy; the abolition of feudalism; the replacement of monarchical power with a forceful unicameral legislature; the protection of individual freedom from royal encroachment; the defense of property; and so on. Yet they think that the elimination of the monarchy portends social chaos.

The Feuillants agree that mob violence has indisputably advanced the revolution, but now that the revolution has accomplished its objectives, violence must end. The revolution has gone far enough; it should go no farther. The task now is to reconcile the deeply divided people of all France so that they can come together and build a strong nation. This, the Feuillants feel, requires a compromise: retention of the king, whose duties will be carefully circumscribed by a constitution.

The Feuillants' goals are embedded in the current draft of the constitution. The Feuillants have an eye, too, to the future and to economic development of the nation. They believe that the "corporate" character of the ancien régime—the pervasive power of guilds, the Catholic Church, and the financial system of the French monarch—hindered the nation's economic growth. If France is to play a
major role in the future, it must in some way approximate the more vigorous free-market institutions of England.

At present, the Feuillants seem to be the dominant force in the National Assembly, and the National Assembly seems to be the dominant force in contemporary France. One reason is that the chief form of income for the new government is derived by the sale of church lands, the income for which is converted into a new currency known as assignats [ahs-seen-yah]. Without this income, the new government could not pay the National Guard or the army, much less the Catholic Church officials who now are employees of the government.

The Clergy

Most of the Clergy who still belong to the National Assembly were initially sympathetic to the Third Estate and to the need to reform the Catholic Church. But the National Assembly, abetted by the mob of Paris, rather than effect the reformation of the Catholic Church, has nearly destroyed it. The expropriation of some church land (Decree on Church Lands), initially adopted to equalize church revenues, soon became the chief source of finances for the revolutionary government of the National Assembly. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy imposes secular control and direction over a spiritual matter. The Obligatory Oath provision, added recently, transforms half of the good and pious priests of the Catholic Church into outlaws. Pope Pius VI's encyclical now obliges all "constitutional" or "juring" clergy (those who have taken the oath) to renounce their clerical offices.

Clergymen now are either enemies of the French state or of the Holy See. Although some Catholic Jansenists long to return to the primitive life of the early Christians, most of the Catholic Clergy in the National Assembly seek to reverse the pending constitution's position on religious issues. They also value the office of the King as a traditional source of authority and stability.

The Nobility

The Nobility who belong to the National Assembly were also sympathetic to the Third Estate and were among the exuberant body that in August 1789 renounced feudal privileges (Fourth of August Decrees). But suddenly things went haywire: peasants rose up in frenzied rebellion later that month, looting chateaux, burning the registers where feudal dues were kept, and attacking the nobility and their families. This was during the Great Fear of August 1789. Then, in October, all Paris erupted in chaos as the market-women went on a rampage to Versailles. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of aristocrats fled the country. Now members of the Jacobin Clubs throughout France hold festivals when they sing the blood-thirsty ditty, "Ca ira" ("It'll happen.")

Ah, ça ira! Ça ira! Ça ira!
Les aristocrates a la lanterne.
Ah, Ca ira! Ça ira! Ça ira!
Les aristocrates on les prendra."
("Ah! It'll happen! It'll happen! It'll happen!"
To a lamppost, send the aristocrats.
Ah, it'll happen! It'll happen! It'll happen.
There we'll hang the aristocrats."

The nobility regards the current constitution as an invitation to more bloodshed and violence. The legislature has all the real power; the King is a pitiable figurehead. The protection of property rights consists of mere words. The power is in the hands of an unstable legislature that happily condones violence.

Delegates from Languedoc, Vaucluse, Lyons, Nancy, Burgundy, or Paris

Although political clubs have popped up throughout France, reiterating the main political divisions within the National Assembly, many people in France (and in the National Assembly) remain undecided about what is best for France. These delegates read the various newspapers, looking for guidance. They also seek to determine the shape of the future and how it will affect their personal and local interests. They were elected to advance the wishes and needs of a particular geographical area, or perhaps of a particular economic group or cultural constituency, and they take this responsibility seriously.

But then, too, like people everywhere, they may be looking out, especially, for themselves.

VICTORY OBJECTIVES

Each player's goals are outlined in his/her specific "role statement," which will be distributed randomly within the next few sessions. Each player will seek to shape the momentous events that have plunged France into Revolution. Players receive "points" for achieving the objectives listed in their "victory objectives statement." Some objectives may involve actions: staying alive, getting elected to leadership posts, or putting out a newspaper on time. But most objectives will involve persuasion. Should the Civil Constitution of the Clergy be revoked? Should the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen remain intact? Should a "right" to property be retained and, if so, in what form?

In many cases, you will not achieve exactly or entirely the stated condition prescribed in your role, but a portion of them; those will be rated by the Gamemaster in determining the final tally. Some objectives can receive partial credit, some cannot. If, for example, your "objectives sheet" required that you abolish a right to "property" and the National Assembly abolishes property rights in businesses, corporations, factories, bakeries, but retains property rights in farm land, the Gamemaster would regard your achievement as a "partial" victory, depending on the exact circumstances of the legislation (such as the likelihood given the then-existing structure and political arguments, that the legislation could be enforced, etc.)