

Imbert rose to his feet. A little blood was of course nothing after their years of forest adventure but the momentary dread had partly sobered him. Steadily enough he went to the fire, threw on it fresh pine logs, and with a piece of burning bark lighted the candles in the two high brass candlesticks on the table. Then he disappeared through the doorway.

Left to himself Biencourt began smoking again. His pipe had a huge lobster-claw bowl, a fantastically carved wooden stem, resplendent with the visages of Indian gods, and from its mouthpiece wampum spread in a white sheen across the blue satin slashings of his doublet. The doublet itself was of black velvet, his long stockings of blue silk and on his silver shoe-buckles diamonds shone.

It was dusk in the ruins of Port Royal the evil-starred, a few years only since Argall and his horde of God-fearing Puritans had rifled its storehouses and magazines and given its emblems of the hated superstition to the flames. Outside a bleak wind moaned and within the glare from the fresh logs fell on scarred walls and broken furniture, and deep hollows in the floor where Argall's men had lit their bivouac fires. Even the richly figured oaken mantel carved in Paris, had suffered with the rest. Its quaint devices had been hacked by Puritan axes and marred by their torches till it was a mere mass of shapeless blackness; from the walls above, the founder's motto had been carefully effaced, and in its stead some wit had drawn a huge black cross in fine derision.

The room, once the state dining-hall of the lords of the seigneurie, was so large and lofty that the two candles made small head against the shadows. They lurked beneath the wooden settle skirting the apart-